

# 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

### Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

#### **Faith Minister launches national tour to celebrate the role of faith communities**

Faith Minister Lord Bourne ... embarked on his latest national Faith Tour to shine a spotlight on the central role faith institutions play in building strong, resilient communities. The tour – ‘Belief in communities: bridging divides and strengthening communities’ – will commence with a visit to the Highway of Holiness Church in Tottenham and will be followed by monthly flagship visits across the country to engage directly with faith communities. This will include meeting volunteers and faith leaders to understand the key success factors that could be applied elsewhere.

Minister for Faith Lord Bourne said: Large or small, faith communities are often at the heart of a local area – the glue that binds our society together.

The length and breadth of this country, faith institutions form community hubs and support centres, as well as places of worships. ...

Many faith-based organisations provide support to their community above and beyond their day-to-day work. Lord Bourne’s tour will serve to recognise and promote this, whilst strengthening and extending the positive impact many faith institutions have as this government continues to celebrate its faith communities. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faith-minister-launches-national-tour-to-celebrate-the-role-of-faith-communities>

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Jeremy Hunt:** Very sorry to miss the @BoardofDeputies Chanukah event due to debates in Parliament. I want to wish the Jewish community in the UK and around the world a Chanukah Sameach - a very Happy Chanukah! שמח חנוכה!

[https://twitter.com/Jeremy\\_Hunt/status/1069648982639632385](https://twitter.com/Jeremy_Hunt/status/1069648982639632385)

### Scottish Parliament Motion

**S5M-15025 Andy Wightman (Green): Freedom of Expression in UK Universities –**

That the Parliament welcomes the report, Uncomfortable, but educational: Freedom of expression in UK universities, by the Index on Censorship, which highlights the importance of free speech in the UK's universities and elsewhere; considers academia to be a nexus for the free flowing and sharing of thoughts and ideas but believes with increasing concern that, in recent years, there have been attempts to suppress debates in certain subjects; acknowledges the report's assessment of the existing legal and other protections for free speech at universities; considers that so-called Prevent legislation, which compels them to refer students who seem at risk of being drawn into terrorism, to be at odds with the statutory duty on institutions to protect free speech; acknowledges the findings and recommendations of the report, and believes that these demonstrate that universities and student bodies could do more to fulfil their commitment to freedom of expression by better navigating the current legislative requirements to protect public safety while balancing the need for free speech on campuses.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-15025>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.indexoncensorship.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Index-on-Censorship-Free-Speech-on-Campus-Report-Design-WebA.pdf>

## Scottish Government

### **Chanukah message from the First Minister**

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon wishes everyone in the Jewish community a very Happy Chanukah:

Chanukah is a wonderful time for Jewish communities to come together to celebrate their faith and heritage. I wish everybody celebrating over the coming days a happy and health holiday – Chanukah sameach!

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1069290233827680256>

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## Holocaust

### Holocaust Memorial Foundation

#### **UK Holocaust Memorial to reaffirm Britain's commitment to stand up against antisemitism, prejudice and hatred**

The Mission Statement for the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, published today (4 December 2018), vows that the national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will reaffirm Britain's commitment to stand up against antisemitism, prejudice and hatred in all its forms.

#### **UK Holocaust Memorial Mission Statement**

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial is the UK's national establishment for remembrance of the Holocaust. It is dedicated to the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of the Nazis and their collaborators.

The Memorial will stand as a reminder of the horrors of the past and will encourage reflection on their implications for British government and society, both at the time and subsequently. The view of Parliament from the Memorial will serve as a permanent reminder that political decisions have far-reaching consequences. By setting history's worst example of the disintegration of democratic values against the greatest emblem of

Britain's aspirations for democracy, it will stand as a permanent reminder of the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy to be vigilant and responsive whenever and wherever those values are threatened.

