

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community  
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities  
SCoJeC

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## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### Racially Aggravated Offences

**Baroness Manzoor** [HL6561] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to tackle racially motivated attacks against (1) ethnic minority women, and (2) asylum seekers and refugees.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government deplores all racially motivated attacks. A strong legal framework is in place to tackle hate crime including criminal offences of incitement to racial hatred and racially or religiously aggravated assault and criminal damage. This Government published a new hate crime action plan in July 2016. The Government supports a range of programmes including Tell MAMA, True Vision and Stop Hate UK that focus on encouraging victims including ethnic minority women, asylum seekers and refugees to report hate crime and signposting them to services that provide support for victims. The Government's Building a Stronger Britain Together (BSBT) programme includes a range of organisations working with different communities across England and Wales that support women and girls from ethnic minorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-04-03/HL6561/>

*The hate crime action 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](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)

*Information about the "Building a Stronger Britain Together" programme can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-announces-support-for-groups-fighting-extremism>

### Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

#### Animal Welfare (Use of Closed-circuit Television)

4. **Gail Ross:** To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to ensure that closed-circuit television is being installed in slaughterhouses to assist in animal welfare scrutiny. (S5O-00871)

**The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity (Fergus Ewing):** The Scottish Government has already recommended the installation of CCTV as best practice in the monitoring of the welfare of animals at the time of killing. The Scottish Government does not consider that CCTV by itself prevents welfare failures or secures welfare compliance. We will continue to monitor animal welfare at the time of slaughter through the presence of Food Standards Scotland staff in all approved slaughterhouses, and we will consider whether there is a role for the Scottish Government to help industry to produce a set of good-practice protocols for the review, evaluation and use of CCTV.

**Gail Ross:** Does the cabinet secretary share my concerns about the recent data released under freedom of information law by Food Standards Scotland, which lists 706 breaches of animal welfare regulations at Scotland-certified abattoirs, on certain farms and during transportation between 1 May 2015 and 31 January 2017? What actions is the Scottish Government taking to bring those involved to justice? Are there any plans to strengthen regulation and enforcement, to ensure that such horrible instances of animal cruelty do not happen again?

**Fergus Ewing:** We take all animal welfare issues seriously, and Food Standards Scotland takes proportionate action in relation to breaches, which ranges from verbal advice, enforcement letters and welfare enforcement notices to investigations with a view to providing reports to the procurator fiscal. It is fair to point out that the majority—almost 70 per cent—of the reported breaches did not take place in slaughterhouses but related to on-farm or transportation issues and were discovered by Food Standards Scotland officers when the animals arrived at the place of slaughter. It is also fair to point out that Scotland has high welfare standards at slaughter and high enforcement and regulatory standards. We should recognise that our abattoirs seek to comply with those high standards, and they should receive credit for that. From the meetings that I have had with them, I know that they are as concerned as everyone else with ensuring that the highest standards are observed.

**Peter Chapman:** There is no excuse to mistreat animals at slaughter or any other time. Does the cabinet secretary know how many slaughterhouses in the north-east are equipped with CCTV cameras?

**Fergus Ewing:** An estimated 95 per cent—the overwhelming majority—of animals are slaughtered in plants where CCTV has already been installed voluntarily. I do not have a breakdown of the provision in the north-east, but it is apparent that most abattoirs have CCTV in place.

Although CCTV films what happens, it is not CCTV itself but the good practice that is employed by the managers, the workforce, the Food Standards Scotland officers and veterinary practitioners, who all play a collective role as a team, that ensures that we in Scotland continue to observe the highest animal welfare standards.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10890&i=99657#ScotParlOR>

*The Food Standards Scotland FoI release referred to in the second question above, which includes a large number of cases of mis- or ineffective stunning, can be read at <https://theferret.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/FOI-Request-Animal-Welfare-Reports-from-1-May-2015.pdf>*

*A statement issued by the FSS Director of Operations can be read at <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/news/fss-director-operations-ian-mcwatt-statement-animal-welfare-breaches>*

