

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

## Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Debate

#### Islamophobia

*col 1927* **Lord Sheikh (Conservative):** To move that this House takes note of the impact of Islamophobia in the United Kingdom. ...

I am very glad that we are having this timely discussion on Islamophobia today. I am also very pleased that recently there was a debate in your Lordships' House relating to anti-Semitism. I am totally against anti-Semitism and feel that we should all get together and combat it in every way we can. Unfortunately, xenophobia has to some extent crept into different walks of life in this country and certain people behave very badly towards minorities. Whether it is deliberate or based on misunderstandings, we must all make an effort to combat this trend.

I am proud to live in a country where there are numerous communities, and all races and religions are tolerated and in fact accepted. Xenophobic attacks are increasing in regularity, and some people feel it is fair game to engage in nastiness towards people who are different from them. ...

I have submitted an application to the House of Lords Liaison Committee asking for a special inquiry to be undertaken on the subject of Islamophobia. ... A poll by ComRes in October found that 58% of people agreed with the statement: "Islamophobia is a real problem in today's society".

It is crucial that we combat all forms of Islamophobia, from subtle and institutional Islamophobia to discrimination and hate crime. ...

Unfortunately, I feel that elements of Islamophobia have crept into the political parties. ...

I feel that political parties must hold an inquiry to establish if there is such an issue and the extent of the problem. ...

The Home Office recently published figures that reveal that 52% of reported hate crime victims overall were Muslim. ... Between January and June 2018, Tell MAMA recorded 608 reports that were verified as being anti-Muslim or Islamophobic in nature. ...

*col 1928* It has also been noted that Islamophobia is an issue for people of other religions and ethnicities. For example, Sikhs have been subjected to hate crimes on the basis that they were perceived to be Muslims. ...

There is an association of Islam with crime and terror, which serves only to spread and normalise Islamophobia. Crimes are committed by people of all religions and races. ...

Muslim charities undertake good work in various parts of the world and provide aid to

Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Muslims provide support to people of all races, colour and religion all over the world. ...

*col 1929* The contribution of Muslims to society must be appreciated, as it sets out the philosophy of Muslims and of Islam itself. Having said that, I realise that Muslims are going through a critical phase and that there are problems associated with some sections of the community. A tiny minority of people practise and promote ideas which are totally un-Islamic. They have misunderstood our glorious religion, and what they do and have done is not in accordance with Islamic principles. It is wrong to condemn the entire community for the actions of a misguided minority. ...

It is imperative that we create a definition of Islamophobia to make a meaningful change. The APPG on British Muslims recently launched a definition of Islamophobia, drawing inspiration from the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. This definition reads:

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness”.

It was developed over six months, with input from a wide range of sources, academics, parliamentarians, community-based organisations, and government-supported and funded NGOs. It has also received a great deal of support across the community. In fact, it has been supported by over 750 British Muslim organisations, 80 academics from different background and over 60 cross-party parliamentarians. Will the Minister consider the acceptance of this definition and schedule a meeting where we can discuss the way forward? ...

*col 1930* **Baroness Warsi (Conservative):** This is a take-note debate on the impact of Islamophobia in the UK. So we could take note of the breadth of Islamophobia in Britain today: from murder—the killing of Maz Saleem, a grandfather from Birmingham—to violent crime, much of it targeted at women and children; from discrimination in the workplace to bullying in the playground; from demonising in the tabloids to distasteful coalitions between fascists and other religious minorities; from the perpetuating of myths by the far right to the political hosting of Islamophobes by Members of this House. This has far surpassed the “dinner table test” that I laid out in 2011: it is, sadly, Britain’s bigotry blind spot.

I could give you statistics on hate crime and appalling polling figures on attitudes towards Muslims from my nearly two decades of work in this space, or I could simply read out the vile, daily Islamophobic messages that I receive some 80 years after both my grandfathers served to defend this country in the Second World War, and 60 years after they and my parents came here, having given up their former lives to create new lives for themselves and opportunities for others. Having served my country at the top table, with children serving to keep this country safe, these messages tell me that, despite all that, I am the enemy within, that the likes of me are not to be trusted and that I do not belong in Britain today. Or I could make a personal plea that I worry about whether my grandchildren will call Britain their home, but that would become a very long debate. ...

Enough is enough. We do not put racists in charge of race relations, we do not make anti-Semites the arbiters of anti-Semitism, and we should not hail those who have sought to malign Muslims as voices of reason on a definition of Islamophobia. ...

