

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 Commons Statement and Q&A

Terror Attacks

col 196 **The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Amber Rudd):** ... we are entering a new phase of global terrorism, and many of the challenges that we face are unprecedented. We now believe we are experiencing a new trend in the threat we face. Between June 2013 and the Westminster bridge attack in March this year, the security services foiled 13 plots linked to or inspired by Islamist extremists, but just since then, we have seen five plots prevented as well as three such Islamist extremist plots succeed and of course the appalling attack at Finsbury Park earlier this week.

We must therefore do more. We must do more to defeat ideologies of hatred by turning people's minds away from violence and towards pluralistic British values. We must make sure that these ideologies are not able to flourish in the first place. We must do more to force tech companies to take down terror-related content from their platforms. We must also do more to identify, challenge and stamp out the extremism that lurks in our communities. That is why we will set up a commission for countering extremism. ...

col 197 **Diane Abbot (Labour):** ... I would like to say a word about the imam at the Finsbury Park mosque. He put himself at risk to protect and defend the alleged assailant, who had driven over so many people outside the mosque. I believe that this imam exemplifies the best of the values of Islam, such as peace and justice, as well as the best of British values.

I would also like to say a word about the community around the Finsbury Park mosque. I was there this week and I met people of all faiths—Christian leaders, Jewish leaders, including my constituents Rabbi Gluck and Rabbi Pinter, and of course Muslim leaders—working together to heal the community and take the community forward. I believe that the way in which multi-faith and inter-community co-operation is working in practice in that area of London shows us the way forward in the long run in contesting the ideology of fear, violence and terror. ...

col 200 **Joanna Cherry (SNP):** ... The Finsbury Park attack reminds us that terrorism is a threat to all communities in the United Kingdom and it is therefore important that measures to counter extremism never segregate or stigmatise communities. ...

col 202 **Margaret Hodge (Labour):** ... the Home Secretary said in her statement that those who perpetrate terrorism seek to spread fear, intolerance and hate, and I have

concerns that, in the aftermath of the attacks, that is precisely what could happen in my constituency. The Muslim community in particular are feeling very vulnerable and isolated, and the police have not been able to give them the reassurance that they want. Will she take steps to ensure that police resources are made available so that there is a police presence there, the allegations of race hate crime, which are already growing, are dealt with and other measures that will provide security for all communities in my constituency, and therefore promote tolerance, are put in place rapidly and not left to fester? ...

Amber Rudd: ... we must ensure that we do not see an increase in Islamophobia. We must be a country that can deal fairly with all communities. ...

col 205 Robert Jenrick (Conservative): At the weekend, I drove my family back to London from my constituency. My wife and daughters are Jewish. We were met by a protest where there were anti-Semitic banners and chants and where people were waving Hezbollah flags—for those unfamiliar with the flag, I should add that it has a big machine gun on it. To make a mockery of the law, somebody had put a post-it note on one of the flags saying, “You cannot arrest me because I support the political wing of Hezbollah, not the military wing—this time.” If enough really is enough, will the Home Secretary take action against such rallies, ban them, so that they can never happen on the streets of London again, and ensure that the whole of Hezbollah is a proscribed organisation?

Amber Rudd: ... It is always distressing to see that sort of march going on, and the provocation that he describes must have been very upsetting for him and his family. I will certainly consider what he has suggested and come back to discuss it with him and, if needed, the House. ...

col 211 Seema Malhotra (Labour/Co-op): ... The attacks were indiscriminate. People of all faiths were killed and injured. People of all faiths went to help, whether that was on the scene or in our hospitals and throughout the other emergency services. We know that there is a ripple effect of hate crime that carries on afterwards, and that reaches much wider and affects other communities. Muslims in my constituency and throughout the country have told me about how they feel more vulnerable and less secure. Does the Home Secretary agree that it is important for MPs to reiterate the message that Islam is a religion of peace? Can she reassure the House that, in the final days of Ramadan and Eid, if more support is needed for Muslim communities, she will ensure that it is provided?

