

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Home Affairs

UK Parliamentary Questions

Islam4UK

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department plans to take steps against the founders of Islam4UK under racial hatred legislation. [309642]

Mr. Alan Campbell [*holding answer 11 January 2010*]: The actions of this group are of significant concern to the Government and an Order providing that Al Muhajiroun, Islam4UK, Islamic Path, Call to Submission and London School of Sharia are to be treated as alternative names for the proscribed organisation Al-Ghurabaa and The Saved Sect was laid in Parliament on Monday 11 January. This action will make membership of the organisation unlawful. The investigation and prosecution of offences under both proscription and race hate legislation are matters for, respectively, the police and the Crown Prosecution Service. Should members of the public believe that members or supporters of this group have committed a racist hate crime then they should report the matter to the police.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100114/text/100114w0007.htm#10011462000102>

Islam4UK: Internet

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to prevent the promotion through Islam4UK websites of the teachings of individuals who have been required to leave the UK as a result of their extremist views. [309640]

Mr. Hanson [*holding answer 11 January 2010*]: The Home Office has no powers to remove or modify extremist material on websites. Where websites are identified to contain unlawful material, the police have powers under section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2006 to seek the removal or modification of that material.

As the hon. Member will be aware, on Monday my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary laid an order providing that the name Islam4UK, along with several others, be treated as alternative names for an organisation which is already proscribed under the names Al Ghurabaa and The Saved Sect.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100114/text/100114w0007.htm#10011462000103>

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Community Relations

House of Lords Debate

UK: Tolerance, Democracy and Openness

Includes:

col 670 **Lord Patten:** I do not think that the Government understand the role of the clergy. They now require proof that a protected job involves leading worship or teaching doctrine, wholly or mainly. Most pastors-I use that term generically, whether they are in the Jewish faith or the Muslim faith, or are Catholics or Protestants-are greatly involved in pastoral and administrative work. They probably could not demonstrate that they are mainly or wholly involved in leading worship or teaching doctrine.

The results of this sort of legislation could be disastrous. The Roman Catholic view ... is in general that the new wording may outlaw its male-only clergy policy. ...

The time has come for religious groups and faith groups to make quite sure that they are not walking away from their ground in front of the little intolerances that are being brought in as a direct result of trying to promote tolerance. We do not have any Roman Catholic religious representation; we do not have any cardinals in your Lordships' House. Recently, we had the very welcome introduction of the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, who I hope will speak out in favour of religious freedoms. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100114-0010.htm#10011439000663>

col 680 **Lord Mitchell:** ... In 1964, as a very excited 21 year-old, I left London for New York. ... For a Jew, New York was a wonder to behold. Jews have a strong presence in that city and in those days more Jews lived in New York than in Israel. I was staggered at Hanukkah to see the local branch of the Chase Manhattan Bank with menorah candles in the shop front. That was unheard of in London. Had I been Irish, Puerto Rican or Afro-American, I am sure that I would have had a similar sensation. It made me feel very provincial, having left a London that then was very white and very homogeneous. Sure I was Jewish, but we were a small minority nestling in the outer reaches of north-west London.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100114-0011.htm>

Lord Mitchell: I remember my mother telling me how, as a 15 year-old, she could not get a job as a shop assistant at C&A in Oxford Street. The people there unashamedly told her that it was because her surname was Cohen and they had a policy of not employing Jews. She and her generation had to endure continuous anti-Semitism, most notably during the Mosley marches in the 1930s. Knowing what Hitler was advocating in Germany, can your Lordships imagine how they must have felt watching the fascists march in the East End?

Before the war, some of our leading authors, poets and academics were openly anti-Semitic. Our leading public schools thought that they were being liberal when they imposed a 10 per cent Jewish quota on admissions. Indeed, some still do. I say all this as a Jew but I know that other minorities suffered similar indignities. Maybe it was simply the inevitable consequence of being immigrants in a very white Christian country.

Today in the 21st century, the London that I left no longer exists. ... The world will be astounded in 2012 when it realises just how culturally diverse this city has become. Foreigners are staggered when they come to London-from the female immigration official wearing a hijab to the customs officer with a turban, to the mixed-race couples walking hand in hand on our streets, to the blasé way that we regard gays and lesbians. ...