*col 1931* I am aware of a small number of very vocal critics who have contacted the Home Secretary and other Secretaries of State, urging them not to adopt the definition of Islamophobia proposed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims. ...

To those who criticise it, I say this: first, in evidence heard by the APPG, some of those urging the non-adoption of the definition of Islamophobia were equally reticent about adopting a definition of anti-Semitism—the Southall Black Sisters, for example. I can safely say that the Government and Home Secretary would justifiably give short shrift to arguments against the IHRA definition. British Muslims would expect nothing less.

Secondly, the definition proposed by the APPG emerged from a wide-ranging consultation ... It is rooted in communities, under-pinned by academics and framed by parliamentarians. Those who have taken aim at the definition possess neither credibility

in nor the confidence of the communities this definition seeks to protect. So I return to the definition of anti-Semitism and reiterate that instrumental to its adoption was the agency of British Jewish communities. British Muslims expect nothing less. ...

We are not concerned with limiting or eliminating criticism of Islam any more than the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism limits or eliminates criticism of Israel. The same misguided arguments which were raised against that IHRA definition are being rehearsed in relation to the Islamophobia definition. We hear siren voices claiming it will curtail speech or criticism of Islam or Islamism. I am amused that those raising these concerns have been ostensibly silent on anti-Semitism, despite the Islamophobia definition mirroring the IHRA guidelines. Dare I say it, their arguments betray the same hyperbole of those whose contention against the anti-Semitism definition is that it would rightly call them out for anti-Semitic sentiments. ...

*col/ 1933* I concluded my book two years ago with these words and I end with them today:

“The fog of fascism is once more spreading across our continent, xenophobic views are drifting in from the east and west ... It starts with words, and if the ‘respectable’ justification of hatred is left unchecked it ends with actions. How Britain responds to this new environment will determine whether we succeed in remaining a tolerant, diverse, liberal inclusive democracy, and the canaries in the coal mine are British Muslims”. ...

**Lord Parekh (Labour):** ... The word Islamophobia comes to us from the Runnymede Trust report of 1997, with which I was associated. The report began to make it clear that the word Islamophobia is useful but also risky. ... First, it confuses Islam with Muslims. To talk about “Islamophobia” simply means that I resent Islam while taking a different attitude towards Muslims. Secondly and more importantly, “phobia” absolves the agent of responsibility—for example, one might say, “I suffer from agoraphobia”, or say that they have a fear of heights or of speaking in public. If someone says, “I have this phobia; there is nothing I can do about it; it is an irrational, deeply ingrained fear”, it gives them a get-out. ...

*col/ 1934* The expression it used was “anti-Muslim racism”. That also does not quite work, because I do not know what “racism” is doing there. It looks like verbal obesity, using an extra word when “anti-Muslim” would convey what you wish to convey. It also fails to capture the specificity of Islamophobia. I therefore suggest that, rather than talk about “anti-Muslim racism”, one simply says that something has to be done about anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination in all areas of life.

This discrimination also occurs towards other minorities, but in addition Muslims have been subjected to something unique—a kind of irrational, instinctive fear. Whenever somebody talks about Muslims in a university or elsewhere, the feeling is: “Oh my God; keep it out”. Where does this irrational antipathy, this refusal to talk about it and closure of the mind, come from? This is peculiar to Muslims; it does not extend to black people or others. ...

When does Islamophobia in that sense arise in our society? ...

First is extraterritorial loyalty, the feeling that Muslims are somehow more loyal to the ayatollah than to their own sovereign ... Secondly, the argument arises that Muslims are somehow against liberal values, freedom of speech or gender equality. Thirdly, and increasingly importantly in recent years, is the idea that somehow minority identities—in this case, Muslim identity—are valued more and that the identity of the majority community in society as a whole is being systematically undermined. Finally, there is the argument that Muslims are keen to introduce religion into public life and question the secular settlement. ...

How do we counter this deep-seated, irrational fear? ...

*col/ 1935* **Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat):** ... if we cannot say what something is, how can we measure its prevalence?

*col/ 1936* Islam is blamed for many things but in truth, pure Islam, and most other religions, are innocent of the malign characteristics sometimes ascribed to them. It is

those who seek power over others to interpret the words of Allah—or the name of any other God—and bend them to their own ends who are to blame for many of the injustices in this world. ...

Criticising Islam, like criticising any religion, is quite legitimate, of course. ...

