

# 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

### Westminster Hall Debate

#### Public Holidays on Religious Occasions

*col 235WH* **Martyn Day (SNP):** ... Petition 220501 calls for public holidays on Muslim religious occasions and has more than 46,000 signatures. It states: "This will give an opportunity for Muslim families to get together and share happiness with other religious communities. It is very important for Muslims to celebrate Eid." It adds that despite being the second largest UK religion, "Muslims don't get a lawful Public Holiday on their two special religious occasions in a year".

Petition 221860 calls for public holidays on Hindu special occasions and has more than 11,000 signatures. It states: "It is very important for Hindus to celebrate Diwali...Diwali—Festival of Lights is a major holiday that is also celebrated by Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs." It notes that Hinduism is the third largest religion in England but that Hindus do not get a "lawful Public Holiday" on religious occasions. The petition also asks for a public holiday on Dussehra. ...

*col 236WH* ... the Government response to each petition is the same, stating: "The Government has no plans to create a public holiday to commemorate religious festivals such as Eid" and "such as Diwali." ...

**Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, in the strongest terms, employers should work with their employees to accommodate their wishes to take time off to celebrate Eid? Working with employers is probably the best way forward. ...

**Martyn Day:** ... we certainly need to highlight to the wider employing public the requirements to facilitate all religious faiths within the workforce. ...

... 87% of respondents to [the Petitions Committee] consultation said that they felt that not allowing time off for religious occasions was discriminatory, while 84% felt that they could not ask for time off work or education for a religious occasion, so there are clearly underlying issues that need to be addressed. ...

*col 237WH* The celebration of these festivals is very important to worshippers of the faiths concerned. They represent the most important occasions in their religious calendars. At a time when religious persecution is growing around the world, it is important that we do everything we can to protect people's freedom to practise their religion or belief. ...

We have a modern multi-faith and multicultural society in which people of all faiths and none can follow their belief systems. However, we can never take that diversity and

tolerance for granted, particularly as we have seen increased antisemitism and significant Islamophobia. Just yesterday, *The Sunday Times* reported on a poll in which 47% of respondents believed that Britain was becoming less tolerant of Muslims.

The Petitions Committee's public engagement also suggests that things are not as good as they could be. Some 88% of those we engaged with felt that their community had few opportunities to get together to celebrate religious occasions. ...

*col 238WH* ... Many people felt it unfair that although they were forced to take time off at Christmas and Easter, they struggled to get time off to celebrate their own religious festivals. Some 72% of respondents who identified themselves as directly affected said they had been refused time off work or education for a religious occasion. Similarly, 72% felt that their employer was not sympathetic to the request and did not understand its importance. Some of the respondents described the process of asking for time off for a religious occasion as "risky" or "risking job prospects and growth".

Many people said they were made to feel guilty for asking for time off to celebrate religious occasions. ...

*col 239WH* ... Concern has ... been raised by the National Secular Society, which commented: "... Compelling those who do not celebrate minority faith festivals to take time off work risks causing unnecessary resentment and would harm efforts to promote a concept of common citizenship." ...

*col 240WH* "The UK's religious landscape is in a state of continuous change. Our population is more irreligious, yet more religiously diverse, than ever before. A multi-faith approach to holidays can therefore never serve the individual needs of the many different people who make up the UK, or adequately keep abreast with the changes in the UK's demographics. A more practical and equitable approach is to give workers greater flexibility, where their work allows, to take holidays on the specific days that matter to them."

That is a pragmatic suggestion, which is perhaps let down only by the apparent lack of awareness in society as a whole, and among employers in particular, of the significance of religious occasions ...

That lack of awareness featured repeatedly in the comments by petitioners ... Many people said that employers wanted holidays to be booked well in advance, which was particularly difficult for Eid, because it is lunar and not on a specific calendar date. They said that employers often did not understand it. One person said: "It's very difficult to bring it up as many don't recognise religious occasions and how paramount they are for the ones celebrating."

Another commented: "I'm made to feel like they've done me a favour by giving me the day off. Sometimes they say they cannot give me the day off because I took the day off for the last Eid. ..." ...

