

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 Oral Answer

Extremism

... **Theresa Villiers (Conservative)**: Will the Minister set out what the Government are doing to tackle anti-Semitism on campus, where the activities of hard-line groups often create an intolerant and intimidatory atmosphere for Jewish students?

Sarah Newton: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right to raise the issue of anti-Semitism. There is no room at all in our society for hatred of anyone based on their faith, race or ideology. The Government have put a safeguarding responsibility on universities and schools to make sure that they protect young people from being exposed to vile hatred and radicalisation.

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-07-03/debates/1E1D5BB9-5A7F-499C-807F-08C292734930/Extremism#contribution-8E82D5FB-7C84-4198-915E-79A1AA000EA6>

House of Commons Written Answers

Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme

Rachael Maskell (Labour) [917] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will set out those places of worship which will be able to access grants through the places of worship: security funding scheme.

Sarah Newton: The second round of the current places of worship funding scheme closed on 29 May 2017. Places of worship able to access grant funding under the current scheme include temples, mosques, gurdwaras and churches. The scheme excludes the Jewish community who are funded under a separate scheme.

On the 22 June the Home Secretary announced that an additional £1m will be made available for the protection of vulnerable faith institutions. Details of how to apply for this additional funding are available on www.gov.uk

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-23/917/>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-06-22/debates/D00D2537-BD22-4E4D-8E65-FE170E02848A/TerrorAttacks#contribution-0C3A539A-9FB7-4EEC-AD30-26DCF76A37FE>

Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme

Rachael Maskell (Labour) [918] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the maximum grant will be for individual places of worship under the places of worship: security funding scheme.

Sarah Newton: There is no upper limit on individual grants within the existing places of worship funding scheme.

On the 22 June the Home Secretary announced an additional £1 million worth of funding for vulnerable faith institutions. Details of how to apply for this additional funding are available on www.gov.uk but there will be no upper limit on individual grants.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-23/918/>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-06-22/debates/D00D2537-BD22-4E4D-8E65-FE170E02848A/TerrorAttacks#contribution-0C3A539A-9FB7-4EEC-AD30-26DCF76A37FE>

House of Lords Written Answers

Government Guidance

Baroness Afshar (Crossbench) [HL46] Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have issued to government departments, local authorities and other public bodies and agencies to avoid referring to British citizens by their creed, race or colour other than in contexts in which it is strictly necessary to do so.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government has issued no such guidance and has no plans to do so.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL46/>

Sermons in mosques

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP) [HL18] Her Majesty's Government whether it is part of their Islamist anti-terrorist strategy to encourage all sermons in mosques to be delivered in English.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It is not part of our counter-terrorism or counter-extremism strategies to encourage all sermons in Mosques to be delivered in English. This is a matter for Mosques not Government.

Communicating in English helps all places of worship to be open and accessible.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL18/>

Hate speech

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP) [HL47] Her Majesty's Government whether they differentiate between (1) those who criticise a religion, and (2) those who insult its adherents, in their guidance, policies and other literature on hate speech; and if so, how.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: A crime that is motivated by hostility on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity can be classed as a hate crime. Our hate crime laws recognise everyone's right to believe and practice their chosen religion, free from targeted abuse. This same right extends to those who have no religion and those targeted for intra-religious hostility.

The guidance to the application of our laws is covered in the Hate Crime Operational Guidance (attached) issued by the College of Policing in 2014 (http://report-it.org.uk/files/hate_crime_operational_guidance.pdf) which guides the police on the application of our laws.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has issued advice to prosecutors which is available at http://www.cps.gov.uk/legal/p_to_r/racist_and_religious_crime
[Hate Crime guidance](#)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL47/>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Africa: Refugees

Mark Hendrick (Labour) [83] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how much assistance his Department (a) has and (b) plans to provide to charities and other non-governmental organisations assisting refugees from African countries residing in Israel following the implementation of the so-called deposit law amendment to the Prevention of Infiltration (Offences and Jurisdiction) Law, 5714-1954 on 1 May 2017.

Alistair Burt: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not provided any assistance in the past or plans to provide any assistance in the future to charities and other non-governmental organisations assisting refugees from African countries residing in Israel.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-21/83/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Gaza

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL40] Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel and to the Palestinian Authority (PA) regarding the reduction of the PA's monthly payments to Israel for the supply of electricity to Gaza

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Ambassador to Tel Aviv and our Consul-General to Jerusalem have raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities and the Palestinian Authority (PA) respectively over this issue. The Minister for the Middle East raised the situation in Gaza with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister and the Israeli Ambassador to London on 22 and 23 June respectively.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL40/>

Gaza

Baroness Tonge (non-affiliated) [HL41] Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Egypt regarding the closure, since January 2015, of the Rafah Border Crossing

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are concerned about the closure of the Rafah Crossing and the impact this has on urgent medical and other priority cases in Gaza. We encourage Egypt to show maximum flexibility on opening the crossing. We have frequent discussions with the Government of Israel about the need to ease restrictions on Gaza. Easing restrictions would alleviate the suffering of ordinary Palestinians, advance construction and allow the Gazan economy to grow. A durable agreement is necessary to safeguard Egypt and Israel's security;

this would include Hamas and other militant groups permanently ending rocket fire and other attacks.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL41/>