We seek to preserve the memory of the Holocaust whilst also considering its contemporary relevance. The Holocaust – the murder of Europe's Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators – remains unsurpassed as a historical event in its aims and extent, yet the questions it raises have many echoes in the modern world, including (but not restricted to) subsequent genocides and the persistence of antisemitism.

Deeper understanding of the Holocaust, and of Britain's responses to it, therefore prompts us to ask challenging questions about human behaviour and the world around us. The UK Holocaust Memorial will thus aim both to remember and to encourage reflection on the lessons of the past amongst all British citizens and visitors of all nationalities. In dedicating itself to this mission, Britain reaffirms its commitment to stand up against antisemitism, prejudice and hatred in all its forms

### **How we will deepen understanding of the Holocaust and Britain's response**

We seek to combine a striking architectural monument with an engaging, reflective and powerful exhibition. This will be founded on academic research and judicious use of sources, combined with an experiential approach to immerse visitors in the historical content and provoke their critical thinking.

The display will confront the immense human calamity caused by the destruction of Europe's Jewish communities during the Holocaust, arousing a sincere commitment to mourn, remember and act. Victims will be remembered as individuals, not nameless statistics.

The thematic exhibition will set the Holocaust within the British narrative: historically, politically and culturally. This narrative will be balanced, addressing the complexities of Britain's ambiguous responses to the Holocaust, avoiding simplistic judgements and encouraging visitors to critically reflect on whether more could have been done, both by policymakers and by society as a whole.

We will work with other institutions across the UK supporting Holocaust commemoration and education. We will complement the permanent exhibition with online material, drawing on the same research and sources, making links to other relevant sites, and promoting a deeper understanding of the Holocaust among as wide an audience as possible.

Facing history honestly requires us to question the role of our own Parliament, government and society in the history of the Holocaust, and recurring genocides in its aftermath. The obligation to confront the contemporary rise of antisemitism will not be overlooked, in light of the recent rise of extremist views in Britain and many other countries.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-holocaust-memorial-to-reaffirm-britains-commitment-to-stand-up-against-antisemitism-prejudice-and-hatred>

### **UK Holocaust Memorial public exhibition boards**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/761583/UK\\_Holocaust\\_Memorial\\_public\\_exhibition\\_boards\\_December\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/761583/UK_Holocaust_Memorial_public_exhibition_boards_December_2018.pdf)

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Israel: Gaza

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11592] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether

they intend to (1) make representations to the government of Israel, and (2) take other steps, to ensure the safety of people in Gaza (a) from incursions by the Israel Defense Forces, and (b) when protesting peacefully at border fences.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israel Defence Forces (IDF) in the West Bank and Gaza. We have raised the issue with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. The UK has repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the IDF police protests, including use of live ammunition. We will continue to do so.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-19/HL11592/>

#### **Israel: Gaza**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11593] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the (1) reduction of the permissible fishing zone off the coast of Gaza, and (2) the reports of shots fired at fishermen outside the zone.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly raise with the Government of Israel on Gaza the urgent need to ease all access and movement restrictions including fishing limits. This would help to restore the fishing industry. We are concerned by all acts of violence in Gaza, including in the fishing areas. All sides have a responsibility to protect civilians.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-19/HL11593/>

#### **Israel: Gaza**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11594] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the current status of Gaza, (2) the control which Israel exerts over it, and (3) Israel's obligations towards civilians living there.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We consider that the level of control that Israel retains over the Gaza strip amounts to occupation under international law and hence Israel's presence is governed by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Conventions of 1949, to which Israel is a state party. The UK is closely monitoring the situation in Gaza. We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on movement and access in Gaza, and the impact that these have on the humanitarian situation. We have frequent discussions with the Government of Israel about the need to ease restrictions on Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-19/HL11594/>