So it may well come as quite a shock to learn that the Jewish community in this country feels under constant attack. I do not want to overstate the case, but many Jewish friends have said to me that they feel more frightened and threatened than at any time in their lives. Instances of anti-Semitic attacks are up. Some attacks are verbal, others are physical, but the trend is rising. Of course, many of the attacks are linked to the situation

in the Middle East. Jews are held by some to be supporters of the more extreme elements in Israel and, when there is a south Lebanon or Gaza conflict, attacks on British Jews go up.

Noble Lords may not be aware that for many years all synagogues have had constant security patrols. At most Jewish social events, you will see Community Security Trust-trained personnel prominently watching and checking. At this point I must pay tribute first to CST but also to the police forces up and down this country that work hand in hand with the Jewish community, particularly the Metropolitan Police, which gets such a bad time from other quarters but which has done amazing things in this direction. Anti-Semitism is unacceptable for most people, but anti-Zionist or anti-Israeli attitudes have become its barely concealed proxy. That is what makes people very worried.

I am chair of an organisation called the Coexistence Trust. Our mission is to be united against intolerance. Our focus is on Muslim-Jewish relations, particularly on university campuses in the UK. Noble Lords may again be surprised to learn that there is a problem and that there are campuses in our country that Jews prefer to avoid. Religious Jews wearing any form of dress that identifies them as being Jewish are sometimes attacked. I can tell noble Lords of many instances where stickers saying things such as "Death to Jews" have been displayed at some of our leading campuses and have been slow to be removed. It is not a good scene.

Muslims also have a difficult time. Issues such as dietary observance and exams being held on religious holidays cause problems for them. ... We can bemoan the situation or we can do something about it. ... The Coexistence Trust is absolutely balanced between Jews and Muslims; our trustees, our donors and our staff all come from both communities. We visit campuses with a simple message: racism and discrimination have no place in our society. We actively encourage Jewish and Muslim students to get to know one another. After all, our backgrounds are not that dissimilar; all of us are sons and daughters of immigrants.

Our campus objectives for 2010 are that we will provide conflict resolution training, develop student leadership skills and appoint campus representatives and ambassadors at key universities. Now I shall tell your Lordships what we will not be doing: we will not get into any discussions about the Middle East. The situation is complicated enough and nothing much that we can do can change it. We are concerned about British Muslims and British Jews. Our role, indeed, is to make the UK a more tolerant society. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100114-0012.htm>

col 689 Lord Davies of Oldham: ... I hear what he says about religious freedom, which is of the greatest significance. Our society cannot be free unless there is proper protection for religious freedom and people are free to worship in the way in which they are called to do so, but he will appreciate that part of our difficulty is that there are some who masquerade under the religious banner and who are a threat to our society. I have met many imams-I represented a constituency with a very large number of Muslim constituents, so I know of imams' wonderful work and leadership in their communities-but the noble Lord will also know that we have to watch with care those who carry the title without any commitment to the teachings of Islam, who have a very distorted perspective of the concept of jihad and who are a constant physical challenge to other people. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100114-0013.htm>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

"Tackling Race Inequality: A Statement on Race"

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Mr. John Denham): I have today published *Tackling Race Inequality: A Statement on Race*. This document sets out the Government's approach to tackling the inequalities that people from minority ethnic groups continue to face and also sets out the increasing complexity of those problems. ...

Over the past decade, the Government have worked tirelessly to build a fairer, more

equal society. A society where a person's chances and opportunities in life are determined solely by their talent and effort-not by their class, gender, beliefs, sexuality or their race. ...

However, there is still much to do. ... So we must recognise that we will not succeed in tackling racism without tackling all forms of discrimination, prejudice and inequality. We have to redouble our efforts to promote greater equality for all, and combine that with action to target the specific problems faced by particular groups. And we have to do that in ways which are fair, and seen to be fair, so that no group is neglected or overlooked.

... We now have a very strong legal framework to tackle racism and promote equality-this will be simplified once the new Equality Bill becomes law. The emphasis in this statement is on enforcing those laws, particularly through the EHRC and through effective inspection of public services. We stress the commitment across government departments to promoting race equality. And we make clear that we will continue to promote targeted approaches to address the specific obstacles and barriers which hold particular groups back ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100114-wms0001.htm#10011432000054>

Communities and Local Government

Tackling Race Inequality: Speech by John Denham

... No one working in public services today can turn a blind eye to racism or inequality. Every single public service, every single public body - all forty three thousand of them - have to positively promote race equality and better race relations.

For example, each and every school now has a race equality programme, complemented by national programmes like the Black Pupils Attainment Strategy. ... All my Cabinet colleagues share a total commitment to this work as part of our wider efforts to build a society free of bigotry and intolerance, prejudice and discrimination.

