

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland

S5W-18104 John Finnie (Green): To ask the Scottish Government, in light of it no longer publishing the report, Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland, whether (a) it will begin publishing the report again and (b) any new publications will provide details of racist incidents recorded by the police, including (i) location and time, (ii) crimes and offences recorded, (iii) characteristics of victims and complainers, (iv) characteristics of perpetrators and (v) supporting contextual information.

Humza Yousaf: When the Scottish Government last published statistics on Racist Incidents Recorded by the Police in Scotland, we outlined for users our plan to scope out the replacement of this information with a new and broader product on police recorded incidents with a hate element.

Since that point, Scottish Government independent statisticians have been working with Police Scotland to assess whether their data systems adequately capture hate-related incidents reported to the police. We have now completed this work and are in a position to publish a new report later in 2018. This report will include information on incidents with a race element, as well as information on incidents related to religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity. Whilst statisticians are continuing to work on the final content of the report, in collaboration with Police Scotland, it will include statistics and further contextual information on the characteristics of hate-related incidents, the associated crimes, victims and perpetrators.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-18104>

Scottish Government

Rosh HaShanah Message from the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP

I send my warmest greetings to everyone in Scotland's Jewish communities as they begin to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and mark the holy day of Yom Kippur. At this time of reflection, I hope the forthcoming year will bring joy and happiness to all.

The Scottish Government appreciates and values our relationships with our Jewish communities, and I want to thank you all for the significant and important contributions

you all make to Scottish society. I have enjoyed meeting with a number of Jewish organisations, including SCoJeC, this past year and I very much look forward to continued positive engagement in the year ahead.

It is essential that everyone feels connected, has a sense of belonging and feels valued in Scotland and I am proud of the way in which we continue to work together to tackle prejudice and build a more inclusive, safer Scotland.

On behalf of the Scottish Government and the people of Scotland, I wish you Shanah Tovah!

https://www.scojec.org/news/2018/18ix_rh/fm.html

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

West Bank: Violence

Richard Burden (Labour) [166440] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of violence carried out by settlers in East Jerusalem and the West Bank; and what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on that violence.

Alistair Burt: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is concerned by reports that settler violence has increased in 2018 compared to 2017. The Government condemns any violence by settlers against Palestinians. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised the issue of settler violence with the Israeli authorities on 22 May 2018. We welcome the efforts of Israeli authorities to tackle settler violence, and urge thorough investigation of every instance to bring those responsible to justice. We have also stressed the importance of Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-20/166440/>

Palestinians: ICT

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [167103] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to (a) assist the development of the IT sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and (b) foster links between UK and Palestinian companies.

Alistair Burt: The Department for International Development funds the Palestinian Market Development Programme (PMDP) which is currently supporting 18 Palestinian IT firms to strengthen their capability to work with British businesses. As part of this assistance PMDP is also working closely with the Portland Trust, the Palestinian Information Technology Association, the Palestinian Business Council and the Palestinian UK Country Trade Representative to develop business links between these firms and British businesses.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-23/167103/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Richard Burden (Labour) (1566) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees – That this House is appalled by the decision of the US Administration to end its funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency

(UNRWA), which amounts to a reduction of nearly a third of UNRWA's operating budget; believes that such a move takes the Middle East further away from peace and is part of an unprecedented attempt to undermine the international legal consensus on the protected status of Palestinian refugees; notes that across Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, around six million Palestinian refugees are registered with UNRWA and reaffirms their status as such; is concerned that this funding decision will critically endanger UNRWA's ability to continue providing vital services, including health care and social services as well as education for well over 500,000 refugee children; and calls on the Government to work with international partners to fill the funding gap left by the US Administration and ensure that vital front-line services are not put at risk by this reckless unilateral withdrawal of support.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1566>

Department for International Development

New UK aid package to meet immediate needs of Palestinians through UN Relief and Works Agency

The UK will step up its support to the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to help ensure vulnerable Palestinians are able to continue accessing vital healthcare and education services, Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt has announced.

The UN agency, which is facing severe financial pressure at a time of unprecedented demand, is a lifeline for millions of Palestinian refugees across the Middle East.

Today's announcement of additional UK aid support from the Department for International Development aims to help UNRWA keep schools open for over 500,000 children, and provide medical care for 3.5 million refugees.

Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt said: UK aid support through UNRWA provides an essential humanitarian and stabilising force in the Middle East, educating hundreds of thousands of children every year and providing healthcare to some of the most vulnerable Palestinian refugees. Today's UK aid package reaffirms our unequivocal support to this UN agency and the important work it does.

We are deeply concerned about the devastating impact a shortage of funds for UNRWA could cause on those that rely on its services, as well as the consequences this could have for regional stability. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-uk-aid-package-to-meet-immediate-needs-of-palestinians-through-un-relief-and-works-agency>

United Nations

Refugee Agency Will Soon Lose Ability to Carry Out Most Critical tasks, Director of Its New York Office Tells Palestinian Rights Committee

... "As things stand now, we will run out of funding for most of our programming at the end of this month — four weeks from now," said Peter Mulrean, Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Representative Office in New York. Briefing the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the impact of UNRWA's funding crisis, he expressed regret at the 31 August decision by the United States to end its support to the Agency, noting that, in light of the cut, UNRWA is now in need of \$200 million in additional funding to carry out its work through the end of 2018.

Describing the decision as a "radical departure" from what has long been one of the world's most robust development and humanitarian relationships, he said that, while it is every nation's sovereign right to allocate its funding as it chooses, last week's cuts

regrettably appear to be linked to political agendas. Rejecting recent statements by United States officials who described UNRWA's schools as "irredeemably flawed", he said the World Bank and other reputable partners have long recognized the Agency's school systems as among the region's best. ...

Emphasizing that a political solution to the Palestinian-Israeli crisis is not part of the Agency's mandate, he said UNRWA will continue to push forward with its support of Palestine refugees — the only task mandated to it by the General Assembly — as long as the latter deems it necessary. "UNRWA should not become a bargaining chip in political negotiations," he stressed. ...

Feda Abdelhady Nasser, Deputy Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine to the United Nations ... said that confronting the current threats facing the Palestinian people is crucial as the socioeconomic, humanitarian and political crises facing them become increasingly severe. Citing Israel's recent attempts to legitimize its human rights violations — including collective punishment, restrictions on movement, the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip and the continuation of illegal Israeli settlement activities — she said the decline in living conditions, particularly in Gaza, is exacerbating the situation and eroding belief that peace is still possible.

"We are regrettably facing countless assaults on the rights of our people," she continued, citing, in particular, Israel's adoption of the so-called "Nation State Law" and its continuing attempts to displace Palestinians, including those belonging to Bedouin communities. ... Indeed, she said, it is shocking in 2018 to see the passing of such racist legislation as Israel's Nation State Law, which amounts to a system of apartheid and defines Palestinians as a separate, second-class population. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gapal1415.doc.htm>

UN urges countries to step up assistance for Palestine refugees

The United Nations said it regrets the decision of the United States to stop funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and called on other countries to help fill the remaining financial gap.

"We regret the United States' decision to provide no further funding to UNRWA, which provides essential services to Palestine refugees and contributes to stability in the region," Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, said in a [statement](#) ...

"The Secretary-General calls on other countries to help fill the remaining financial gap, so that UNRWA can continue to provide this vital assistance, as well as a sense of hope to this vulnerable population." ...

"UNRWA has a strong record of providing high-quality education, health and other essential services, often in extremely difficult circumstances, to Palestine refugees who are in great need," he said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1018192>

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Other Relevant Information

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Improving responses to hate crime focus of workshop co-organized by ODIHR and European Network of Police Women

Strengthening skills in recognizing and investigating hate crimes was at the centre of a train-the-trainer workshop for women police officers organized by the OSCE Office for

Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the European Network of Police Women (ENP) from 29 to 31 August 2018. The event was hosted by the Scottish Police College in Kincardine, the United Kingdom.

The workshop brought together 20 trainees from eight countries. Participants learned about ODIHR's definition of hate crime, international obligations related to hate crimes and techniques to recognize and investigate such crimes.

"This training course is intended to further empower women police officers and help improve their knowledge and skills to ensure a robust response to hate crimes," said ODIHR Programme Officer Yulia Korysheva. "The workshop was also an opportunity for participants to share their expertise, personal experiences and best practises in addressing hate crimes." ...

The workshop was based on the curriculum of the [Training against Hate Crime for Law Enforcement \(TAHCLE\)](#) programme, which has been implemented in 15 countries across the OSCE region.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/392240>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

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

**** Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

Call for evidence: Responses

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/109033.aspx>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

20 years of the Human Rights Act (closing date 14 September 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/20-years-human-rights-act-launch-17-19/>

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