

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Holocaust](#)

[Israel](#)

[Foreign Affairs](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Consultations](#)

Home Affairs

House of Lords Oral Answers

Brexit: Hate Crimes

Baroness Smith of Basildon: To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of concerns raised by the Chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, what assessment has been made of the likelihood of increased hate crimes against non-UK EU nationals living in the UK, following the publication of the Supreme Court's decision on Article 50 and the capacity of relevant authorities to deal with the consequences of any such crimes.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford): My Lords, we are working very closely with the police and community organisations to monitor any changes in hate crime levels. One of the first things that the Home Secretary did in July last year was to publish a comprehensive new hate crime action plan to drive forward work to tackle hate crime. The Prime Minister and the Home Secretary have both said on numerous occasions that there is no place in the UK for hate crime. ...

Lord Paddick: My Lords, the latest crime figures show an increase of about 200 hate crimes a week in 2015-16 compared with the previous year. There has been a 40% increase in hate crime since 2013-14. This is not a spike but a trend and police action is simply addressing the symptoms. What assessment have the Government made of the causes of these increases and do they believe, as we do, that the increase in populism and nationalism is behind these significant and worrying increases? ...

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I will get to the point about pre-referendum, because in fact the numbers of hate crimes reported are now down to pre-referendum levels. The reasons behind some of the hate crime were many and varied. The Polish community, for probably the first time in its history in this country, experienced in Hammersmith an unprecedented attack, and the Polish centre in Hammersmith was one of the first centres to benefit from the community demonstration project funding. As I say, the reasons that motivate people to provoke hatred against other people are many and varied, and it is generally based on certain characteristics of those people and those communities, and it has gone down to pre-referendum levels since then.

Lord Ouseley: My Lords, on 24 June we were all shocked by the level of responses of hate demonstrated by the recorded and reported incidents. I declare an interest in my

work as chair of Kick It Out, where we monitor—and have done for the last 23 years—hate incidents that are at the lower level of everyday abuse. There is nothing new about the level of hatred that exists within our society. We have to tackle the issue of prejudice, which we are not doing sufficiently. To blame Brexit as a cause of what we saw on 24 June and since is delusional. Quite frankly, in the context of racial abuse, you cannot blame the levels of homophobic abuse and abuse of disabled people that we are witnessing specifically on Brexit. How are we taking action to effectively tackle prejudice, which is what feeds bigotry and hatred?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord raises a very important point, which is that it was not Brexit per se that was the cause of this hatred but Brexit was used as an occasion to promote prejudice and hatred. ...

Lord Blair of Boughton: My Lords, does the Minister agree that drawing the line between hate crime and the protection of free speech is one of the most difficult jobs that the police service has to do? In the event of difficulties following this judgment, will she ask the Home Secretary to support police action, perhaps slightly more quickly than the Lord Chancellor did on the last occasion?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I agree with the noble Lord that there is a distinction. How the police operate is of course up to the police, but we certainly support them.

Lord Kinnock: Is the Minister satisfied with the level of punishment of perpetrators of hate crime and with the provision for education of such people? Is it not clear that, unless and until those guilty of hate crime are taught a lesson in both senses of the term, they are likely to continue with their poisonous attitude?

Reply from Baroness Williams of Trafford: I am satisfied with the level of punishment. The noble Lord raises a point that was mentioned in previous Questions today—that is, education. We engage the Anne Frank Trust in going into schools, which is an incredibly important initiative. It is essential not to forget what happened in the past. We always say that it will never happen again but it does, and for children to have at the forefront of their minds man's inhumanity to man in the past helps us in the future.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-01-19/debates/8A2985D4-328C-44E1-9D8C-7549E921D1B7/BrexitHateCrimes>

[TOP](#)

Holocaust

House of Commons Debate

Holocaust Memorial Day

col 1137 **Peter Kyle:** ... Holocaust Memorial Day was established in 2001 as a result of Andrew Dismore's private Member's Bill. We owe him a debt of gratitude because since that time it has provided our nation with the annual opportunity to pause to reflect on the holocaust. It is necessary to pause because of the enormity of the holocaust and the impact it had on millions of individuals, on families and on humanity as a whole. ...