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# Holocaust

## House of Lords Written Answer

### World War II: Genocide

**Lord Robathan** [HL6479] To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the report from the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission, published in January 2015, which identified three prospective sites for the intended Holocaust Memorial, for what reasons, and by what means, was a different site in Victoria Tower Gardens chosen.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Holocaust Commission's report was clear that the three potential sites it identified were "not the only possible sites". As the cross-party body advising Government on taking forward the recommendations of the Holocaust Commission, the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation was tasked with finding the most appropriate location for a national memorial to the Holocaust and an accompanying education centre. The Government agrees with the Foundation's recommendation that Victoria Tower Gardens, next to Parliament, is considered the most appropriate of the almost 50 sites examined, including those identified by the Commission in Lambeth and at Millbank. The option of locating at Potters Field referred to in the Holocaust Commission report no longer exists.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-30/HL6479/>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398645/Holocaust Commission Report Britains promise to remember.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398645/Holocaust_Commission_Report_Britains_promise_to_remember.pdf)

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# Israel

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel and Palestinians: Suicide

**Baroness Tonge** [HL6544] To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of suicides in (1) Gaza, (2) the West Bank, and (3) Israel, in the year ending 31 December 2016.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** We have not made any estimate of the number of suicides in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Israel for 2016.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-04-03/HL6544/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge** [HL6545] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations are they making to the government of Israel following the release of a video by B'Tselem on 19 March, allegedly showing Israeli forces using a young Palestinian child as a human shield.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** On 27 March, our Embassy in Tel Aviv asked the Israeli authorities for clarification about the incident.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-04-03/HL6545/>

### Mazen Faqha

**Baroness Tonge** [HL6546] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the killing of a senior Hamas member, Mazen Faqha, in Gaza; and what assessment they have made of the repercussions of that killing.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has received reports of the killing. There remains an urgent need for all the parties to reach an agreement that addresses the underlying causes of the conflict in Gaza and to take the necessary steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. Any agreement should ensure that Hamas and other militant groups permanently end rocket and other attacks against Israel; the Palestinian Authority resumes control of Gaza and restores effective governance; and that Israel lifts its restrictions to ease the suffering of ordinary Palestinians.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-04-03/HL6546/>

### Israeli Settlements

**Baroness Tonge** [HL6548] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their response to the decision by the government of Israel to approve the construction of a new settlement in the occupied West Bank.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 31 March strongly condemning the Israeli Government's decision to found a new settlement deep in the West Bank. The construction of this settlement is contrary to international law and seriously undermines the prospects of two states for two peoples. Our Ambassador to Tel Aviv also raised the UK's grave concerns with the Israeli authorities on 31 March.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-04-03/HL6548/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-plans-for-a-new-settlement-in-the-west-bank>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office Fol release

### Funeral of Shimon Peres

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609690/FOI\\_0930-16\\_letter.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609690/FOI_0930-16_letter.pdf)

and

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/609691/FOI\\_0930-16\\_attachment.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609691/FOI_0930-16_attachment.pdf)

## United Nations

### UN envoy urges Palestinian unity to resolve electricity crisis in Gaza

The United Nations envoy for the Middle East peace process today called on authorities in Gaza to work together with the international community to resolve a new energy crisis after the area's only power station shut down, saying the consequences of the crisis "should not be underestimated."

"All in Gaza must share the burden by [paying their bills](#). It is the poorest Palestinians in Gaza who pay the price for exceptions and privileges that others enjoy," said Nikolay Mladenov, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

He urged the "defacto authorities" in Gaza to ensure that collection rates are improved and that revenue collected in Gaza is returned to the "legitimate Palestinian authorities" in order to keep fuel and electricity supply flowing. ...

He also called on Israeli authorities to facilitate the entry of materials for repairs and maintenance of the power grid and plant, and noted the need to also upgrade Egyptian power lines.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56582#.WPj161N96nY>

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## Other Relevant Information

### Church of Scotland

**Embracing Peace and Working for Justice: A Joint Report of the World Mission Council and Church and Society Council on the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration**

pages 9/1-9/21 of the Church of Scotland "Blue Book"

[http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/39533/Blue\\_Book\\_2017.pdf](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/39533/Blue_Book_2017.pdf)

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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>

**Lobbying (Transparency) Bill**

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

**Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)**

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

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

**Independent review of hate crime legislation** [in Scotland] (closing date 12 May 2017)

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/hate-crime/2f6c8d5f/>

**Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law** (closing date 18 July 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>

**Workplace Diversity (Wales)** (closing date not stated)

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

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