We will not weaken our focus, we will not lessen our resolve until we have realised that goal. There are those who say that you can't afford programmes like this in a downturn - that tackling inequality is a distraction.

I say exactly the opposite. We cannot afford the inequality and discrimination at work which restricts opportunities, wastes talent, and sets artificial limits on people's careers and prospects. ... we've also got to recognise that the context for what we are doing has changed. For example, there is a growing appreciation of the ways in which racism interacts with other factors - like economics, religious identity, and migration - to undermine community stability and lead to communities living separate and parallel lives. Migration has also had a big impact on the debate about race in Britain. In some places we've seen antipathy against Eastern Europeans or Muslims becoming more acceptable - justified on the grounds of religious difference but manifesting itself in terms of racial prejudice and gaining a political voice through far right groups. ...

We'll be holding two conferences later in the Spring to keep that conversation going and to feedback on progress. ...

To read the full transcript see

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/tacklingraceinequality>

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UK Parliamentary Questions

Israel

Richard Burden: To ask the Solicitor-General what the position was of the Government as presented by the Attorney-General at meetings with representatives of the Government of Israel in January 2010 on the operation of the law of universal jurisdiction in the UK in relation to the possibility of Israeli officials, politicians or military personnel being arrested if they travel to the UK. [310076]

The Solicitor-General [*holding answer January 2010*]: The Attorney-General reiterated the statement by the Foreign Secretary that the Government were looking urgently at ways in which the UK system might be changed to avoid this situation happening again.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100114/text/100114w0001.htm#10011462000039>

War Crimes: Arrest Warrants

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice with reference to the answer of 27 October 2008, *Official Report*, column 755W, on war crimes: arrest warrants, (1) if he will take steps to consult all interested parties before bringing forward any proposals to amend legislation relating to the issue of arrest warrants under section 51 of the International Criminal Court Act 2001; [309751]

(2) what recent representations he has received in respect of changes to the law relating to the issue of arrest warrants from (a) the Israeli government, (b) other governments, (c) UK-based organisations and faith groups and (d) victims of war crimes; [309752]

(3) what recent consideration he has given to whether the Attorney-General's consent should be required in respect of the issue of (a) all arrest warrants, (b) arrest warrants issued in respect of charges of war crimes, (c) arrest warrants issued in respect of charges of war crimes against individuals whose home jurisdiction is a party to the International Criminal Court, (d) arrest warrants issued in respect of Israeli nationals and (e) arrest warrants issued in respect of those who are in the UK for meetings with Ministers and officials; [309753]

(4) what progress has been made in the consideration of whether to bring forward legislative proposals in respect of the issuing of arrest warrants without the consent of the Attorney-General; and whether any changes to this process will require Parliamentary approval. [309754]

Mr. Straw: We are looking at this issue as a matter of urgency. No decisions have yet been made. Any changes in this area of the law would require primary legislation.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100114/text/100114w0022.htm#10011464000025>

Interpal

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will acknowledge or reply to the letter to the Foreign Secretary of 18 November 2009 from Ibrahim Hewitt, chairman of Interpal, regarding the status of that organisation. [HL952]

Lord Brett: A reply was sent to Mr Hewitt on 11 January 2010.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100114w0004.htm#10011449000477>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

**** Children, Schools and Families Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/childrenschoolsandfamilies.html>

notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/008/amend/pbc0081401a.21-23.html>

**** Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/constitutionalreformandgovernance.html>

notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/004/amend/pbc0041401a.251-257.html>

Scottish Parliament Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee: Report on the legislative consent memorandum on the Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/eet/reports-10/eer10-02.htm>

Crime and Security Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/crimeandsecurity.html>

**** Equality Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/equality.html>

amendments to be moved in Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldbills/020/amend/su020-iirb.htm>

**** Flood and Water Management Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/floodandwatermanagement.html>

notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/009/amend/pbc009140110a.149.html>

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Consultations ** new or updated

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Implementation: Consultation on Significant Draft Secondary Legislation, Guidance and Regulatory Impact Assessment (Scotland only) (closes 2 February 2009)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/children-families/pvglegislation/Consultation09>

Communities and Local Government: Creating a Single Equality Scheme for 2010 – 2013 (closes 28 February 2010)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/987402.pdf>

Proposal to amend the Licensing Act 2003 to simplify the procedures for Licensing Statements; Interim Authority Notices; and Temporary Event Notices (closes 9 February 2010)

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6498.aspx

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