

# 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 Written Answer

#### Faith Schools

**Jo Stevens (Labour)** [125493] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has any plans to revise the inclusivity and community and engagement requirements for new faith schools.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** All schools must promote integration, and social cohesion whatever their character and ethos. The Department's consultation document, 'Schools that work for everyone', set out proposals to replace the 50% cap on faith admissions in faith free schools with new safeguards to support inclusivity and integration. These are aimed at building on existing inclusivity requirements and those to promote fundamental British values to help ensure children and young people are prepared for life in modern Britain. The Department plans to respond to the proposals in 'Schools that work for everyone' in due course.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-30/125493/>

The consultation referred to above can be read at

[https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone/supporting\\_documents/SCHOOLS%20THAT%20WORK%20FOR%20EVERYONE%20%20FINAL.PDF](https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone/supporting_documents/SCHOOLS%20THAT%20WORK%20FOR%20EVERYONE%20%20FINAL.PDF)

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### Ethnic Groups: Equality

**Lord Ouseley (Crossbench)** [HL4945] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action plans are in place to address the inequality deficiencies identified in the Race Disparity Audit; and what arrangements are in place to review and monitor developments and progress.

**Lord Young of Cookham:** The Government has made a commitment to explain or change key ethnic disparities highlighted by the Race Disparity Audit in the *Ethnicity facts and figures* website.

The Government has launched an initial programme of work to tackle some of the disparities highlighted, including targeted action in employment areas, a review of

school exclusions and a commitment to take forward a number of recommendations in the recent Lammy Review of the criminal justice system. Detailed analytical work and engagement with external partners is underway across Departments to bring forward further data driven policies to tackle disparities highlighted by the Audit and will be announced in due course. The Race Disparity Unit in the Cabinet Office is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the progress of the Government's response to the Audit overseen by the Cabinet Office and the Race Disparity Inter-Ministerial Group.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-22/HL4945/>

*The findings of the Race Disparity Audit, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/650723/RDAweb.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/650723/RDAweb.pdf)

*The Ethnicity facts and figures website, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/>

*The Lammy Review, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf)

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Palestinians: Radio**

*The following nine questions all received the same answer*

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [125927] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and her Department, what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the broadcast on official PA radio on 1 January 2018 of a song encouraging martyrdom.

#### **Palestinians: Television**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [125928] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and her Department, what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the broadcast on official PA TV on 15 December 2017 of a poem stating that Jews defile Jerusalem.

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [125929] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and her Department, what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the broadcast on official PA TV on 11 December 2017 of an interview where Jews were described as the world's stench.

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [125930] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and her Department, what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the broadcast on official PA TV on both 11 and 17 December 2017 of a music video featuring two suicide bombers.

#### **Palestinians: Newspaper Press**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [125931] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and her Department, what discussions her Department has

had with the PA on the description in the official PA daily newspaper on 23 January 2018 of the Munich Olympic terrorist attack as a quality operation.

#### **Palestinians: Television**

**Ian Austin (Labour)** [125951] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), whether her Department has had discussions with the PA on reports of a broadcast on a children's television programme on 20 January 2018 encouraging children to follow the example of terrorists.

**Ian Austin (Labour)** [125953] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), whether her Department has had discussions with the PA on reports of a broadcast on a children's television programme of a poem inciting violence against Israelis on 6 January 2017.

#### **Palestinians: Parades**

**Ian Austin (Labour)** [125952] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on reports that people wore mock suicide belts and carried detonators at a parade in Ramallah on 8 January 2017.

#### **Palestinians: Schools**

**Ian Austin (Labour)** [125954] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), whether her Department has had discussions with the PA on the naming of a school after Salah Khalaf.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK Government deplores any act of incitement to violence; the Secretary of State and I raised the issue of incitement during our respective bilateral meetings with senior Palestinian counterparts in January 2018. Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority (PA) includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-31/125927/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-31/125928/>

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<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-31/125929/>

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<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-31/125930/>

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<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-31/125954/>

#### USA: UNRWA

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [125959] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the reduction in US funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency on assistance for (a) Palestinian refugees in Syria, (b) people living in the West Bank and (c) people living in Gaza.

**Alistair Burt:** I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I provided on 30 January 2018 to Question number 125084.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-31/125959/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-25/125084/>

**Alistair Burt:** *The UK has discussed the situation in detail with the United States, all other main donors, and host Governments in the context of the recent United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Advisory Commission. The UK has highlighted our concern about the impact on the activities of UNRWA that any unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements might have. My officials are working closely with UNRWA, the United States, and other European Union partners to understand the risks to UNRWA's programmes and to ensure the continuity of services for Palestinian refugees. The UK is concerned about the impact on UNRWA's activities whenever unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements occur and, in particular, how this may disproportionately affect the most vulnerable refugees. We are liaising with UNRWA on their plans for service continuity. UNRWA has publically stated their determination to continue services in all their fields of operations.*

#### UNRWA

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [125960] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what estimate she has made of the number and proportion of people dependent on UN Relief and Works Agency funding in (a) Gaza, (b) the West Bank, (c) Syria, (d) Jordan and (e) Lebanon.