Catherine McKinnell: Towards the end of last year, I visited Auschwitz with a group of students from my home town of Newcastle. It was an incredibly challenging and moving visit, but it was made really powerful by the presence of so many young people from the region. Does my hon. Friend agree, therefore, that we also owe a debt to those at the Holocaust Educational Trust, who make this visit possible for so many young people to ensure that we never forget and that we never repeat?

Peter Kyle: ... TWe are entering an age when the lived experience of the second world war and all its horrors is being replaced by one where we experience it through stories

handed down, or through the media, books or film. Because fewer survivors remain, it is easier to get away with trivialising those events or making light of them. It is not uncommon these days to hear people who are officious being described as having “Nazi tendencies” or to hear those in public life mindlessly calling others “concentration camp commandants” simply for disagreeing with them or feeling that they have strong views. Those sorts of comments are extraordinarily irresponsible because they casually draw a line from those who deliberately attempted, through state murder, to kill every member of an ethnic or a religious group—the first and only time this has happened in history—to 21st century daily life in a country such as Britain. To do that not only trivialises the horrific events of the past, but makes the job of those who set out on the malicious path of outright holocaust denial that much easier. ...

col 1138 ... the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the right hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Sajid Javid) ... urged people “to push back when people lazily reach for glib comparisons that belittle what happened, calling those we disagree with ‘Nazis’ or claiming someone’s actions are ‘just like the Holocaust’. Ultimately, we must be prepared to do that most un-British of things—we have to make a scene. Maybe that’ll be in private. Maybe in the media. Maybe on Twitter...What’s certain is that if we don’t speak out against hatred and anti-Semitism it will become normalised. It will become part of everyday life. And once that happens, the consequences once again will be tragic.” ...

col 1139 I cannot praise highly enough the thoughtful, engaging and extremely powerful way the [Holocaust Memorial] Trust guides students through the process of learning about and experiencing Auschwitz. Before the visit, students get together in a set of structured seminars to learn the history, policies and facts behind the holocaust, even meeting a holocaust survivor. They then visit Auschwitz. Finally, when they return, they meet again to talk about the lessons and what it means for them as individuals and us as a society—the past, the present and the future. ...

col 1140 **Eric Pickles:** ... Last April, I visited Treblinka ... The best estimate is that somewhere between 700,000 and 900,000 Jews and around 2,000 Roma were killed in Treblinka’s gas chambers. More Jews were killed at Treblinka than at any other Nazi extermination camp apart from Auschwitz. ...

I laid a wreath at the site and following the visit, as most politicians do, I tweeted my observations. Within minutes I received a tweet that said: “No one died at Treblinka, it was a transit camp. There were no gas chambers, no crematoria, no mass graves”.

I have no idea whether the person who sent me that tweet believed it or not, and it is too easy to dismiss this as yet another example of our post-truth world’s fake news ... but I think there is something more sinister going on. Members will recall the long-established 10 stages of a holocaust or genocide starting with classification and working through persecution and extermination. Of course, the 10th and final stage is holocaust denial: it did not happen; the numbers are exaggerated; there were not that many Jews in the first place; they brought it on themselves; the Jews are using it to justify their actions. To forget or belittle continues the holocaust. ...

col 1141 **Louise Ellman:** ... I very much welcome the Government’s acceptance of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of anti-Semitism, because it is important that we focus on what anti-Semitism means in this day and in this era, as well as what it has meant historically.

Figures from the Community Security Trust show us shockingly that there has been a resurgence of anti-Semitism and of anti-Semitic discourse. It is important not to exaggerate that—most British Jews will go about their lives without experiencing anti-Semitism—but there is a profound unease across the UK’s Jewish community with the increase in both anti-Semitic incidents and comments. ...

It is a fact that people who declare themselves anti-racist are not necessarily opposed to anti-Semitism, and do not necessarily even understand what anti-Semitism is. ...

col 1143 **Huw Merriman:** ... We should never assume that the horrors of the Third Reich

could never be repeated in Europe. The Germany of the 1930s had culture, history and people of differing creeds living side by side, yet the murmurings of hate quickly turned an entire country into a place where sending Jews, Romany Gypsies and other groups to their graves was accepted by millions of people who had previously lived and worked among them. The noise of hatred in 2017 may be low, but a civilised society must aim to switch it off before it can deafen us.