*col 241WH* Most of the petitioners who responded to the survey, 52%, said that they would prefer a legal right guaranteeing time off work or education to celebrate religious occasions not currently recognised as public holidays, such as Eid and Diwali. A small number of people, 5%, wanted the ability to swap public holidays such as Easter for other religious occasions. ...

*col 242WH* **Bob Blackman (Conservative):** ... One important issue is that, while Eid advances each year with the end of Ramadan, generally speaking it falls at the end of June or thereabouts. That is quite helpful to break up the year during the summer. Equally, Diwali is between October and November, as has been said, and breaks up the period between the August bank holiday and Christmas.... I think we should have a holiday based around Judaism as well. That could fall on either Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, both of which tend to occur in September. ...

*col 243WH* I think a consultation with the Jewish community would be well received. It is a requirement among people of the Jewish faith to fast, go to the synagogue and pray, breaking their fast at the end—funnily enough, there are many similarities between the Muslim and Jewish faiths on that particular issue. During those times, it is fundamental that someone who is Jewish observes both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, even if

they do not follow all the rest of the religious holidays. ...

*col 247WH* **Justin Madders (Labour):** ... I was disturbed to hear the hon. Gentleman's comments about how many people in surveys feel that we are becoming a less tolerant society. ... I think that it is a much wider issue than the question of public holidays that we are considering today. ...

*col 248WH* While Muslims and Hindus represent the largest religious groupings in this country after Christians, there are many other faiths ... Those communities' faiths are just as important to them as those of any other religious group are to its members, and it is important for those faiths to have the same opportunities to participate in ceremonies of significance for them. ...

That raises the question of whether there should be any threshold for official recognition of public holidays for religious festivals. When one considers that one in four people does not subscribe to any faith at all—they are by far the biggest group in this country after Christians—arguments on the basis of numbers begin to look slightly less robust. ...

*col 249WH* It is not just about time off for religious holidays. There are also periods of fasting during daylight hours, or required prayers at certain times of day, which are just as important as annual festivals. That opens up a series of very complex issues, for which it is not practical to legislate in each and every instance. ...

*col 252WH* **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kelly Tolhurst):** ... I am proud that we are one of the world's most successful multi-ethnic, multi-faith societies. We should all be proud of that diversity, which is at the heart of our economic success. ...

Although the hon. Member for Linlithgow and East Falkirk has made a powerful case today, the Government do not believe that it is necessary for such extra bank holidays to be declared ...

*col 253WH* It is at the heart of the Government's quality of work agenda to encourage employers to respond flexibly and sympathetically to any requests for leave, including for religious holidays. ...

*col 256WH* Britain is a great place to live. However, we cannot ignore the fact that in too many parts of our country, communities feel divided. The Government are fully committed to the principles of freedom of religion and belief. I am proud that this country has in place some of the strongest protections in the world to allow people to practise their faith or belief. More than that, we understand that faith communities make a valuable contribution to our society by creating strong social networks, supporting vulnerable people, undertaking charitable work and providing education. We continue to support interfaith work as a means of breaking down barriers between communities and building greater trust and understanding. ...

*col 258WH* **Martyn Day:** ... We pride ourselves on being a tolerant and inclusive society, but we cannot be complacent and must all take on a leadership role. Clearly, as the petitions indicate, many people do not feel as included or valued as we want them to, so we must do extra work to remove barriers. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-29/debates/6EF118AA-489B-4ADC-B915-FFE29C922C4E/PublicHolidaysOnReligiousOccasions>

## House of Commons Oral Answers

### [Pittsburgh attack] ESOL Classes

... **The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sajid Javid):** With your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like first to express how shocked and appalled I am at the deadly gun attack that took place this weekend at the synagogue in Pittsburgh. I am sure that the whole House will want to join me in expressing our deepest sympathies for the victims and those injured, as well as their families.

The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish friends across the world and utterly condemns antisemitism in all its forms. ...

**Michael Fabricant (Conservative):** Does my right hon. Friend agree that perhaps the success of the Jewish community in this country has been its willingness to integrate, to do in Rome as the Romans do and to learn the language? That is not always the case with other ethnic groups, so it is a question not only of providing sufficient funds but of encouraging them to learn the language and become a part of our community.