Amber Rudd: ... we already have a £2.4 million fund for places of worship, to which a number of mosques have applied to make sure that they are safe. I can announce that next week I will open up an additional £1 million for places of worship. That addresses the concern from some people, including the shadow Foreign Secretary, that in order for a place of worship to apply for the funds there had to have already have been a hate crime in the area. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-06-22/debates/D00D2537-BD22-4E4D-8E65-FE170E02848A/TerrorAttacks>

House of Commons Library

Counter-extremism policy: an overview

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7238/CBP-7238.pdf>

Welsh Government Written Statement

Welsh Government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister of Wales: As part of the Welsh Government's ongoing commitment to tackle antisemitism, I can confirm that we have now adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

The IHRA definition is as follows:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

I want to make it absolutely clear that antisemitism in any form will not be tolerated.

The IHRA definition will help all organisations and bodies in Wales to understand and recognise contemporary antisemitism. This will help to ensure that fewer perpetrators get away with being antisemitic. The four police forces in Wales are already using the definition.

To further embed the use of the definition within the Welsh Government, I have asked my officials to:

- arrange training about antisemitism, initially for Welsh Government officials and potentially then for external stakeholders;
- look to use Hate Crime Awareness Week and all year round communications as a platform to ensure key messages about antisemitism reach our communities across Wales;
- work with Victim Support Cymru to ensure that their recording system will be able to flag antisemitic hate crimes and incidents.

The Welsh Government is committed to encouraging victims of antisemitism to report it. We will work with our partners to protect and support victims of antisemitic abuse and violence and hold perpetrators to account.

The Welsh Government is determined to ensure that Wales continues to be a friendly and tolerant place to live, study and work; a country where antisemitism has no place.

<http://www.assembly.wales/ministerial%20statements%20documents/welsh%20government%20has%20adopted%20the%20international%20holocaust%20remembrance%20alliance%20e2%80%99s%20working%20definition%20of%20antisemitism/170626%20-%20fm%20-%20written%20statement%20-%20antisemitism%20-%20english.docx>

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Israel

House of Lords Debate

Queen's Speech

col 36 Lord Purvis of Tweed (LibDem): ... As we abstained from being involved in the outgoing French President's initiative for discussing the Palestinian question, what active steps are the Government taking in challenging Israel on its recent moves in the Occupied Territories? The committee's report said: "The balance of power in the delivery of peace" — the two-state solution — "lies with Israel ... The Government should give serious consideration to now recognising Palestine as a state, as the best way to show its determined attachment to the two-state solution". ...

col 102 Lord Polak (Conservative): ... Two nights ago, the Prime Minister received a

phone call from Prime Minister Netanyahu, following the awful attack at the mosque in Finsbury Park. After every atrocity, Prime Minister Netanyahu has rung and written to offer support, but the read-out from the latest call was that Israel and the UK would continue working together to counter terrorism and extremism in all its guises. It was agreed that the relationship between the UK and Israel would continue to go from strength to strength. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the UK's commitment to a two-state solution, enabling an Israel free from terrorism and a viable Palestinian state. UK-Israel relations are in a good place. The two-way trade in 2016 was nearly £6 billion, and I pay tribute to His Excellency David Quarrey, the British ambassador in Israel, and His Excellency Mark Regev, the Israeli ambassador here, for their professionalism and dedication.

But something else is going on in the region. In part as a result of Iran's regional ambitions, as it increases its supply of weapons to a proxy Hezbollah, and the threat of ISIS, it is clear that there is an alignment of interests between Israel and her neighbours in the Gulf, opening unprecedented lines of communication. This will and already has led to a regional push towards progress in the peace process, which is all good news. However, Iran continues to fund terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, which is bad news. Iran played a key part in the formation of Hezbollah in 1982, and has openly provided financial assistance, weapons, ammunition and military training to the group for more than three decades. ... It is estimated that Iran has supplied Hezbollah with up to 150,000 rockets and more advanced weapons which are situated worryingly close to Israel's northern border in Lebanon. Hezbollah does not recognise the State of Israel but calls for its destruction. Its record of international terrorism I do not have the time to list—and yes, Hezbollah, together with Hamas, have been described by the Leader of the Opposition as his "friends".