Khan al Akhmar

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL42] Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to make representations to the government of Israel regarding demands to carry out the army demolition order issued against the school at Khan al Akhmar

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have raised strong concerns about demolitions in Khan al Ahmar with the Israeli authorities, most recently on 7 April. We understand that the Israeli High Court will be holding a hearing on this proposed demolition on 25 September alongside a petition calling for the demolition of the 46 other structures in the Bedouin community.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL42/>

Gaza

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL43] Her Majesty's Government what discussions they are having with the government of Israel regarding ending the blockade of Gaza

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate-General in Jerusalem frequently urge the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to take steps to improve conditions in Gaza. We welcome the steps that Israel has taken to ease some restrictions. However, we want to see Israel go much further, and we are continuing to call on Israel to do so to help the Gazan economy to grow. The Minister for the Middle East discussed the situation in Gaza with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister and the Israeli Ambassador to London on 22 and 23 June respectively.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL43/>

Palestinians: building permits

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL49] Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the lack of building permits provided to, and building restrictions placed on, Palestinians in Areas B and C of the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Palestinian Authority, not the Government of Israel, is responsible for planning in Area B, we have not raised this issue with Israeli authorities regarding this Area. However, we continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL49/>

UK Parliament House of Commons Library

Briefing: Israel and Palestinian Talks

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2017-0131/CDP-2017-0131.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-06576 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative): Hamas-Fatah Rivalry Killing Palestinians – That the Parliament notes with concern reports that the Hamas-Fatah feud has led to the death of three Palestinian babies; believes that Gaza is controlled by Hamas while Fatah retain control of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank; understands that the report from The Times of London suggests that the three babies suffered from heart conditions and died after the Palestinian Authority reportedly refused to pay for them to be treated in Israel; believes that Israeli and Palestinian officials have said that the Palestinian Authority has stopped processing requests for urgent medical care, which it understands has left more than 1,600 patients on waiting lists, and that, according to a health spokesman for the health ministry in Gaza, six adults have also reportedly died waiting for permits, and believes that, sadly, this can and should be seen as a direct result of the power struggle between Hamas and Fatah, which has also reportedly seen the Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, halt shipments of medicine and baby formula to hospitals in Gaza.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-06576>

United Nations

UN, partners seek \$25 million to stabilize Gaza's worsening humanitarian conditions

United Nations relief agencies and their partners in the occupied Palestinian territory are calling on the international community to provide \$25 million in new funding to stabilize the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, including the effects of deep power cuts and lack of fuel for generators for hospitals.

“The situation in Gaza has become increasingly precarious over recent months. No one is untouched by the energy crisis,” [said](#) Robert Piper, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, in a press release.

“The coping capacities of Gaza's families to deal with these types of shocks are seriously depleted as the cumulative impact of 10 years of isolation, division and insecurity take their toll,” he added.

In a document presented today to diplomats of donor countries in Jerusalem, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme and other entities identified priority, life-saving interventions in the health, water, sanitation and hygiene, and food security sectors. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=57111#.WVuR2NOGM5s>

Gaza Crisis: Urgent Funding Appeal

https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/gaza_urgent_humanitarian_funding_v5_3july2017_10am_1.pdf

Nobel Peace Laureate Stresses Need for Greater Civil Society Involvement in Push to End Occupation of Palestinian Lands, in Keynote Address to June Forum

... “Power never concedes without pressure,” Jody Williams, Chair of the Nobel Women’s Initiative, said in her keynote address on the role of civil society. As the Forum discussed the costs and consequences of the occupation born of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, she added: “If Governments do not take action, we will help them.” Erecting a “wall of shame” would require Governments to “come running” in order to salvage their

reputations, she said. ...

How could a State say diplomacy must be given a chance even as it continued to steal land and vital resources, such as water, from the Palestinian people? ...

"It is not that anyone wishes ill on the Israeli people," she said, asking whether they would really feel inclined to change their stance and, more importantly, their Government's policies, if they did not feel some sort of discomfort. Why would they do anything to change the situation when they were so comfortable? There was need to exert pressure on Israel and Israelis to end the occupation, she said, declaring: "Stigmatization, making people pariahs, brings about change." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/gapal1390.doc.htm>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Hezbollah: Weapons

Paul Masterton (Conservative) [557] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent reports he has received on the size of Hezbollah's weapons arsenal.

Alistair Burt: We are aware of reports that Hizballah continues to amass an arsenal of weapons in direct contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 1559. Hizballah's arsenal has been increasing since the 2006 war with Israel and we remain concerned about Hizballah's involvement in the Syria conflict where they have provided essential support to the Syrian Armed forces.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-22/557/>

Hezbollah

Philip Hollobone (Conservative) [1658] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will proscribe the political wing of Hezbollah.

Ben Wallace: I refer my Hon. Friend to the answer given to the Hon. Member for East Renfrewshire on 28 June 2017, UIN 556.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-28/1658/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-22/556/>

Ben Wallace: *We do not routinely comment on whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription. A decision to proscribe an organisation must be based on a belief that it is concerned in terrorism as defined in the Terrorism Act 2000.*

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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>

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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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