

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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UK Government launches new national hate crime awareness campaign

A new nationwide hate crime campaign aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of what constitutes a hate crime has been launched by the government.

The campaign has been developed in consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime and other organisations, to help the public understand hate crime, particularly offences which often people do not recognise as criminal, such as some forms of online and verbal abuse.

This includes educating perpetrators who have been motivated by hostility towards the victim's race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or disability that they have committed a hate crime.

The strapline of the campaign sends a clear message about what hate crime is:

'If you target anyone with verbal, online or physical abuse because of their religion, race, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity – you may be committing a hate crime. It's not just offensive. It's an offence.'

Minister for Countering Extremism Baroness Williams said: "Committing a hate crime goes against all the shared values we hold and can have a traumatic impact on victims. ...

The campaign seeks to reassure communities at risk of hate crime that the government takes this seriously and to publicly address the attitudes and beliefs that foster hate crime and re-establish boundaries around not targeting people on the basis of their identity.

The campaign website also signposts organisations where victims and witnesses can get the support they need.

Chris Long, Chief Crown Prosecutor and CPS hate crime champion, said: "Hate crime has a corrosive effect on society and being on the receiving end of an incident can be particularly distressing because of its personal nature.

The CPS works closely with the police to prosecute thousands of cases every year. More than two-thirds of offenders are now receiving tougher, uplifted sentences from the courts – the highest levels ever recorded.

We take hate crime very seriously and are committed to properly supporting victims. People should be in no doubt – if you believe you have been a victim of hate crime you should report it to the police. ...

Mike Ainsworth, chairman of the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime and Director of London Services for Stop Hate UK, said: We know 2 key facts about hate

crimes. The impact on victims is devastating and life changing, and perpetrators often escalate in the seriousness of their offending.

This campaign is important in emphasising the corrosive impact these crimes have on communities. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-new-national-hate-crime-awareness-campaign>

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Trends in Hate Motivated Incidents and Crimes Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland 2004/05 to 2017/18

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/documents/hate-motivated-incidents-and-crimes-in-northern-ireland-2004-05-to-2017-18.pdf>

Accompanying tables

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/documents/hate-motivations-in-northern-ireland-by-month-2004-05-to-2017-18-pivot-tables.xls>

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Holocaust

Holocaust Educational Trust

Scottish First Minister Joins Lessons From Auschwitz Project

Yesterday, First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon MSP joined 200 students and teachers from across Scotland on our *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project. ...

Reflecting on the visit, the Scottish First Minister commented, "it's hard to put into words the impact. The sheer scale of the horror and the remnants of so many lives, the shoes, suitcases, photos, is hard to comprehend."

"We must ensure the Holocaust is never forgotten. The work of the Holocaust Educational Trust is vital in educating young people about the Holocaust and what can happen if prejudice and racism become acceptable in a society. I'm proud the Scottish Government is able to support them to continue their important work and I am honoured to be participating in this visit." ...

<https://www.het.org.uk/news-and-events/754-scottish-first-minister-joins-lessons-from-auschwitz-project>

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Plan

11. **Henry Bellingham (Conservative):** What discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the proposed (a) content and (b) timeline for a US-brokered peace plan for Israel and the Palestinians. [907353]

12. **Philip Hollobone (Conservative):** What assessment he has made of the

implications for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process of the Human Rights Watch report, "Two Authorities, One Way, Zero Dissent: Arbitrary Arrest and Torture under the Palestinian Authority and Hamas", published in October 2018. [907354]

The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt): I discussed the proposed United States peace plan with the US President's middle east envoy, Jason Greenblatt, on 28 September in New York. The Foreign Secretary discussed this with the special adviser to the US President, Jared Kushner, on 22 August. The UK remains committed to a negotiated settlement leading to a two-state solution based on 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital.

Henry Bellingham: I am glad the Minister has made that commitment, but does he agree that the time really has come for a re-energising and reinvigorating of a two-state solution? Will he personally take a lead in that? Surely what the world expects from both sides is restraint and statesmanship, with Hamas stopping the constant rocket attacks and Israel drawing a halt to the west bank settlement programme?

Alistair Burt: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's questions. The need to keep the middle east peace process at the forefront of the world's mind is perhaps greater than ever. Just because it has gone on for so long, that is no reason why it should slip away. I absolutely assure my hon. Friend that, everywhere I go and in every conversation I have in the region, they know that the middle east peace process will come up because the United Kingdom must not let it be as it is, because there will no peace or security for either the state of Israel or its neighbours unless the issue is finally resolved.

Philip Hollobone: After a comprehensive two-year investigation, Human Rights Watch has concluded that "Palestinian authorities routinely arrest people whose peaceful speech displeases them and torture those in their custody."