**Alistair Burt:** The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has a unique mandate to provide essential support and protection for over five million registered Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon. All registered Palestinian refugees can access UNRWA services; According to UNRWA's latest field of operations map in 2017, there are 618,128 in Syria, 532,173 in Lebanon, 2,286,643 in Jordan, 997,173 in the West Bank, and 1,435,616 in Gaza.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-31/125960/>

#### USA: UNRWA

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [125961] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether the Government plans to increase its funding for UN Relief and Works Agency in the light of the reduction in funding from the US Administration.

**Alistair Burt:** UK officials are working closely with the UN Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) and other donors to assess how best to ensure the continuity of essential services to Palestinian refugees at this time, in line with humanitarian principles. The UK remains firmly committed to supporting UNRWA, and has so far provided around £50 million in 2017/18 based on the Agency meeting rigorous performance indicators. The UK will monitor the impact of any cuts to UNRWA's services closely.

## House of Lords Written Answers

### UNRWA: Finance

**Baroness Helic (Conservative)** [HL4889] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of refugees who will be affected by the decision of the government of the United States to withdraw funding for the UN Relief Works Agency; and what specific services and aid they expect will be affected.

**Lord Bates:** The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) provides essential services to over 5 million Palestinian refugees across the region. My officials are working closely with UNRWA, the United States and other European Union partners to understand risks to UNRWA's sustainability and how to maintain continuity of key services such as education and health for Palestinian refugees. The UK is concerned at the impact on UNRWA's activities whenever unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements occur and are liaising with UNRWA on their plans for service continuity. UNRWA has publically stated their determination to continue services in all their fields of operations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-18/HL4889/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL4932] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel in respect of the demolition of internationally funded buildings and equipment in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We repeatedly make clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concerns about continued demolition and confiscation of Palestinian property, including internationally funded buildings and equipment, and the need to abide by their other obligations under international law. The UK has not directly funded any structures in recent years that have been demolished by the Israeli government. We are keeping the case for compensation under review.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-22/HL4932/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL4933] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to call on the government of Israel to pay compensation to Palestinians whose homes were officially demolished in 2017.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities. The UK is focused on preventing demolitions from happening in the first place through our funding to the Norwegian Refugee Council legal aid programme, which helps residents to challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system. We have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the rate of demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem and call on them to cease the policy of demolitions and instead provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-22/HL4933/>

### Gaza: Economic Situation

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL4934] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of recent statements by Israeli officials that the economy of Gaza is on the verge of collapse.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made any assessment on this specific issue, we remain deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. 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 (PA). We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians in Gaza and that supporting legal trade for Gazans is firmly in Israel's long-term interests. We are also encouraging Egypt to reopen the Rafah crossing. We welcome the PA's return to Gaza and the agreement to allow the PA to resume administrative control, which we hope will improve both the humanitarian and economic situation.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-22/HL4934/>

## UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

**Foreign Affairs Council: 22 January 2018**

**The Minister for Europe and the Americas (Sir Alan Duncan)** [HCWS448]: ... Ministers discussed the latest developments in the Middle East peace process and looked at how the EU could help to ensure engagement by all the relevant players in order to advance the peace process.

In the margins of the Council meeting, Ministers held an informal lunch with the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas. This was an opportunity for the European Union to reiterate its united and clear messages on the importance of preserving a two-state solution and the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two states. ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-02-05/debates/1802051000006/ForeignAffairsCouncil22January2018>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Hugh Gaffney (900) Palestinian firefighters** – That this House recognises the outstanding work of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in continuing to support Palestinian firefighters from the Occupied Territories of the West Bank; notes that the FBU has recently facilitated the training of firefighters from the municipality of Hebron and will soon welcome firefighters from Ramallah to undergo instructor training in the UK; and offers good wishes and support to the FBU on this important initiative.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/900>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Boris Johnson:** Good to speak to President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority today. We discussed the importance of resuming peace negotiations towards a two-state solution

<https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/960567901790113794>

**Alistair Burt:** I condemn the attack in Ariel in the West Bank. There is never any excuse for terror. My thoughts are with the family and friends of the victim.

<https://twitter.com/AlistairBurtUK/status/960556266321072130>

### **Secretary-General's remarks at opening of the 2018 Session of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**

... As we all know, the question of Palestine is inextricably linked with the history of the United Nations and is one of the longest unresolved issues on our agenda. Over many decades, the international community has encouraged a negotiated process leading to a two-State solution, addressing all final status issues on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and mutual agreements as the only way to lay the foundations for enduring peace. ...

The General Assembly has reaffirmed the two-State solution through the establishment of a Palestinian State as the only way to achieve stability, peace, prosperity and development in the region.

And I have always said that I would like to see a Palestinian state and an Israeli state, both with capital in Jerusalem.

However, we must face today's difficult reality.

... Negative trends on the ground have the potential to create an irreversible one-state reality that is incompatible with realizing the legitimate national, historic and democratic aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Ongoing settlement construction and expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under UN resolutions and international law.