I conclude by thanking Karen Pollock and her team at the Holocaust Educational Trust for continuing to ensure that this country remembers the unspeakable evil that created the holocaust. I also thank the trust for delivering these new voices—the young and not so young—who will continue to ensure that we never forget what occurred and that we do all we can to stop the undercurrents that, if left unchecked, could make it occur again.

Joan Ryan: ... At 10 am on 27 January—Holocaust Memorial Day itself—the Holocaust Educational Trust will host a live webcast with holocaust survivor Mala Tribich. The webcast will be livestreamed to schools across the UK, and more than 600 schools have signed up so far. ...

Even when it makes for difficult hearing, we have a moral duty to listen to holocaust testimony. Survivors speak not only for themselves but for those who did not survive to tell their story. ...

col 1145 Let us be clear: those who minimise, trivialise, distort or deny the horrors of the holocaust do so to legitimise the anti-Semitism that fuelled it. We must recognise that whenever people claim the gas chambers are a myth, argue that the holocaust is Jewish propaganda, distort Nazi history, minimise the number of holocaust victims or attack holocaust memorial days, they do not do so out of historical interest or a desire for debate; they do so from nothing but prejudice, bigotry and naked anti-Semitism.

col 1146 **Bob Blackman:** ... Jewish people have suffered anti-Semitism throughout the centuries; there is nothing new in that. ... I grew up in an area where we were educated among Jewish people, Hindu people, Muslims, and people of all religions and origins, but the holocaust was never talked about. On my first to Israel in 1992, I saw not the wonderful museum that is now Yad Vashem, but the original museum. That brought home to me what life was like for the Jewish people in Germany and beyond who suffered the systematic attempt to wipe them out. It also brought home to me that we must educate young people across this country on the need to remember what happened ... We must remember that it is not good enough to pinpoint just the evil people who did this; we should also pinpoint those who stood by while recognising what was going on. ...

col 1148 **Alex Salmond:** ... Some years ago, I was privileged as First Minister to write the foreword to a book called “Scotland’s Jews”. I claim no special virtue for the Scottish nation, but I was able to recount that Scotland was one of only two nations in the whole continent that have never had any anti-Semitic legislation on the statute book. ... We should remember that anti-Semitism and its consequences have been with us for the greater part of recorded human history. ...

Recognising and commemorating the significance of the holocaust, of man’s inhumanity to man, is not restricted to any religious grouping or any point of view. It should be commemorated by those who take a pro-Palestinian, a pro-Israeli or just a pro-peace view of the middle east. ...

col 1149 All of us who are a part of humanity, regardless of affiliation, point of view, political party, religion and all the rest of it, must recognise that there are those among us who would seek to deny the terrible crimes of the past for their own cynical motivations. Those who do not deny it—who acknowledge it, face up to it and recognise it, which is the first step in preventing it from happening again—should be embraced by us, whatever their point of view, as fellow human beings.

col 1151 **Rupa Huq:** ... Seventy-plus years on from the liberation of Auschwitz, this subject still has enormous contemporary relevance. It has been pointed out that with the passage of time there are fewer and fewer camp survivors, Kindertransport children and

people who liberated the camps, so we owe a huge debt to people and organisations such as the HET and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, headed up by Olivia Marks-Woldman ...

All communities must learn lessons and be vigilant against racism, anti-Semitism, islamophobia and all forms of hatred in the contemporary world. ...

col 1152 At the end of last year, I attended my first-ever Rabbi's Tisch, which is a Friday night meal. It was a great event, which was held at Ealing Liberal Synagogue. The presence of a Community Security Trust guard on the door served as a reminder that, while all communities deserve to worship in safety, that is not always possible. ...

col 1155 **Lisa Cameron:** ... There can be no excuses for anti-Semitism or any other form of racism or prejudice. I congratulate the Holocaust Educational Trust and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance for their invaluable work supporting holocaust education, remembrance and research, which is recognised both nationally and internationally. The Home Affairs Committee recently produced a comprehensive report on anti-Semitism in the UK, and I urge the Minister and all parties to take appropriate cognisance of it.

Genocide does not happen out of the blue. There is a gradual process of victimisation, discrimination, hatred, words, actions, maligning, inferences and looking the other way. That leads to psychological distancing, and then to dehumanisation. That is the path to genocide. ...

col 1156 **Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh:** ... Holocaust Memorial Day takes place at a time when we should seek to learn the lessons of the past. We must understand that genocide is often the evil culmination of a gradual process that begins with unchecked discrimination, racism and hatred. ...