Will my right hon. Friend condemn that deplorable abuse of power and make appropriate representations to the Palestinian Authority?

Alistair Burt: We read with great concern the report that my hon. Friend quoted. We do not provide any funding to the agencies mentioned in it, although we do support other areas of the security sector. We have raised our concerns about this issue with the Ministry of Interior and continue to encourage the Palestinian Authority to respect human rights and to ensure that complaints of mistreatment or arbitrary detention are properly investigated. We continue to work with the authority to improve the performance of the security sector.

Louise Ellman (Labour Co-op): Has the Minister considered the political implications of the recent tragic events at the Gaza border, where Palestinians are encouraged to believe that they have a right of return within Israel's internationally recognised 1948 boundaries? That makes a two-state solution impossible.

Alistair Burt: What I can and should say to the House is that it has been clear in recent weeks that Hamas has much greater control over the demonstrations at the border than it had at the start of the summer. Hamas has in effect completely taken over the committee that was responsible for the protests and the march on the right to return, and it is now taking people, including children, to the border. That is a practice that must end. The situation at the Gaza border is very grim. It will take both sides to realise that there can be no future unless Gaza and the west bank are included in the overall settlement for which we work so hard.

Ian Austin (Labour): Is not it incredible that earlier we had a discussion about the terrible situation in Gaza in which the word "Hamas" was not mentioned once? Is not it the case that the only way in which that terrible situation will be alleviated and improved is through progress being made on a peace process, and that the only way that that is going to happen is when Hamas lays down its weapons, stops using resources that should be used to build houses, hospitals and schools to dig tunnels and to make rockets to fire at civilians in Israel, and stops the incendiary attacks that have caused 1,000 fires on the border?

Alistair Burt: As the hon. Gentleman knows, although very often Members on

one side of the House or the other tend to raise issues of greatest concern to themselves and ignore the other side, the United Kingdom Government have been clear about the responsibilities in Gaza. I just mentioned Hamas in my previous answer—but I understand the point—and it is very clear that Hamas has significant responsibility for the events in Gaza. None the less, Israel also has some responsibility for the restrictions and the issues in Gaza, which is why, as the hon. Gentleman rightly said, none of this will be settled by one side or the other; it will be settled only by the comprehensive agreement that we are all working so hard to achieve.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-30/debates/B47E1D1A-8825-4261-859B-16927AB199B9/Israeli-PalestinianPeacePlan>

Gaza: Access to Healthcare

8. Philippa Whitford (SNP): What diplomatic steps the Government is taking to improve access to healthcare in Gaza. [907350]

The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt): The Government remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. I regularly raise with the Israeli authorities the need to ease restrictions there. Our ambassador to Israel discussed Gaza with the Israeli authorities on 17 October. The UK supports healthcare in Gaza through the International Committee of the Red Cross, and is a strong supporter of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, which provides basic healthcare in Gaza.

Philippa Whitford: As well as many breast cancer patients not being allowed out of Gaza for treatment, it is very difficult for doctors to get out to access training, so Medical Aid for Palestinians has recruited specialists to bring the training to them. But on our visit last month, I was formally denied permission to enter Gaza and two other doctors on our team never received theirs. This totally wrecked our teaching programme. Will the Minister make representations to the Israeli authorities to allow these medical projects in Gaza to continue unhindered?

Alistair Burt: First, I have already done so. Secondly, although it is of course a matter for Israeli authorities to make those decisions, the value of the visits of the hon. Lady and her team cannot be overestimated. Thirdly, we are all in her debt for the work that she does to support those suffering conditions in Gaza.

Stephen Crabb (Conservative): The Save a Child's Heart programme at the cardiology department of the Wolfson Medical Centre in Israel has now seen or treated around 6,000 Palestinian children. Does my right hon. Friend agree that these kind of projects—which bring together Palestinian and Jewish medics, and bring Israelis into contact with Palestinian families—are incredibly powerful and uplifting? Will he look at what more we can do to support such projects?

Alistair Burt: It is an often understated fact of the complex relationship between Israel and its neighbours that there is cross-border work, and that medical treatment takes place in Israel for those from both the west bank and Gaza—some of it is very high level and done in the most important circumstances. Save a Child's Heart is not directly supported by the United Kingdom, but we certainly support all efforts to make sure there is even more contact between the Palestinians and the Israeli authorities, particularly in healthcare matters.

Fabian Hamilton (Labour): The United Nations says that international funding to tackle the humanitarian crisis across the Palestinian territories is at an all-time low, with the shortfall to meet this year's needs now standing at \$380 million. Although we warmly welcome the £7 million increase in September from the UK Government, the Minister of State must know that it is a drop in the ocean. Will he instead do what we have been calling for since January, convene an urgent global funding conference and treat this as the pressing emergency it is?

