

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime: Religion

Martyn Day [61287] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's Action Against Hate plan, published in July 2016, what steps she is taking to improve the (a) awareness of and (b) data collected on hate crimes motivated by anti-apostasy.

Sarah Newton: The Government takes all hate crime very seriously. Those who commit hate crimes attack the fundamental values that underpin our diverse society, values of acceptance and respect for others. The cross Government hate crime action plan covers all five monitored strands of hate crime, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation and transgender status. Religion in this context includes people defined by reference to their religious belief or lack of religious belief.

This includes Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, and different sects within a religion. It also includes people who have changed faith and people who do not hold any religious beliefs. We are working in partnership with a number of organisations including Streetwise and the Anne Frank Trust to raise awareness of hate crimes including religiously motivated hate crimes and the importance of reporting incidents. The Government does not currently collect data on crimes motivated by anti-apostasy.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-23/61287/>

The Action Against Hate plan referred to above can be read at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf

Hate Crime: Internet

Nusrat Ghani [60965] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the Government plans to convene the ministerial seminar on hate on the internet referred to in Action Against Hate: The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime, published in July 2016; and which Government Departments will be consulted prior to that seminar on which victims' groups, stakeholders and industry representatives will be invited to attend.

Sarah Newton: The cross Government hate crime delivery group will meet on 30 January 2017. The development of the Ministerial seminar on hate on the internet will be one of the actions this group will take forward.

The delivery group includes representatives from the Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Education, Department for Transport, representatives from the Hate Crime Independent Advisory Group, National Police Chiefs Council, Department for Work and Pensions, Ministry of Justice, Crown Prosecution Service and Government Equalities Office.

The delivery group will consider which victim's groups, stakeholders and industry representatives should be invited to attend the seminar.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-20/60965/>

The Action Against Hate plan referred to above can be read at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf

Schools

Christian Matheson [61415] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of schools were (a) local authority, (b) church and (c) academy and free schools on 31 December 2016.

Nick Gibb: On 31 December 2016 there were 21,925 state funded schools. 71.1 per cent (15,588) were local authority maintained and 28.9 per cent (6,337) were academies and free schools. In addition, 31.2 per cent (6,839) of state funded schools had either a designated religious character or religious ethos.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-24/61415/>

Marriage: Humanism

Naz Shah [58588] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to section 14 of the Marriage (Same Sex) Couples Act 2013, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of legalising humanist marriages; and whether the Government has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to legalise such marriages.

Oliver Heald: Assessments of the likely equality impacts and of the potential economic costs and benefits of provision for marriages by non-religious belief organisations, including humanist marriages, were published on gov.uk in June 2014 in the consultation paper on such provision.

The Law Commission has published its report on initial scoping work to identify the issues for potential reform of the law concerning how and where people can get married in England and Wales. The Government is carefully considering the report and will respond in due course.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-20/58588/>

The relevant section of the Act referred to above can be read at

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/30/section/14>

The consultation paper referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/marriages-by-non-religious-belief-organisations>

The scoping paper referred to above can be read at

http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Getting_Married_scoping_paper.pdf

House of Lords Written Answer

Marriage

Baroness Thornton [HL4721] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to enable the recognition in law of marriages in England and Wales conducted by a humanist celebrant; and if so, when.

Lord Keen of Elie: The Government is carefully considering the report published by the Law Commission on initial scoping work to identify the issues for potential reform of the law concerning how and where people can get married in England and Wales, including considering the differences in treatment that already exist within marriage law alongside any further differences that would result from permitting legally valid non-religious belief marriages.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-17/HL4721/>

The scoping paper referred to above can be read at

http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Getting_Married_scoping_paper.pdf

UK Parliament Home Affairs Committee

Inquiry into Hate Crime and its Violent Consequences: new written evidence

Board of Deputies of British Jews (supplementary evidence)

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/written/46147.pdf>

Network of Sikh Organisations

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/written/45945.pdf>

British Pakistani Christian Association

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/written/45746.pdf>

MEND

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/written/44998.pdf>

Sara Ross

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/written/45949.pdf>

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House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Diplomatic Service

Baroness Tonge [HL4722] To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the investigation by Al Jazeera into the action of Israeli embassy staff in the UK, whether

they intend to expel any of those staff.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK has a strong relationship with Israel and we consider the matter closed. The Israeli Ambassador apologised for the actions of an individual about whom concerns had been raised.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-17/HL4722/>