The Scottish National party Government in Scotland have long supported remembrance and the importance of holocaust education, and the Scottish Parliament will also play its part in remembrance. ... the Holocaust Educational Trust's "Lessons from Auschwitz" project ... is supported by a grant from the Scottish Government. They also set up the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion in 2015 to engage with minority ethnic stakeholders and communities in considering what more can be done to tackle these issues. ...

col 1157 The holocaust did not begin with the murder of millions; it began with what we now know as hate speech, perpetuated by a small minority and tolerated by the vast majority. We cannot make the same mistakes again. ... We can and should be very proud of the diversity of modern Scotland, and the diversity we see across the British Isles, but we should never take that diversity or tolerance for granted. We want our Jewish community to feel safe and welcome, and so we condemn the growing anti-Semitism and the hate seen more recently across Europe and the USA. ...

col 1159 **Kirsten Oswald:** ... I thank the Holocaust Educational Trust for the help, briefings and advice it has given to all Members, and for the excellent work that it does all year. ...

col 1160 There is no place for anti-Semitism here or anywhere else. Where it exists, it is our responsibility to challenge it vigorously and to challenge discrimination in all its forms. The holocaust saw more Jewish men, women and children perish in ghettos, mass-shootings and extermination camps than the entire population of Scotland. As the hon. Member for Hove said, it was an almost unbelievable scale of deliberate terror against ordinary people simply because of their identity as Jews. As time passes and memories fade, we must not lose our focus on this or on making sure that it cannot happen again. ...

col 1163 **Kate Hollern:** ... In some circles, there is a view that young people will become less interested in the subject if it becomes simply history, but that does a tremendous disservice to the empathy of the next generation. As we think about how life can go on after the holocaust and subsequent genocides, the role of the next generation is even more crucial. Through establishing permanent memorials and the continued presence of

the holocaust in schools through the national curriculum, and the support of devolved Governments, young people must be given every opportunity to engage with the difficult subject of the holocaust and other atrocities that have happened. Dedicated and conscientious teachers of history can convey the gravity of the holocaust and young people can draw parallels between historical events. ...

col 1166 The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Andrew Percy): ... In the context of the Holocaust, we are also required to bear witness—we hear that all the time. We must not trivialise the Holocaust. We have to recognise the peculiarly unique evil of the Holocaust, and that is why we must bear witness to it. ...

col 1167 I thank all the holocaust organisations that are involved. They have been mentioned a lot today, but I am going to refer to them again. I particularly thank Karen Pollock, the CEO of the Holocaust Educational Trust. She and her team are an inspiration for us all. ...

I used to serve on the all-party group against anti-Semitism. I visited a Jewish school in Brussels, and I was shocked by the fact that outside the school Belgian armed forces were guarding the young people who were inside. I asked those young people, “Would you wear your kippah out and about in Brussels?” They laughed; they would not. In a modern, western European capital that is the home of the European Union and a liberal, open-minded place, Jewish children are not prepared to walk about outside with a kippah on because of the risk of attack and abuse. Of course, sadly, that has happened on campuses here. Swastikas have appeared and meetings organised by Jewish societies have been violently disrupted. That is not acceptable and we cannot be silent about it.

The right hon. Member for Gordon (Alex Salmond) was right to say that we must all acknowledge Holocaust Memorial Day, regardless of our views on the middle east—whether pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli. Unfortunately, there has been an increased Israelification of anti-Semitism, using Israel and Zionism as a proxy for Jews. I have seen that and been on the receiving end of it, particularly on Twitter. There are pictures of the Star of David represented as the Nazi flag—that is unacceptable and a form of anti-Semitism. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-19/debates/760B4F72-36DA-469F-A484-7F595AB84FFD/HolocaustMemorialDay>

House of Commons Business

Edward Leigh: In this week, of all weeks, it is absolutely right that we say in the House of Commons that we want to proceed with the building of a Holocaust memorial museum. As the Leader of the House is responsible, at least in part, for the environs of the Palace of Westminster, does he accept that there may be merit in a debate on the siting of the museum? There is a view among many people that the best place for the museum would be within or outside the Imperial War Museum, so that its many visitors can see the link between the Holocaust and war and hatred, rather than siting it in Victoria Tower Gardens, which is one of the last green spaces around this Palace and visited by many hundreds of thousands of people each year. As the museum will be two storeys underground, there might also be a flood risk. There is a need for a debate on the siting of the museum.