On Monday, I wrote to the Home Secretary after the al-Quds march that took place last Sunday, which I raised in the House earlier. Hezbollah flags were repeatedly displayed in direct contravention of Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Separating Hezbollah into military and political wings is untenable and an artificial exercise; its own senior leaders have long insisted that its military and non-military activities are indivisible. The United States, Canada, the Netherlands, the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council have all designated the entirety of Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation, and I urge the Minister to talk to his friends and the Home Secretary. In the wake of several deadly attacks against civilians in this country, it is time that the UK demonstrates its commitment to combating extremism and joining our important allies in proscribing the terror group in its entirety.

col 122 Lord Hylton (Cross Bench): ... Israel, Palestine and their Arab neighbours are now out of the media spotlight, but there is at the moment no peace process or immediate prospect of one. What can be done, however, is to improve the status quo. In Gaza, that would mean a 24-hour supply of electricity, a wider fishing limit and freer movement for people and goods. Anything that can be done to improve the local economy of east Jerusalem and the West Bank will help to reduce bitterness and violence; the Bedouin should be treated as full citizens, whether they live inside Israel or in the occupied territories. ...

col 142 The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): ... [Lord Polak] rightly raised concerns around Hezbollah and other groups whose political and military wings are not limited in what they do. I am sure he will appreciate that the Government consistently review the situation with all such groups. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-06-22/debates/D1378C65-58D0-4EF6-A602-9C4C95AB6F6E/Queen%E2%80%99SSpeech>

and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-06-22/debates/76150E97-C690-468F-B9BD-94C9A969AB79/Queen%E2%80%99SSpeech>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-06297 Ivan McKee: 10th Anniversary of Israel Tightening its Blockade on Gaza – That the Parliament acknowledges that June 2017 marks the 10th anniversary of Israel tightening its blockade on Gaza; believes that this action has significantly damaged the economy of the region, resulting in over 40% unemployment, roughly 80% of people being dependent on some form of humanitarian aid and a very serious shortage of medical supplies; understands that there have been numerous military offensives that have caused huge loss of life and internal displacement and significant damage to the infrastructure, which is very difficult to rebuild due to the blockade's strict restrictions on building materials, and encourages all parties involved to work toward a peaceful solution and to bear in mind that the habitability of Gaza, and therefore the lives of its people, are considered to be at immediate risk.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-06297>

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Other Relevant Information

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Addressing anti-Semitism, discrimination and intolerance through gender-sensitive coalition building focus of ODIHR event in Barcelona

Efforts to address anti-Semitism, discrimination and intolerance through coalition building that addresses gender and interlinking forms of discrimination was the focus of an event organized by the OSCE ...

Fifty civil society activists, experts and practitioners from 26 OSCE countries shared best practices and challenges in building civil society coalitions that emphasise gender equality, as well as other forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/325011>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

Scottish Parliament

**** Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105269.aspx>

Bill as introduced

[http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20\(Repeal\)%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill19S052017.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20(Repeal)%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill19S052017.pdf)

Policy Memorandum

[http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20\(Repeal\)%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill19PMS052017.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20(Repeal)%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill19PMS052017.pdf)

Explanatory Notes

[http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20\(Repeal\)%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill19ENS052017.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20(Repeal)%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill19ENS052017.pdf)

Financial Memorandum

[http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20\(Repeal\)%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBill19FMS052017.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20(Repeal)%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill19FMS052017.pdf)

Statements on Legislative Competence

[http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20\(Repeal\)%20\(Scotland\)%20Bill/SPBILL19LCS052017.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/Offensive%20Behaviour%20at%20Football%20and%20Threatening%20Communications%20(Repeal)%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBILL19LCS052017.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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