It is a major obstacle to peace and it must be halted and reversed.

Violence and incitement continue to fuel a climate of fear and mistrust.

The humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza remains dire. ...

At stake is the human security, rights and dignity of the five million Palestine refugees across the Middle East.

But also at stake is the stability of the entire region which may be affected if UNRWA is unable to continue to provide vital services to the Palestine refugee population, both across the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. I appeal to the generosity of the international community not to let that happen. ...

***To read the full transcript see***

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-02-05/secretary-generals-remarks-opening-2018-session-committee-exercise>

### **Global Consensus on Two-State Solution Could Be Eroding, Secretary-General Tells Palestinian Rights Committee, as 2018 Session Opens**

... Feda Abdelhady-Nasser, Deputy Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, said [her] people faced an existential crisis. The year had begun on a demoralizing note, with reckless decisions that further denigrated Palestinians' rights and aspirations and dismissed a global consensus — based on Security Council and General Assembly resolutions — which had prevailed for decades.

She said the United States decision on 6 December 2017 to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to move its embassy there, combined with subsequent punitive measures, had emboldened Israel's impunity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem. Further deterioration in the humanitarian situation loomed following the United States' decision to dramatically reduce funding for UNRWA. ...

Fodé Seck (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, conveyed the body's deep concern over recent measures taken by Israel, including the adoption by its Parliament of a law that would prevent future Israeli Governments from ceding any part of Jerusalem, including East Jerusalem, to an independent Palestinian State. Illegal settlement activity meanwhile continued at a faster pace ...

Condemning all forms of violence and incitement to hatred and extremism, he called on the international community to pursue its long-running efforts towards inter-Palestinian

reconciliation, to guarantee the financial viability of Palestinian State institutions and to strengthen the capacity of Palestinian officials to administer an independent State. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gapal1402.doc.htm>

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## Foreign Affairs

### UK Parliament Petition

#### Proscription of Hezbollah

*The petition of residents of the Hendon constituency*, Declares that demonstrations against the legitimate and democratic state of Israel where offensive and anti-Semitic language is used are not acceptable and that they, the petitioners, condemn such actions; further, that they, the petitioners, note that the police will not take any legal action against perpetrators under the current law; and further, that they, the petitioners, demonstrate their commitment to democracy, tolerance and freedom of speech be seeking the elimination of hatred. The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to proscribe the political as well as military arm of the Hezbollah organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000. ... [P002099]

#### **Observations from the Minister for Security and Economic Crime (Mr Ben Wallace):**

Hezbollah's external security organisation (also known as the Military Wing) was proscribed by the UK Government in March 2001 and in 2008 the proscription was extended to Hezbollah military apparatus including the Jihad Council. While the UK proscribes Hezbollah's military wing, we do not proscribe the group in its entirety.

Hezbollah's military wing is also designated in the UK under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing Act 2010. Therefore, funds or economic resources owned, held or controlled by its military wing in the UK can be frozen. In July 2012 the EU also designated Hizballah's military wing as a terrorist organisation under the EU asset freeze regime.

The current proscription and asset freeze already sends a clear message that we condemn Hezbollah's violence and support for terrorism. Groups are not free to spread hatred, fund terrorist activity or incite violence as they please, irrespective of whether they are included on the list of proscribed organisations or not.

Peaceful protest is a vital part of a democratic society and it is a long-standing tradition in this country that people are free to gather together and to demonstrate their views, however uncomfortable these may be to the majority of us, provided that they do so lawfully. There is, of course, a balance to be struck. Protestors' rights need to be balanced with the rights of others to go about their business without fear of intimidation or serious disruption to the community. Rights to peaceful protest do not extend to violent or threatening behaviour and the police have powers to deal with any such acts. The management of protests is of course a matter for the police. Similarly, the investigation and prosecution of all criminal offences is a matter for the police, together with the Crown Prosecution Service.

The UK Government condemn any language or act which attempts to delegitimise the State of Israel, and also hate crime of any kind, directed against any community, race or religion, which has absolutely no place in our society. Violence against anyone in this country is a crime and will be treated seriously.

The Government acknowledge the petitioners' request to extend the proscription of Hezbollah to cover the group's political wing, however, while the list of proscribed groups is kept under review, the Government do not routinely comment on whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-02-05/debates/18020528000020/ProscriptionOfHezbollah>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **Draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/666576/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/666576/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf)

#### **\*\* European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/europeanunionwithdrawal.html>

Scottish Parliament Finance and Constitution Committee: evidence session

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11343&i=103194#ScotParlOR>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

### 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

**Introducing 'opt-out' consent for organ and tissue donation in England** (closing date 6 March 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-opt-out-consent-for-organ-and-tissue-donation-in-england>

**Promoting Organ Donation and Transplantation in Northern Ireland** (closing date 9 March 2018)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/promoting-organ-donation-and-transplantation-northern-ireland>

**Electoral Reform (Scotland)** (closing date 12 March 2018)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00529431.pdf>

**Human Rights (Scottish Parliament)** (closing date 16 March 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/106453.aspx>

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