Mr Lidington: My hon. Friend may well want to seek a Westminster Hall debate on the subject. The previous Prime Minister gave a commitment to the Victoria Tower Gardens site, and that has been reiterated by the current Prime Minister. Ultimately, the planning matters to which my hon. Friend alluded will be the responsibility of Westminster City Council.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-19/debates/95B5799B-8EBB-4C61-9215-BCAB00CB4C6B/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-ABCD77DB-33BD-4823-B7FD-A6DCF73BC60D>

Chris Bryant: Can we have a debate on bravery? In March 1936, a young gay Conservative Member of Parliament, Captain Jack Macnamara, visited the Rhineland to celebrate its remilitarisation, because he was then a supporter of Hitler. But while he was there, he visited the first concentration camp, Dachau, and he saw such horrific violence to Jews and homosexuals that, when he came back here, he campaigned relentlessly against anti-Semitism and appeasement. He raised those matters in this Chamber, but he was spat at when he went to the Carlton Club that night. He was killed in action in the second world war, on 22 December 1944, and his shield is on the wall of this Chamber. Do we not owe a debt of gratitude to such people, and should we not be doing everything in our power to put an end to anti-Semitism and prejudice in our era?

Mr Lidington: I agree with every word the hon. Gentleman said. The tribute he has just paid was a most appropriate one as we come towards Holocaust Memorial Day.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-19/debates/95B5799B-8EBB-4C61-9215-BCAB00CB4C6B/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-45C9D08C-F53D-45D6-A84A-E625B658F75E>

Barry Sheerman: It seems appropriate, Mr Speaker, that today we have not only an amazing exhibition of photographs in the Attlee Room on Syria and Aleppo by William Wintercross, a brilliant photographer—I hope people will be able to see it—but a debate on Holocaust Memorial Day. May we also, on this special day, think about having a debate on a report that came out, I believe, in July 2008—it was called the Bercow report—on children and young people? Owing to cuts to local government up and down this country, young people are in dreadful danger, because child protection is becoming very difficult to maintain. May we have a debate on the Bercow report so that we can see what progress has been made since those good recommendations?

Mr Lidington: I cannot promise a debate in Government time, but the hon. Gentleman can make a submission to the Backbench Committee.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-19/debates/95B5799B-8EBB-4C61-9215-BCAB00CB4C6B/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-ED1D389A-0E2E-479A-9F89-3233424CFA73>

United Nations

United Nations Headquarters to Host Official Opening of Poster Exhibition ‘State of Deception: the Power of Nazi Propaganda’

The Department of Public Information will officially open a provocative exhibition from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on the important role of propaganda in bringing the Nazi Party to power, and in preparing the way for the Final Solution that resulted in the murder of 6 million Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Titled “State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda” ... lays out the manner in which the Nazis used propaganda to manipulate public opinion and behaviour in order to attain their goals. Over two decades, they skilfully used their “terrible weapon” to win broad voter support in Germany’s young democracy, implement radical programmes under the party’s dictatorship and justify war and mass murder. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/note6493.doc.htm>

[TOP](#)

House of Commons Business

Desmond Swayne: With the decision of the Backbench Business Committee not to schedule a debate on settlements and the destruction yesterday of Umm al-Hiran, is there a possibility of a Government statement on what appears to be a significant shift in Government policy over recent days as we cosy up to the incoming American Administration in granting complete impunity to Israel?

Mr Lidington: The Government's policy on Israel and Palestine has not changed. We remain committed to a two-state solution, involving a sovereign, independent viable Palestinian state living alongside Israel, with mutually agreed land swaps where appropriate and with Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states. Our view on the settlements remains that they are illegal in international law, and that is at the heart of the United Kingdom's policy.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-19/debates/95B5799B-8EBB-4C61-9215-BCAB00CB4C6B/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-2DA8A7D4-FC11-465E-BFAF-F6C3F08B76C6>

House of Commons Oral Answers

Occupied Palestinian Territories

1. **Helen Goodman:** What support the Church of England is giving to Christians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [908240]

The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Dame Caroline Spelman): The Bishop of Southwark is currently visiting the west bank and Gaza and the Archbishop of Canterbury also intends to visit later this year. He is very keen that the House should know about the work of Embrace, whereby the Church of England is in partnership with 23 Palestinian Christian organisations to end poverty and bring justice to the Occupied Palestinian Territories—to Muslims, Christians and Jews alike.

