

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 Debate

Queen's Speech

col 42 **Jeremy Corbyn:** ... Earlier this year, we also lost the Father of the House, Sir Gerald Kaufman, who had served his constituents for nearly 47 years, and previously worked for Harold Wilson in Downing Street. Gerald was an iconic and irascible figure in the Labour party. He came from a proud Jewish background and campaigned to bring peace to the middle east throughout his life. It was my pleasure to travel with him in that quest to many countries in the region, and I loved the very many lengthy conversations I had with him—in fact, nobody ever had a short conversation with Sir Gerald. ...

col 51 **The Prime Minister:** ... When I visited Finsbury Park on Monday, I was struck by the interfaith way in which the various faith communities were coming together. I saw representatives of the Muslim faith, the Jewish community and the Christian community all coming together with one ambition: to drive extremism and hatred out of our society.

...

col 64 **Ian Blackford:** ... The whole country is united in grief at the outrage of the attacks in Manchester, at London Bridge and, only this week, at the Finsbury Park mosque. In this place, we must all be united in showing leadership to all our citizens. Despite the despicable efforts of a small minority of misguided individuals, our communities and our society will not be divided. We stand firm against terrorists who attack Muslims, just as we stand against those who wrongly claim to act in the name of Islam. ...

col 104 **Mrs Main:** ... I would also like us to look at extremism in universities and people being fearful for their personal safety because of their creed, colour, faith or gender. I am concerned about the rise of BDS— Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions—at universities. I went to a synagogue hustings; I am sure many colleagues did. I am appalled at the rise of anti-Semitism that is going on at our universities. I wish to highlight that as much as the anti-Muslim sentiment that has been expressed. I am pleased that the Charity Commission is looking into the matter. We should look at what is happening at some of our universities to ensure that no student feels that they cannot take up an opportunity at any campus in the UK because they feel they are unwelcome because of their faith. I said to the synagogues in my constituency that I thought the issue was a priority and I hope that we include that in the things we look at. ...

col 139 **Catherine McKinnell:** ... On the evening of the most recent incident, at Finsbury Park, alongside my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne Central (Chi Onwurah), I had the privilege of joining a multi-faith community iftar hosted by

Newcastle's United Hebrew Congregation synagogue as part of the Great Get Together initiative in memory of our dearly loved and missed colleague Jo Cox. For me, that event—and all the moving Great Get Together events held across the country last weekend—could not have provided a clearer demonstration of Britain's determination that hate and intolerance will not divide us. ...

As I was leaving the Great Get Together event in Newcastle, I stood at the gate with a local police officer, and together we looked back at the scene. Inside the hall, people of many faiths and none were enjoying a buffet, some breaking fast together, while outside a number of Muslims prayed together on the grass just by the entrance to the synagogue. It was a very powerful scene. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-06-21/debates/16CAF0D8-37D0-41D6-AE61-264FD03429CB/DebateOnTheAddress>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

John Mann (7) IHRA Definition – That this House welcomes the adoption of a formal definition of anti-Semitism by the Government in response to the work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA); further welcomes the agreed cross-party support for the definition, including from the Leader of the Opposition and hon. members of all political parties represented in the House in the previous Parliament; congratulates the IHRA and its 31 member countries for adopting the definition; notes that the definition has been officially adopted by the Government, the Labour Party, the UK Police College, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Union of Students, Universities UK, the London Assembly, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and a number of local councils; welcomes the Government's update report on anti-Semitism, including progress made in ensuring wider adoption of the definition; and calls on all other political parties, universities, councils and other public bodies and organisations to continue to adopt the definition and use it to better understand and act against anti-Jewish hatred.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/7>

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Israel

House of Commons Debate

Queen's Speech

col 114 Joan Ryan: ... the Gracious Speech states: "My Government will work to find sustainable political solutions to conflicts across the Middle East."

It is no secret in the House that I have a long-standing commitment to a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine. I remind the Government, and particularly the Department for International Development, of the value of building peace at the grassroots by supporting co-existence projects that bring Israelis and Palestinians together—projects that build a constituency for peace and of which there are many good examples. There is undoubtedly an international consensus in support of a renewed focus on the importance of the civil society dimension to advancing a two-state solution.

...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-06-21/debates/16CAF0D8-37D0-41D6-AE61-264FD03429CB/DebateOnTheAddress#contribution-14FF51DB-2117-411E-B429-6AFD38164FE4>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Chris Stephens (19) Amnesty International Campaign: 50th anniversary of Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Golan Heights, and Gaza – That this House endorses Amnesty International's newly launched global campaign calling on governments around the world to ban imports from illegal Israeli settlements; notes that this campaign coincides with 50th anniversary of Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights and Gaza; expresses grave concern at the UK's complicity in a multi-million pound enterprise that fuels mass human rights violations against Palestinians and the legal implications this has under international law; calls on the Government to preclude all trade, imports and investment in Israel's illegal settlement enterprise by adopting a total ban on trade and imports that are proven to either originate or are tied to Israel's illegal settlements in territories under Israel's belligerent military occupation; further calls on the Government to ensure that the UK acts in compliance with its obligations under international laws and treaties which require the Government, along with all third parties, to ensure respect for international law and not recognise an illegal situation arising from breaches, such as Israel's illegal settlement enterprise, and refrain from any activity that would render aid or assistance to such grave and severe breaches of peremptory norms of international law; and asks the Government to demand that Israel dismantle the settlements and fully withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/19>

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Other Relevant Information

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

Strong surge of nationalistic populism, xenophobic hate speech were key challenges in Europe in 2016

A strong surge of nationalistic populism, continued efforts to integrate migrants, and the response of European states to the continued Islamist terror attacks that struck Europe in 2016 were the main developments identified by the Council of Europe's anti-racism commission (ECRI) in its annual report published today.

The surge of nationalistic populism was a distinctive feature of 2016. Fears and uncertainties were instrumentalised by nationalistic and xenophobic movements; racist insults and xenophobic hate speech have reached unprecedented levels and entered in many cases the political mainstream. ...

The Chairperson of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Christian Åhlund, noted the rise of hate speech in political and media discourse: *"It is not enough to criminalize hate speech and monitor it; we need to actively counteract it. Internal codes of ethics for media and parliamentarians should foresee sanctions for its use. Political, religious, cultural elites, artists and sports celebrities must actively engage in counter-speech."* ...

Islamophobia, antisemitism, and homo-and transphobia have been persisting trends, ECRI notes. Women wearing visible religious symbols (headscarves) have been particularly vulnerable. ...

National legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination has not been yet fully implemented by many states. National specialised bodies often lack resources, which is an additional barrier to combatting racism more effectively. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Library/PressReleases/AR-2017-250-EN.asp>

Annual Report on ECRI's Activities: covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202016.pdf

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Consultations ** new or updated today

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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