**Sajid Javid:** It is right, of course, that this Government do more to welcome all communities and help them to integrate. That is why the Government published—I published it when I was Communities Secretary—an integration Green Paper, which we will build on. It is also worth commending the work that World Jewish Relief does to help all communities to integrate. ...

**Bob Blackman (Conservative):** I associate myself with the remarks by the Home Secretary in relation to the terrible attack in Pittsburgh ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-29/debates/F0848715-751B-4F9A-8B8B-6121ADCA9026/ESOLClasses#contribution-D28331BA-90DE-410A-89FD-7D0A25371A87>

### Topical Questions: Home Office

**Theresa Villiers (Conservative):** In the light of the horrors of Pittsburgh, can the Home Secretary provide the reassurance that both Government and the police will always take very, very seriously the security of the Jewish community and other minorities who may be subjected to hate crimes and violence?

**Sajid Javid:** I can absolutely provide that reassurance to my right hon. Friend. In fact, this weekend, following that tragedy, I spoke to the head of the Community Security Trust to offer that reassurance. It is an organisation that we are proud to support, but we want to look at new ways of helping the community with its security needs. It is sad, in this day and age, that any community needs security of that type but, for as long as they do, we will always be there. Tonight, I will also be attending a vigil to mark the terrible tragedy at Pittsburgh.

**Luciana Berger (Labour Co-op):** The perpetrator of the Pittsburgh murders has a history of posting the most vile antisemitism, Islamophobia and threatening comments. Similarly, the man suspected of sending pipe bombs to prominent Democrats threatened the life of a political commentator via a tweet a few months ago, but Twitter said that it did not violate its online guidelines. In the wake of these terrible tragedies, what are the Government doing to address the very serious issue of online hate?

**Sajid Javid:** The hon. Lady is again right to raise this matter. We have seen the role that social media is playing not just in Britain, but abroad, in feeding hate. That is one reason why the Government recently refreshed our anti-hate strategy and that is exactly one of the things that we will be looking into further.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-29/debates/2113CE9D-E6A5-4D02-9C6A-182624A1811E/TopicalQuestions#contribution-CA428D9B-6103-4166-A20D-4C5F24DA0D9B>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Community Security Trust: Expenditure

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [181646]** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he will publish the total amount of funding per pupil allocated by his Department to the Community Security Trust for school security in each year since 2015.

**Ben Wallace:** The Home Office does not allocate funding for school security on a per pupil basis. The funding allocation for each school is based on a security assessment of the guarding requirements to secure the pupils on that site. Spending on the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, which includes

schools, colleges, nurseries, communal sites and synagogues for previous years is:

2015-16: £10.9m

2016-17: £13.4m\*

2017-18: £13.4m\*

\*includes a £3.0m contribution from the Department for Education in relation to security of Jewish state and free schools.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-19/181646/>

### **Community Security Trust: Finance**

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour)** [181647] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the funding allocated by his Department to the Community Security Trust to protect Jewish educational settings in the UK.

**Ben Wallace:** The Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, like other Home Office Grants, is awarded annually.

Under the Grant educational sites are a priority and all registered schools, colleges and nurseries are offered funding for security. The Home Office works with the Security Community Trust throughout each year to consider how the Grant is being operated and what is being delivered across all areas.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-19/181647/>

## **House of Lords Oral Answers**

### **Pittsburgh: Synagogue Attack**

**Lord Polak (Conservative):** To ask Her Majesty's Government following the murder of 11 worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, what action they are taking to protect and reassure the Jewish Community here in the United Kingdom. ...

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth):** My Lords, we have all been appalled by the horrific attack on worshippers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and the consequent dreadful loss of life. We stand in solidarity against this hatred and have committed to provide over £50 million since 2015, including £13.4 million this year to the Community Security Trust, to ensure that people can pray and live without fear at over 500 Jewish institutions across the country. I pay tribute to their outstanding work. No one should be afraid to practise their faith, and our places of worship should not engender fear. We will not let fear overcome us. Hatred will not win.