Helen Goodman: Palestinian Christians are suffering the effects of the settlement. Two weeks ago, I stood on the hills behind Bethlehem and saw how the six-lane motorway and the wall carve through Palestinian farmland. Their houses are being demolished and I met a young man whose family had lost 18 trees, which are now being sold on the internet for £30,000. When the Archbishop and the Bishop go to the occupied territories, please could they make vocal their witness to the injustice that is happening?

Caroline Spelman: Speaking out about injustice is precisely what Church leaders do, and they do it well. When the Archbishop visits, I am sure that he will look closely at the injustice that the hon. Lady described. It is scandalous that infant mortality is increasing in the occupied territories when, on the whole, it is in decline around the world. The Church supports the Anglican Al Ahli hospital, where 1,000 children and more than 15,000 adults are treated, so we give practical support to the territories.

Desmond Swayne: There is an increasingly militant settler movement that treats Palestine like its own biblical theme park. To what does my right hon. Friend attribute the radical decline in the numbers of Palestinian Christians living in the west bank?

Caroline Spelman: Both my right hon. Friend and the hon. Lady have the advantage over me in having actually been to the occupied territories. I have not been there. Sadly, there is a huge pressure on Christians in the middle east. About 8% of the population of the middle east is Christian, with 80% concentrated in Egypt. As we saw at the Open Doors launch in Parliament last week, religious persecution is one of the main drivers of out-migration.

Ruth Cadbury: ... Will the right hon. Lady consider visiting Christians and others in the Palestinian west bank very soon? Like my hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland (Helen Goodman), I too saw the land owned by 53 Christian families near Beit Jala, and the monastery and the convent. Despite protests and support from Christian leaders around the world, the wall proposal is going ahead through those lands. I hope the right hon. Lady will visit very soon.

Caroline Spelman: I would love to have the opportunity to visit this very troubled part of our world and to see for myself the impressions gained by several hon. Members. The Church actively encourages its members to go and see the reality of life for Palestinian Christians. About 750,000 parishioners have taken advantage of this opportunity. I hope to add to their number.

Philip Hollobone: I declare my interest, as I was on the same visit as the hon. Members for Bishop Auckland (Helen Goodman) and for Brentford and Isleworth (Ruth Cadbury). It might surprise people to know that there are Christians in the Palestinian Cabinet. The Palestinian Authority are responsible for both Jesus's birthplace and his family home. May I encourage my right hon. Friend to encourage the Church to develop as close relationships as possible between the Church in this country and Christian communities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

Caroline Spelman: That is exactly the purpose of Embrace the Middle East. We are in partnership with 23 Palestinian Christian organisations. The value of the support we give through this scheme is equivalent to £1.25 million.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-19/debates/AB999452-D073-4C6E-90E8-905DA42E71B3/OccupiedPalestinianTerritories>

House of Commons Written Answers

West Bank: Demolition

Rupa Huq [59551] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his Department's policy is on EU member states seeking compensation from the Israeli government as a result of that country's demolition of EU-funded structures in Area C of the West Bank.

Tobias Ellwood: The EU has not to date asked for compensation for EU funded infrastructure. No decision has been made yet as to whether to claim compensation in the future. The UK is focused on preventing these demolitions from happening in the first place, and supporting those affected. We are working with other EU member states to make clear to Israel the need to provide a reasonable means for Palestinians to gain planning permission in Israeli controlled areas of the West Bank (Area C) and the need to halt all demolitions until a more effective process is in-place.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-11/59551/>

Gaza: Visits Abroad

Richard Burden [59566] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of cooperation of the Israeli government in fact-finding visits to Gaza by UK parliamentarians.