Whatever definition we use, it is the effects of this unreasonable and irrational view of Muslims and Islam that are damaging the fabric of our society and the lives of so many thousands of people. ...

*col 1937* **Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench):** ... Unfortunately, it is a fact that some communities use government funding to produce questionable statistics to show that they are more hated than others; groups without a culture of complaint, such as Sikhs, fall off the Government's radar. We have had debates on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, but what about other communities? Should we not be thinking about all communities, not just those in more powerful positions? ...

The result of that effective lobbying is seen in the half-term report on the Government's hate crime strategy, which gives some 20 government initiatives to protect Abrahamic faiths from hate crimes. However, it is totally silent on hate crimes against other communities. ...

*col 1938* Today the one-time distant foreigner with a different culture and religion, whom we could safely ridicule at a distance to give us a greater sense of cohesion, is now very often our next-door neighbour. For a harmonious society we must work to remove the distorting fog of ignorance and prejudice, and see others as they really are: equal members of our one human family. ...

*col 1939* In summary, while I sympathise with the suffering of the Muslim community from hate crimes arising out of common prejudice, there is no statistical evidence whatever to suggest that this is greater or less than that suffered by other communities. ... The only components of hate crime that justify the term "Islamophobia" are those arising from negative perceptions of Islam, or what is seen as inappropriate behaviour by members of the Muslim community. It is again a task for the Muslim community. It is not an easy one. The Muslim leaders and clerics deserve our full support in this. ...

**The Lord Bishop of Chichester:** ... As extremists attempt to divide our communities, and even seek to hijack Christian symbols to do so, it is important to state clearly and loudly that it is the duty of all Christians in this country to stand in solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters who suffer hate speech, violence or prejudice. ...

We should also remember that hatred which isolates us from one another impoverishes us all, socially, economically and culturally. As the noble Lord, Lord Sacks, has argued, a society that values integration without assimilation allows us all to bring our particular gifts as contributions to the common good, "not to ourselves and our communities alone but to all of us and the life we share". ...

*col 1940* Prejudice, discrimination and hatred of Muslims must not be treated as a concern voiced by the Muslim community alone. It is the duty of us all to ensure that Islamophobia is given no hiding place in our national life and to seek to build an open society in which the varied and significant contribution of our Muslim brothers and sisters is recognised and celebrated. ...

*col 1942* **Baroness Falkner of Margravine (Liberal Democrat):** ... there is great diversity within Islam in terms of its different traditions and the composition and practice of its adherents, as well as their ethnicity and geographical backgrounds. It is an error to speak of the Muslim experience in the West as one of a homogenous group, with "them" against "us", the victims. The identity of Muslims from east Asia is profoundly different from that of south-east Asian Muslims, or from Turkic, central Asian or west African Muslims, leaving aside Europeans and other converts to Islam. So a community of global adherents to a particular religion, particularly one which is so diverse, does not lend itself well to being set up as a group with distinct and superior collective rights in a European context, in opposition to the majority population, which is what I find this report is mainly about. ...

*col 1943* **Baroness Warsi:** ... the noble Baroness made a comment just then which is simply untrue; I want to put that on the record. ...

**Baroness Falkner of Margravine:** ... One could look at things the other way, as many of us do, and the report picks this up insufficiently: we are intensely loyal to Britain; we believe we absolutely belong here; and we are full and active citizens partaking of the opportunities this country offers. Despite the malign acts of our co-religionists and their impact on public perception, the majority of us get on and live our lives day in, day out without thinking of ourselves as victims of something undefinable. ...

*col 1944* The definition says: “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness”.

*col 1945* When you define a religion—in other words, a belief system—as an adjective and declare that this is rooted in race, which is biological, you ascribe to belief an immutability which cannot work. People live their lives on a spectrum of belief, at some points in a deeper sense and at others less so. Their visible and cultural identity will depend on where they are on this spectrum and may change over time. By basing Islamophobia on biological characteristics and saying that Muslims are a racially homogenous group, you are speaking to the plight of only a section of the BAME community. Where does that leave white European Muslims—Bosniaks, Kosovars and Albanians—as well as converts to Islam in Europe? One assumes that their protection would come under religious hate crime. ...