**Lord Polak:** I thank my noble friend for his reply, and I am certain that the Jewish community will be comforted by his words and actions. It was an unspeakable act—the cold-blooded murder of 11 Jews on Shabbat—and Jewish communities throughout the world are afraid. Have we learned nothing from history? For me, it is nice to stand shoulder to shoulder and offer sympathy, but it is action that is now required. Has the Minister read the editorial in the *Times* today, which is spot on? It ends:

“The Jewish people have withstood pogroms and prejudice for millennia based on fakery, fraud and myths. There will always be people gripped by ideological wickedness but the context matters and responsible politicians set that context”.

We in the UK cannot mend the world, but we can take action here. If there were anti-Semitism in my party, I would call it out. If there is anti-Semitism in no party, I will call it out. I hope that all noble Lords will do the same if they encounter it in their own parties. It is often said that anti-Semitism is a problem for the Jewish community. Yes, it does affect

that community, but does my noble friend agree that it should be seen as a grave threat to British values and British decency and to all that we hold dear?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I agree with the sentiments expressed so well by my noble friend. This morning I spoke to the Chief Rabbi's office, which has described the response of British communities around the country as, "heartening and reassuring". It is important that we stand united against this hatred. It has been heartening that other religious communities, particularly the Muslim one, have been leading crowd funding for the victims of Pittsburgh. I repeat: we will not let hatred win.

**Lord Beecham (Labour):** My Lords, the House will congratulate the noble Lord for tabling this Question. All noble Lords, and most of the population of this country, were horrified at the tragic loss of life and the irrational hatred which inspired it. Thankfully, this country does not have a gun culture, nor a Government who believe that the answer is to equip places of worship with weapons—in a country which has more guns than people. We welcome the support that the Government currently give to the Community Security Trust, which helps to achieve safety and security not only for the Jewish community but for the Muslim community and other minority communities. I invite the Government to consider making statutory provision for something which is now Labour Party policy and would be acceptable across our political system: an emphatic repudiation of the violence and hatred which have disfigured life in America and taken so many lives.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for his contribution. The Community Security Trust is specifically for the Jewish community. Other vulnerable places of worship fund their own protection, but the noble Lord is right that we look at this across the piece. We are well aware of the importance of that protection and the Government have given particular heed to it over the years. He is also right about arming people: let there be no doubt that the more arms there are, the more danger there is. This was pure evil and it needs to be called out as such.

**Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, there is no excuse for trying to justify or explain the Pittsburgh killings, and I echo the words spoken by other noble Lords. The Minister talked about physical protection from the Community Security Trust—but protection is surely also needed from those who condone and incite anti-Semitism in postings on social media. What is his response to that?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for his contribution. He will be well aware that the whole House recognises the importance of tackling the issues arising from social media as they relate to hate crime across the piece and to anti-Semitism specifically. He will also be aware of the globalisation of that problem. The Government are resolute on this issue and my department, along with that of my noble friend Lady Williams, intends to proceed with it and to push harder to get concrete results.

**Lord Pickles (Conservative):** My Lords, will the Minister join me, along with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, in condemning the words of the noble Baroness, Lady Tonge, in suggesting that the murders in Pittsburgh were caused by the actions of the Israeli Government? That suggestion will clearly cause great pain in Pittsburgh, and falls foul of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I do so unreservedly. These issues must not be conflated in the way that the noble Baroness sought to conflate them.

**Lord Winston (Labour):** My Lords, I have four grandchildren, who had to go to school this morning—to two Jewish schools—with a guard. The youngest is four, the next is six, one is seven and one eight; this is a close issue for me. I am grateful to the Government for the Statement that the Minister has made today. I think the Jewish community will be very pleased. Does the Minister not agree, however, that the real issue is hate speech and not guns?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, the noble Lord is absolutely right: hate speech is at the root of this. He will be aware that we have just refreshed the hate

crime action plan for the next two years. We are determined to take whatever action is necessary, whether it is hate crime expressed orally, online, or, as I indicated to the noble Lord, Lord Palmer, on social media. The noble Lord is absolutely right: it is central to our efforts to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred.