Alistair Burt: The support we give to UNRWA continues to be considerable, and we have brought forward support that would have come in the next couple of

years, but the hon. Gentleman is absolutely right that, compared with the loss from the United States, it is only a small amount. We lobby other states directly on this, and there has been an increase in funding that will see us through a relatively short period of time. After that, it is essential that the issues surrounding UNRWA are dealt with and that funding is found for those who are in need. Ultimately, the issues that UNRWA deals with will only be resolved when we get the final agreement for which we are all searching. In the meantime, we do encourage, and we have seen a response from, other states following the United Kingdom's generosity.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-30/debates/2C15FB2F-1635-4791-9583-0E917DF16FD5/GazaAccessToHealthcare>

Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Tommy Sheppard (SNP): Last week, the UN special rapporteur, Michael Lynk, produced his report on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He concludes that the problem is not with the clarity of international law, but with the unwillingness of the international community to uphold it. Does the Foreign Secretary agree with that assessment and, if so, what action will his Government take to ensure the rule of law in the middle east?

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Jeremy Hunt): We are very concerned about a number of the things that have been happening in the occupied territories. We will study that report extremely carefully. Indeed, we are talking closely to the Americans about their middle east peace plan, which we hope will be launched soon.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-30/debates/4EFBC063-CEDD-4FFD-B48B-A22871B5B072/TopicalQuestions#contribution-7539CB49-28CD-410B-B712-DA8BB0F00B35>

Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Brendan O'Hara (SNP): I have recently returned from Abu Nuwar, a village close to Khan al-Ahmar. There, I asked some of the mothers about their hopes and expectations. They said their hope was to remain in their village; their expectation was that, if Khan al-Ahmar is demolished, they would be next. What hope can the Minister give the mothers of Abu Nuwar?

Alistair Burt: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman, both for his visit and for his continuing interest in this issue. As he knows, and as the House knows, we have made significant representations in relation to Khan al-Ahmar and other Bedouin communities in recent times. There has still been no decision to demolish the Khan al-Ahmar village; that is currently paused—a decision by the Israeli authorities that we welcome. We continue to hope that a resolution will be found that does not involve demolition. The United Kingdom will remain closely involved.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-30/debates/4EFBC063-CEDD-4FFD-B48B-A22871B5B072/TopicalQuestions#contribution-7EBCAC51-C79E-4207-A101-6FD77250A865>

Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Debbie Abrahams (Labour): When will the Government formally recognise Palestine as a state in its own right and a full member of the UN?

Alistair Burt: The United Kingdom reserves the right to acknowledge and recognise the state of Palestine when it is in the best interests of the peace process to do so.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-30/debates/4EFBC063-CEDD-4FFD-B48B-A22871B5B072/TopicalQuestions#contribution-38DC1943-6FD0-4D87-8FA4-90889B8F11BD>

House of Commons Written Answer

Israel: Demolition

Brendan O'Hara (SNP) [907363] What recent representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on communities threatened by demolition and forcible transfer in the West Bank.

Alistair Burt: I raised demolitions with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 11 October; in particular urging Israel to reconsider plans to demolish the village of Khan al-Ahmar. Our Ambassador to Israel raised the proposed demolition with the Israeli authorities on 3 October. We remain gravely concerned by these proposals and will continue to raise our concerns with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-30/907363/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Overseas Trade: Israel

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL10702] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that United Kingdom companies are not selling equipment to Israel to be used for the demolition of Palestinian villages in the West Bank.

Baroness Fairhead: Where equipment is subject to export controls the exporters must have a licence authorising shipment. All export licence applications are assessed rigorously against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. The Consolidated Criteria provide a thorough risk assessment framework and require us to consider the impact of providing equipment and its capabilities. The Government will not grant a licence if to do so would be inconsistent with these criteria, including respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

We continue to raise concerns with the Israeli authorities about demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes. The British Government is fully committed to the promotion of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Where a company decides to trade is ultimately a decision for each company to reach, taking account of the legal and regulatory environment, as well as international human rights law. The British Government will continue to encourage and foster respect for human rights among UK businesses.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-15/HL10702/>

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Foreign Affairs

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Douglas Chapman (SNP) (1786) Pittsburgh Support and Solidarity – That this House recognises the close links between Pittsburgh, USA and Dunfermline, Scotland which have been developed over many years through our joint association with the life and work of Andrew Carnegie; expresses its sincere condolences to the people of Pittsburgh, and especially the Jewish community there, which this week witnessed a direct attack on their place of worship causing many innocent men, women and children to have their

lives taken or to have sustained serious injury through such a mindless act of violence; and offers its support and solidarity and sends a message that its thoughts, hopes and prayers are with Pittsburgh at this difficult time.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1786>

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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>

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>

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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