**Baroness Uddin (Non-affiliated):** ... The 20th century witnessed the mass persecution and killing of millions of men, women and children who were identified, demonised and dehumanised because of their Jewish faith. The Holocaust was underpinned by a fever of fear and hatred, illogical persecution and misinformation. This fear and hatred of Muslims manifested itself in the psyche of Europe for more than a millennium, with anti-Islam narratives in history, the arts, literature and the wider culture of Europe also part of a pattern of fear and illogical hatred.

Centuries-old prejudice and fear have ignited the ever-rising demonisation of Muslims, as has the adoption of draconian anti-Muslim measures and knee-jerk policy reactions, which are a threat to the safety of Muslims in many parts of Europe. ...

*col 1946* However, it is not just the words of far-right extremists and hostile secularists with which we should be concerned. Our own Prime Minister declared in her 2016 party conference speech: “If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don’t understand what citizenship means”.

These sentiments raised widespread concern at the time, as was argued by the now Liberal Democrat leader, Vince Cable, who said that the PM’s words were regrettably reminiscent of anti-Jewish hatred in the previous century. ...

*col 1947* Although I can understand why the option of integrating Islamophobia under racism is appealing, I strongly suggest that legally defining religious discrimination as racism is an erroneous contradiction ... Further, the race industry has worked consistently to deny religious discrimination equal weight. ... The virulent religious discrimination in Britain today demands detailed, national and structural policy responses and redress. ...

*col 1948* **Lord Hussain (Liberal Democrat):** ... during the 47 years that I have lived here ... I have witnessed racial discrimination and religious discrimination of all sorts, and I am not the only one. Thousands of others have done the same. Many people have tried to give names to discrimination, asking, “What kind of discrimination is this? Is it racial discrimination, religious discrimination or whatever?” But religious discrimination has worsened into the hatred that we have seen. I have been a recipient of the “Kill a Muslim” letters in the recent past. That is how far it has gone, and purely on religious grounds. It is about the colour of skin no more; it has gone further. ...

*col 1949* **Baroness Afshar (Crossbench):** ... Islam is a religion of peace and equity. As a matter of fact, the text of the Koran states clearly that Islam accepts and respects all religions of the book that have preceded it. The root for the word “Islam” is taslim,

meaning surrender and submission; submission to the will of God and the teaching of the faith. For many of us, Islam provides not only a pathway to heaven but a prescription for living our lives well in this world. There is a fundamental concern for balance, moderation and compassion that must be observed. ...

*col 1950* It is therefore a matter of deep regret that we are experiencing a sad tendency by some people to create barriers and label some of us as “not one of us”. Rather than building bridges, we are seen in terms of stereotypical caricatures that demonise us and deny our identity. When I say that I am a Muslim, a surprising number of people look me in the eyes and say, “No you are not!” Stereotypes are stronger than the reality. I fear that instead of celebrating differences, there has been a labelling of us by our faith and the demonisation of Muslims and that we are being otherised. ...

Surely it is time that the Government stepped in, ceased to define us by our religion but referred to us in terms of our professions, marital status or whatever is used to refer to other people. Since we do not talk about Christian or Zoroastrian citizens, why talk about Muslim citizens as a single category when in reality we are as diverse as the continents that we come from? ...

*col 1951* **Baroness Chakrabarti (Labour):** ... Even though this is our last working day before Christmas, a debate about hatred of British Muslims is particularly important as so many British Muslims will celebrate Christmas with their friends and wider communities, and many British Muslims alongside British Jews and members of other faith communities will be working in vital emergency services and doing other important work to allow their friends and neighbours to have a break over Christmas. That is worth remembering and recognising. ...

... everyone has acknowledged that racism is on the rise, not just in our country, or just on the continent of Europe, but across the world ... While racism generally is on the rise, I think Islamophobia in particular is too often minimised, ignored and even denied in our politics and our media, including as compared with other manifestations of racism. That is not to set up a competition for victimhood but to acknowledge that a real problem has perhaps not been given sufficient space. ...

*col 1953* ... the statistics are real. The Home Office statistics now point to 52% of religious hate crimes—which are recorded as religious hate crimes—being directed at 5% of the population. That is a real worry and, with underreporting, the figures may be even worse than that. ...

*col 1954* **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth):** ... Islamophobia, racial and religious hatred is an issue that must concern us all ...

*col 1958* The Government’s position is fairly clear. First, if anyone asks the Government or indeed a political party, “Are you against anti-Semitic behaviour or anti-Islamic statements?”, of course any Government will say, “Yes; of course we’re against Islamophobia and anti-Semitism”. The question then is what we do. The first thing we need to look at—we will be looking to work done within government—is establishing a definition that will make things better. ... We have seen today that there are different strands of opinion on how that definition should roll out; I appreciate that that is a slightly different aspect of the issue, but it means that the more potential definitions there are, the more you need to be reassured that you will not make matters worse. ...