**Lord Leigh of Hurley (Conservative):** My Lords, I am president of a progressive synagogue which is similar to the Tree of Life synagogue. We have lent them a Torah scroll. When news came through on Saturday, I was with a rabbi from another progressive synagogue who had come to see me because he is so upset with the current situation that he is planning to leave the country. He is advising a number of his congregants to do the same. We discussed an article by Colin Appleby, who was a Labour Party member and went to the conference in Liverpool. Colin Appleby wrote: “At breakfast on Monday, I was joined by two people I’d not met before. They hadn’t met each other before”.

They agreed, he wrote, “that Jews were ‘subhuman’, ‘didn’t deserve to be allowed to define what constitutes antisemitism’ and should ‘be grateful we don’t make them eat bacon for breakfast every day.’”

He published the article. Would the Minister agree with me that this level of anti-Semitism, and that found in a recent tweet from a Member of this House, must be addressed now before we find a similar situation to that in Pittsburgh arising in the United Kingdom?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, the whole House will have great sympathy with the words my noble friend has just uttered. However, I repeat the point that the Chief Rabbi’s office has felt—correctly, I believe—that there has been outstanding support from all communities in Britain with regard to what has happened in Pittsburgh. That is not to say there is not an issue to be addressed, but the action that the Government have taken, which is supported so clearly in the House of Lords, will help us to combat the dreadful evil of anti-Semitism. ...

**Lord Carlile of Berriew (Crossbench):** My Lords, given the clear evidence that the perpetrator of the Pittsburgh outrage posted anti-Semitic comments on the internet from time to time, is it not time that the Government took the internet service providers to one side and told them that it is their responsibility to remove this kind of outrageous material, or the Government will have to do it for them, with the support of both Houses of Parliament?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, the noble Lord is right. The message will not have been lost on the providers of social media. It is something we are making them aware of—we are seeking action. Some are more willing to assist than others, but it is clear that they have an overriding responsibility, and what has happened in Pittsburgh underlines that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-10-29/debates/6DD837E5-32F0-4E56-B63D-636F7F086724/PittsburghSynagogueAttack>

*Baroness Tonge’s comments, referred to above, were made in a facebook post which has now been deleted.*

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Hate Crime

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP) [HL10678]** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether section 29J of the Public Order Act 1986 remains in force; and what assessment they have made of the extent to which interpretations by the police and Crown Prosecution Service of what constitutes hate crime has altered the application of that provision.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Section 29J of the Public Order Act 1986 remains in force. The police and Crown Prosecution Service definition of a hate crime does not change the application of Section 29J.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-15/HL10678/>

### **Religious Hatred: Islam**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL10921] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of findings in the Statistical Bulletin, Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2017–18, published on 18 October, which shows that more than half of religiously-motivated attacks in 2017–18 were directed at Muslims.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The findings confirm the Government's assessment that we must deal robustly with anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia. The Government takes these hate crimes extremely seriously, and we are determined to tackle them. On 16 October the Home Office and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published a refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan to guide Government's work against all forms of prejudice and discrimination over the the period 2018 to 2020. This includes a strong focus on tackling anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia through the Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Anti-Muslim Hatred. In addition to this, the Government is providing TellMama, a specialist organisation allowing people to report anti-Muslim abuse, with £2.5million between 2016 and 2020, to boost reporting of Islamophobic and anti-Muslim incidents, and to support victims.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-22/HL10921/>

## **Scottish Parliament Motions**

**S5M-14523 Alasdair Allan (SNP): Condemning Attack on Pittsburgh Synagogue –**

That the Parliament condemns the attack on a Pittsburgh synagogue on 27 October 2018, in which 11 Jewish worshippers were killed; expresses its sincerest condolences to the Pittsburgh and American Jewish communities, and reaffirms its absolute dedication to supporting the Scottish Government's efforts to eliminate antisemitism in Scotland.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-14523>

**S5M-14524 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) The Tree of Life Congregation Synagogue, Pittsburgh –**

That the Parliament remembers the lives of Joyce Fienberg, Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil and David Rosenthal, Bernice and Sylvan Simon, Daniel Stein, Melvin Waz and Irving Younger; notes that their lives were cut short by an act of terror on 27 October 2018 at the Tree of Life Congregation Synagogue, which left six others wounded; unequivocally condemns the virulent antisemitism that led to this atrocity; calls on politicians from all parties, and society as a whole, to speak up and challenge the scourge of antisemitism, and notes the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council's communal service for the community on 30 October 2018 to allow everyone to come together in reflection and prayer and show solidarity with the Pittsburgh community.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-14524>