Tobias Ellwood: We have not made any assessment on this issue, as we do not make representations on behalf of British nationals, including parliamentarians, wishing to travel to Gaza. Parliamentarians should be aware that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all travel to Gaza. Entry and exit from Gaza is difficult and can, at times, be impossible. Entry is through either Israel, with permission from the Israeli authorities, or Egypt, with permission from the Egyptian authorities (although this border has been closed almost entirely since

October 2014).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-11/59566/>

Occupied Territories: Overseas Aid

Richard Burden [59567] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for International Development on the review of funding to the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Tobias Ellwood: The Department for International Development's (DFID) ongoing examination of UK aid to the Occupied Palestinian Territories has been carried out in close collaboration with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my right hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), discussed the review with the Secretary of State for International Development, my right hon. Friend the Member for Witham (Ms Patel), on 13 September 2016. On 16 December 2016, the FCO and DFID issued a joint statement confirming the continuation of UK support to the Palestinian Authority.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-11/59567/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/future-uk-support-to-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Gaza: Construction

Richard Burden [59568] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Israeli government on the restriction of building materials entering Gaza.

Tobias Ellwood: We remain deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. I raised this with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister on 12 December and officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv also raised the situation with the Israeli authorities on 5 December. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate General in Jerusalem regularly raise the need to make progress towards a durable solution for Gaza, and press for practical steps to advance reconstruction and economic development with both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-11/59568/>

Israel: UN Resolutions

Rupa Huq [59710] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure that UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016) on the cessation of Israeli settlement and demolition activities in the West Bank is enforced.

Tobias Ellwood: It has long been our position that Israeli settlement activity is illegal and undermines the viability of two states for two peoples, but it is far from the only obstacle to peace. UN Security Council Resolution 2334 addresses settlements while also calling for an end to incitement and terror. The resolution was passed on 23 December and asks the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of its provisions. We will monitor the situation closely.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-12/59710/>

Israel: Palestinians

Tommy Sheppard [60268] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and

Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to send a Minister of his Department to future talks on establishing peace in Israel and Palestine; and if he will make a statement.

Tobias Ellwood: The UK has not been invited to attend any future talks on establishing peace between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. No such talks are planned between any of the parties, so there is no possibility of any country being invited. We would assess UK involvement in any future talks on a case-by-case basis, evaluating the likely impact of such talks on securing a negotiated two state solution.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-17/60268/>

Israel: Palestinians

Tommy Sheppard [60269] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, who represented the Government at the Paris Peace Conference on 15 January 2017; and what representations that representative made on behalf of the Government.

Tobias Ellwood: The UK was represented at the Paris Peace Conference by the Head of the Near East Department. We attended as an observer and, in that capacity, we did not make any formal representations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-17/60269/>

Israel: Palestinians

Tania Mathias [60276] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for what reason the Government did not send a full representative to the Paris Peace Conference of 15 January 2017 on peace between Israel and Palestine.

Tobias Ellwood: The UK welcomes France's efforts to promote peace. But we were always clear that a conference so close to the change of US administration, and without the attendance of the two main parties, was not the best way to make progress. Therefore we decided to attend the conference as an observer, at senior official level.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-17/60276/>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Israel and Palestine: Paris Peace Conference

Lord Steel of Aikwood: To ask Her Majesty's Government why no United Kingdom minister attended the Israel–Palestine peace conference in Paris.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Baroness Anelay of St Johns): My Lords, the UK welcomes France's efforts to promote peace. However, as the role of the US is so critical, we have repeatedly expressed reservations about holding a conference so close to the change of US Administration and without the attendance of the two main parties. We did not consider this the best way to make real progress. As a consequence, we decided to attend the conference as an observer, at senior official level.

Lord Steel of Aikwood: Would the Minister agree that it is important to draw a clear distinction between the support for the state of Israel and the policies of the present Israeli Government? Given that the ministerial absence from this conference followed the crass repudiation of a speech by Senator John Kerry, who had done so much to support the peace efforts, will she confirm that it is still the policy of Her Majesty's Government to recognise that settlements in the West Bank are illegal and, therefore, one of the obstacles to peace?

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Lords, this is about more than illegal settlements, although I have made it clear from this Dispatch Box that this Government view illegal settlements as an obstacle to peace. What I affirm, against the background of what the noble Lord has raised, is that the UK's long-standing position on the Middle East peace process is clear: we continue to support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders, with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair and agreed settlement for refugees.

Lord Turnberg: My Lords, can I ask the Minister to speculate what the attitude of the British Government would be if the French decided to hold a conference with 70 countries to discuss Northern Ireland but did not invite the British or Irish Governments?