*col 1959* I do not agree with the premise that the Government are not even-handed in relation to all religious groups; all religious discrimination is wrong and that is the Government’s position ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-12-20/debates/2F954D45-1962-4256-A492-22EBF6AEF8F0/Islamophobia>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Radicalism

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [202858] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to tackle far right extremism.

**Victoria Atkins:** Through the 2015 Counter Extremism Strategy the Government is committed to tackling extremism in all its forms and protecting our communities from the serious social harms it causes. This includes defeating far right extremism.

We have:

- created a network of more than 240 civil society partners confronting extremism in their communities - including 36 focused on countering far right narratives – through the Building a Stronger Britain Together programme;
- awarded over 160 grants to fund additional security measures for places of worship across England and Wales since 2016;
- excluded and refused entry to the UK to known right wing extremists; and
- supported Local Authorities in tackling far-right extremism.

The Home and Communities Secretaries will also co-chair roundtables on Islamophobia and antisemitism in the new year, with part of the discussions focusing on the impact of the far right on Muslim and Jewish communities

The independent Commission for Countering Extremism is also supporting the Government to defeat the scourge of extremism.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-17/202858/>

*The Strategy referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/470088/51859\\_Cm9148\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470088/51859_Cm9148_Accessible.pdf)

### Radicalism: Crime Prevention

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [202857] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of referrals of individuals suspected of far-right wing activity to Prevent.

**Ben Wallace:** Between April 2015 and March 2018 there were 21,042 referrals to Prevent in England and Wales, of which 3,039 related to right wing extremism. These referrals come from frontline practitioners, police and the public.

In 2015/16, 759 (10%) of the 7,631 referrals related to right wing extremism. In 2016/17 968 (16%) of the 6,093 referrals related to right wing extremism. In 2017/18 1312 (18%) of the 7,318 referrals related to right wing extremism. This reflects a 73% increase in the number of referrals relating to right wing extremism over the previous three years.

It is also worth noting the breakdown of individuals who later go on to receive support on Channel in England and Wales. In 2015/16, 26% of those that received support on Channel related to right wing extremism. This increased to 44% in 2017/18, marking a significant increase in the proportion of right wing extremist Prevent referrals going on to receive support on Channel.

Prevent explicitly addresses all forms of terrorism, including when it is inspired by the ideologies of right wing extremism. The Home Office will continue to allocate resource against the areas of highest risk.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-17/202857/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Antisemitism: EU Countries

**Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench)** [HL12217] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the findings of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU; and what action they intend to take in response.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The findings of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights report on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU show clearly that we cannot be complacent in the fight against antisemitism, or hate crime of any form.

The Government has shown its commitment to tackling antisemitism, as the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2016, and we remain alive to issues of concern in Jewish communities through our Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Antisemitism.

In the recently refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan, we have reinforced this by supporting work to develop counter-narratives to those that fuel antisemitism, and continuing to prioritise tackling antisemitism in our policy work.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-12/HL12217/>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

[http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-experiences-and-perceptions-of-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf)

*The definition of antisemitism referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

*The Hate Crime Action Plan referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/748175/Hate\\_crime\\_refresh\\_2018\\_FINAL\\_WEB.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF)

### City, University of London: Freedom of Expression

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12225] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with City, University of London about the cancellation of a planned speech by the Israeli Ambassador on 21 November; and whether they have received any representations from the Office for Students about freedom of speech at that University.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Both the Department for Education (DfE) and Office for Students (OfS) were made aware of the decision to defer the planned speech by the Israeli Ambassador. The DfE's Further Education/Higher Education coordinator has been in contact with the institution.