#### **Israel: Gaza**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11595] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment have they made of Israel's refusal to allow students from Gaza to study at West Bank universities.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We consistently urge Israel to ease movement and access restrictions across the Occupied Palestinian Territories, not least because of the impact that the restrictions have on continuity of education.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-19/HL11595/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11596] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ruling on 26 August by the Israeli High Court that seven women previously denied entry to Israel for medical treatment on the grounds that

they were relatives of Hamas operatives must be allowed entry; and what discussions have they had with the government of Israel about whether this ruling could be applied to others.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware that the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the State to allow five medical patients to travel from Gaza to Israel in order to receive treatment for cancer. More generally the Court also ruled that the Israeli Security Cabinet's 2017 decision to deny Gazan patients access to medical treatment as a means of leverage over Hamas was ineffective and illegal. We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on movement and access in Gaza, and the impact that this is having on the humanitarian situation. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the matter of medical permits with the Israeli authorities and supports a project aimed at improving health in Gaza through facilitating exit permits and medical delegations to Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-19/HL11596/>

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11635] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the destruction of an agricultural road between the town of Aqraba and Khirbst Yanoun which prevents access to their land for those living nearby.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made any representations specifically on this issue, we are gravely concerned by continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv repeatedly raised our concerns about demolitions with Israeli ministers and senior officials, and urged them to cease the counter-productive policy of demolitions, and provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-20/HL11635/>

## Innovate UK and UK Research and Innovation

### Work with Israeli businesses on innovative ideas: new funding

*Deadline for registration: 27 February 2019*

Israel is increasingly challenging Silicon Valley in the high-tech space, with a [2018 report](#) showing Tel Aviv to have more start ups per capita than anywhere else in the world. It also performs well for global connectedness and product development.

Closer collaboration on innovation projects will create opportunities for both the UK and Israel to boost capabilities and take advantage of international markets.

In a new funding competition, there is up to £1 million available for UK businesses to develop game-changing innovations in partnership with Israeli companies.

The funding comes under the [EUREKA](#) programme, an inter-governmental network that encourages international research and development of innovative business products and ideas. UK involvement in projects will be funded by Innovate UK, with Israeli involvement by the [Israel Innovation Authority](#). The countries are committed to collaborating to develop new technologies and take advantage of global opportunities. ...

Projects in this competition can be from any technology or market area. ...

projects must be led by a UK business of any size working with at least 1 business in Israel, which must be separate, non-linked legal entity ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/work-with-israeli-businesses-on-innovative-ideas-new-funding>

## Israel AI programme will help female innovators' ideas succeed

Women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) specialising in artificial intelligence (AI) and data can apply to be part of a global business innovation programme to help them get ideas closer to market, make connections and uncover opportunities in Israel.

Innovate UK and the UK Science and Innovation Network Israel will host 15 successful applicants on a week-long, fully-funded programme to Israel. They will get advice before the visit to help them prepare as well as follow-on support to make the most of the opportunity. ...

Israel is known worldwide for innovation in digital, AI and cyber technology, with the [highest investment in research and development \(R&D\) globally](#). Over 300 multinational corporations, including Facebook and Amazon, have R&D labs in the country.

Earlier this year, UK government [signed 2 new agreements to strengthen academic and scientific links with Israel](#). One agreement specifically focuses on improvements in AI and data, which is an Industrial Strategy Grand Challenge. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/israel-ai-programme-will-help-female-innovators-ideas-succeed>

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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>

#### **Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

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

### Scottish Parliament

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

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

Health and Sport Committee: stage 1 evidence session

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11810&i=106859#ScotParlOR>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 6 days**

**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>

**Extremism in England and Wales** (closing date 31 January 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/extremism-in-england-and-wales-call-for-evidence>

**\*\* Racial harassment in higher education** (closing date 15 February 2019)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/racial-harassment-higher-education-our-inquiry>

**Draft guidance to challenge bullying in schools** [Wales only] (closing date 15 February 2019)

<https://beta.gov.wales/draft-guidance-challenge-bullying-schools>

**One Scotland: Hate Has No Home Here** (closing date 24 February 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/hate-crime/consultation-on-scottish-hate-crime-legislation/>

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