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Lords, as I rather waspishly said, I think, in response to the noble Baroness, Lady Tonge, on Tuesday, I try not to speculate; I prefer to deal with what is. Indeed, in those 13 long, long years in opposition, I remember having my leg pulled very gently on the basis that I always wanted to know what works, and what works is having the two main parties involved in negotiations. Without the Israelis and the Palestinians coming to an agreement, there can be no lasting peace.

Lord Robathan: My Lords, I commend the Government for sticking with their support for the two-state solution, which is generally accepted as the best way forward. But I invite my noble friend to speculate: without the two states of Israel and Palestine at the discussion of the two-state solution, what exactly was the conference designed to achieve?

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Lords, I do pay tribute to the way in which France has, under various Administrations, genuinely sought to take forward international discussions on a potential peace settlement—this was one more effort by France to do so. But unless the main protagonists are there to come to an agreement, there can be no resolution. That is the nub of the discussion today.

Lord Collins of Highbury: My Lords, in the light of the Foreign Secretary's off-the-cuff remarks, I am not at all surprised that the Government were reluctant to send him to France. However, the Minister has today and yesterday reiterated the Government's support for the two-state solution. Will she reassure the House that, when the Prime Minister visits President-elect Trump—very soon, as we hear—the issue of support for the two-state solution will be high on the agenda?

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Indeed, as I have set out today, our position on the two-state solution has not changed. I have again listed the component parts of a lasting settlement, which I know all Members of this House want to achieve—that is, a lasting solution to a very difficult position across the Middle East and one that could be respected by all. My right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary has a wonderfully dramatic way of making a point. It certainly gets attention.

Baroness Northover: My Lords, the noble Baroness rightly often emphasises the importance of international law. UNOCHA states that there have been record numbers of demolitions of Palestinian properties in 2016. Will the noble Baroness comment on that?

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Lords, we continuously bring to the attention of the Government of Israel the fact that we believe that moves to extend illegal settlements, but also moves to carry out demolitions, can undermine the future of peace, even if those demolitions may be in green-line Israel. It is a very sensitive matter because green-line Israel is not the same as the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but, for me, it is a matter of respecting human rights.

Lord Lamont of Lerwick: Does my noble friend agree that any moves by Governments to move their embassies to Jerusalem would make the two-state solution even more difficult?

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Lords, we have no plans to move our embassy to Jerusalem. I hope that is in accord with my noble friend's wishes.

Lord Dykes: My Lords, while respecting the Minister's earnest endeavours and being grateful to her for that, does she agree that if the Government legitimately are more critical of the Netanyahu illegal settlement policies, that encourages, and gives support to, the millions of Israeli citizens who disapprove of those settlement policies?

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Lords, in continuing to voice our opposition to the building of illegal settlements, we also point to other aspects of the disputes that need to be resolved. However, this is set against a wider issue because this country firmly upholds international law. My right honourable friends the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister have made it clear that, as global Britain going forward as we leave the European Union, we intend to maintain our position as a firm upholder of international law.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-01-19/debates/084510B4-E276-427A-91EC-5C3EF7656AE3/IsraelAndPalestineParisPeaceConference>

[TOP](#)

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

UN Resolutions: Racial Discrimination

Chris Stephens [60420] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2016 to Question 55858, what progress has been made by his Department on securing amendments to UN General Assembly Resolution 70/140 in order for the Government to support that resolution.

Alok Sharma: As stated in our answer in response to Question 55858, the Government remains firmly committed to the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The UK, along with EU partners, abstained in the vote on the resolution "Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" in November 2016 as we considered the resolution, tabled by the Russian Federation, to be unbalanced and politically motivated. Furthermore, the resolution did not address all contemporary forms of racism in a comprehensive way.

Negotiations on the text for the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly will begin later this year. We will continue to engage on this issue with Russia, who table this resolution annually, and seek to secure further amendments when negotiations formally begin.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-17/60420/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-01/55858/>

[TOP](#)

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>

Notice of amendments

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2016-2017/0128/amend/wales_rm_ccla_0120.1-2.html

[TOP](#)

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 9 days**

Welsh Assembly Inquiry into Lobbying (closing date 31 January 2017)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=236&RPID=1507974161&cp=yes>

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>

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

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

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SCO29438