Israel: West Bank

Baroness Tonge [HL4723] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the data collected by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs showing that, during 2016, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized the highest number of West Bank structures since recording began in 2009.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK position on demolitions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is clear: demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; are harmful to the peace process; and are, in all but the most exceptional of cases, contrary to international humanitarian law. The Fourth Geneva Convention is clear that the destruction of property in Occupied Territory is not justified unless it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations. The Fourth Geneva Convention also makes it clear that individual or mass forcible transfer of protected persons from occupied territory is prohibited. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv has raised our concerns on demolitions with the Israeli authorities and has urged the Israeli authorities to provide a legal route for Palestinians to obtain building permits.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-17/HL4723/>

The OCHA data referred to above can be read at

<http://www.ochaopt.org/theme/destruction-of-property>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL4724] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the report by Defence for Children International – Palestine that in 2016 there was the highest number of recorded cases of abuse towards Palestinian children in the past decade.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The UK continues to have strong concerns about continued reports of ill treatment of Palestinian minors, particularly those held in Israeli military detention. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv meet with the Israeli authorities on a regular basis to advocate for the end of night-time arrests and summons, consistent access to lawyers and parents for all minors and implementation of other protection measures. Our Embassy officials raised these issues most recently with the Israeli authorities on 19 January. This issue remains a human rights priority as the UK is firmly committed to the protection of human rights and compliance with international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in Israel.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-17/HL4724/>

The report referred to above can be read at

http://www.dci-palestine.org/children_in_west_bank_face_deadliest_year_of_past_decade

Israel: Bedouin

Baroness Tonge [HL4725] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the demolition by Israeli forces on 2 January of 10 structures in the Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al Akhmar.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Our position is clear; demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; are harmful to the peace process; and are, in all but the most exceptional of cases, contrary to international humanitarian law. The Fourth Geneva Convention is clear that the destruction of any real or personal property in Occupied Territory is not justified unless it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations. We also make clear to Israel that forcible transfer would be a breach of international humanitarian law and would have serious ramifications on Israel's international standing.

On 3 November, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood), met with Abu Khamis, leader of the Khan al Ahmar Bedouin community, and an UN Relief and Works Agency official to discuss the situation in Area C. On 29 November following the Minister's meeting, our Consul-General to Jerusalem made a return visit to Khan al Ahmar, where he also met with Abu Khamis.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-17/HL4725/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL4726] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the shooting by Israeli forces of Mohammed al-Salhi.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not made any representations to the Israeli authorities on this specific issue, we have an ongoing dialogue with the Israeli authorities about the Israel Defence Forces' use of live fire. We remain concerned by the use of force by Israeli security personnel in response to protests and security incidents. We regularly raise these concerns with the Israeli Government, stressing the need for proportionality and proper accountability.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-17/HL4726/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL4727] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the reported wounding of two journalists by Israeli soldiers in the week commencing 5 January.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have not raised this specific issue with the Government of Israel. However, we are clear that protection of the freedom of the media is an important part of respecting human rights.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-17/HL4727/>

United Nations

Palestinian Rights Committee to Convene United Nations Round Table on Question of Palestine

... Convened as the fiftieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation approaches, the Round Table will discuss ways in which the Palestinian diaspora in Central America could enhance its bridges with Palestine in support of its self-determination and independence. It will bring together prominent Palestinians such as Vera Baboun, Mayor of Bethlehem, and Nicola Khamis, Mayor of Beit Jala, as well as representatives of the Palestinian diaspora in Central America, including former Prime Minister Said Musa of Belize, diplomats, United Nations officials and academic experts. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/gapal1381.doc.htm>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/arbitrationandmediationservicesequality.html>

Assisted Dying Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/assisteddying.html>

Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/culturalpropertyarmedconflicts.html>

Lobbying (Transparency) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/lobbyingtransparency.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/promotionofisraelipalestinianpeaceunitedkingdomparticipation.html>

**** Wales Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/wales.html>

Royal Assent

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-01-31/debates/141422DE-0A2C-4BF2-B4B9-22D998E9272A/RoyalAssent>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Consolidation and revision of the school governance regulatory framework in Wales (closing date 17 February 2017)

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/consolidation-and-revision-school-governance-regulatory-framework-wales>

Racism at work (closing date 27 February 2017)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RacismAtWork>

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation: increasing numbers of successful donations (Scotland) (closing date 14 March 2017)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511160.pdf>

The UK's policy towards the Middle East Peace Process (closing date 30 March 2017)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/middle-east-peace-process-inquiry-16-17/>

Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill (closing date 10 April 2017)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/adoption-and-children-northern-ireland-bill>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

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