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## House of Lords Written Answer

### Israel: Bedouin

**The Earl of Selborne (Conservative)** [HL10785] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, or plan to make, to the government of Israel concerning the imminent destruction of the West Bank village of Khan al-Ahmar.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** At Prime Minister's Questions on 17 October, the Prime Minister reiterated the UK's strong opposition to Israel's proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and called on Israel not to go ahead with its plan to demolish the village. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa last raised our concerns about the proposed demolition with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 11 October, and the UK's Ambassador to Israel last raised the issue with the Israeli authorities on 3 October.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-17/HL10785/>

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## Other Relevant Information

### United Nations

#### **Third Committee Experts Warn Racism, Hate Speech, White Supremacy to Become Mainstream Unless States Enforce Zero-Tolerance Policies, Prevent Exclusion**

Racism, bigotry, xenophobia, nationalist populism, white supremacy and hate speech are on the rise, and often made more casual by public figures, experts told the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) today, sounding an alarm bell against a "general indifference" to the perilous uptick in such behaviour. ...

Nadya Rasheed, an observer for the State of Palestine, said Israel's illegal, inhumane occupation of Palestine contravenes all principles of international and human rights law. Its non-stop demolition of Palestinian homes, confiscation of land, expansion of settlements, forced displacement and constant attempts to annex land have continued unabated. The year also witnessed daily military raids, often causing death or injury, settler terror, extremist incitement against holy sites, and the detention of civilians, especially young men. All of these illegal policies and practices have been accompanied by an unending series of collective punishments, including the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip. There, 2 million Palestinians have been inhumanely deprived, isolated, impoverished and traumatized for the past 10 years, forced to endure a dire health and humanitarian crisis and deplorable socio-economic conditions. ...

Karen Pierce (United Kingdom) said that, while all humans are born equal in dignity and rights, there are wide differences in their enjoyment of them. People are denied the right to marry the person they love or the ability to form a family. People flee to neighbouring countries to escape sexual violence, slaughter or ethnic cleansing. People are poisoned in foreign countries in struggles of succession, because they chose to live in freedom or criticize repressive regimes. Journalists are detained, tortured or killed for seeking out the truth or speaking truth to power. The world's shared humanity dictates that everyone should care, she said, urging action. What is more, nations that respect human rights and the rule of law provide the best conditions for development, economic growth, peace and stability. ...

E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, said resurging nationalist populism

has caused racist, xenophobic and intolerant politics to become mainstream, with “disastrous” consequences for human rights. Populist political parties and elected officials use racist and xenophobic sentiments for political gain, stoking hate speech against minorities and racialized groups. ...

States must work with the private sector to combat online intolerance, with technology companies investing the resources necessary to ensure that their codes of conduct and actual practices reflect a serious commitment to racial equality. ...

Ms. Achiume echoed expressions of sympathy for the victims of the shooting that took place recently at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. This attack should be a catalyst for action against hate crime. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gashc4245.doc.htm>

**TOP**

## **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>

#### **Online Forums Bill**

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

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

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

Bill as brought to the House of Lords

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2017-2019/0141/18141.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2017-2019/0141/18141en.pdf>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-10-29/debates/BB69BCF4-6135-4B31-BC29-744B959B975D/OrganDonation\(DeemedConsent\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-10-29/debates/BB69BCF4-6135-4B31-BC29-744B959B975D/OrganDonation(DeemedConsent)Bill)

### **Scottish Parliament**

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

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

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## **Consultations** \*\* new or updated today

**Reform of the legal requirements for divorce** (closing date 10 December 2018)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/reform-of-the-legal-requirements-for-divorce/>

**The future of civil partnership in Scotland** (closing date 21 December 2018)

<https://consult.gov.scot/family-law/the-future-of-civil-partnership-in-scotland/>

**2021 Census: Outputs Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland** (closing date 9 January 2019)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/dfp/2021-census-outputs-strategy-consultation-for-northern-ireland-document.pdf>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438