Freedom of speech is a crucial element of higher education and government and OfS are committed to championing it and to promoting open debate and challenge. Universities are autonomous bodies and are responsible for taking their own decisions around how to manage events and mitigate risks; handling of individual cases is not dictated by government or by the OfS. The OfS has powers to intervene if providers are not following their own free speech codes of practice

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-12/HL12225/>

### Universities: Freedom of Expression

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12226] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will issue guidance to universities on the misuse of data protection law and non-cooperation with security requirements in relation to upholding free speech.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The previous Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation held a free speech summit in May, where sector leaders agreed to collectively develop a single piece of guidance. The government has worked alongside sector leaders to set out key principles for universities and student unions managing free speech. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission will be publishing guidance in 2019 on how to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is upheld effectively in higher education institutions, whilst acknowledging their other legal duties.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-12/HL12226/>

### **Universities: Freedom of Expression**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12227] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effectiveness of section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 in upholding lawful freedom of speech on university campuses following the cancellation of a planned speech by the Israeli Ambassador at City, University of London on 21 November.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The government is deeply committed to protecting freedom of speech within the law. The freedom to express views openly, challenge ideas and engage in robust debate is crucial to the student experience and to democracy. Individuals should never be in a position where they can be stopped from expressing an opinion perfectly lawfully. Institutions are required to balance risks and legal obligations with a view to ensuring freedom of speech wherever reasonably practicable.

The Joint Committee on Human Rights held an inquiry into freedom of speech in universities earlier this year, which looked in detail and collected evidence in relation to upholding freedom of speech in universities. Drawing on information from the inquiry, which found the current regulatory landscape protecting freedom of speech to be extremely complex, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and key partners in the higher education sector have worked with the Department of Education to develop a single piece of guidance, which will set out key principles. This guidance will enable universities and student unions to understand their obligations for protecting and supporting free speech.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-12/HL12227/>

TOP

## **Holocaust**

### **Westminster Hall Debate**

#### **Christmas Adjournment**

*col 378WH* **Bob Blackman (Conservative):** ... During the year, I have been engaged in setting up three new all-party parliamentary groups. ...

The second concerns the holocaust memorial, which will go alongside Parliament. It will be a long-standing memorial to the horrors of the holocaust, and the education centre will educate people of all ages about what happened during the holocaust and why we must never allow it to happen again. The former Chief Rabbi said that Jewish people in this country fear that what is going on now is similar to what happened in Germany in the 1930s. For Jewish people in this country to feel that way is a tragedy—a tragedy for them and for all of us. In 2019, we must redouble our efforts to combat all forms of antisemitism and send a signal to all people that, whatever their religion, they have the

right to celebrate that religion in this country. We must do that on a long-standing basis. ...

*col 379WH* My constituency is the most multi-religious and multicultural in the country, bar none, so I have enjoyed the opportunity to participate in many activities with faith groups in the past year. ... over the Christmas period I shall celebrate with the Jewish community at one of our local synagogues. ...

... Jewish Care is setting up a care facility for newly retired people, which will lead on to live-in care in Stanmore. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-12-20/debates/3304147E-31CD-4803-90E8-53C328D7E7CE/ChristmasAdjournment#contribution-D0ABE1F7-5BF7-496D-89DC-DA61DB78C332>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12314] To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the £50 million they committed to the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre project has been spent so far; and how much has been raised for this project and connected purposes from other sources.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** From 2015/16 to 17 November 2018, the Government has spent £4.35 million on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre programme.

No additional funds have yet been raised from other sources. Plans are being progressed for a country-wide fundraising effort for the Memorial and Learning Centre. An independent charity is being set up to raise funds.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-14/HL12314/>

### National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12315] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the estimated cost of (1) building, and (2) running the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and how these costs will be met.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The estimated cost of building the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre is £102 million (including VAT). Future running costs are estimated to be around £5 - 6 million per annum.

In 2015, the Government committed £50 million to the cost of establishing the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. It is also the intention that further contributions towards the costs will come from a national fundraising effort. Options for providing future financial support are being explored and a sustainable long-term plan will be put in place.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-14/HL12315/>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Peter Bottomley (Conservative) (1951) National Holocaust Memorial And Learning Centre** – That this House regrets that the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF) chose the day before the Christmas parliamentary recess to submit its controversial National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre planning application to the City of Westminster; notes that the application is not yet available for consideration by interested people; further notes that the UKHMF has failed to respond fully and appropriately to successive Freedom of Information requests and has not, with the

honourable exception of the present chairman Peter Freeman, talked to the save Victoria Tower Garden group of experts and local residents; calls on the Government and the UKHMF to reconsider options for a fitting National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre that can be welcomed by all and that meets more of the sensible aims of the consultation in September 2015, including the possibility of the Memorial being placed on College Green with the learning centre developed at and with the Imperial War Museum; and asks that Victoria Tower Gardens with its small memorials and children's playground be preserved as a quiet park.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/52431/national-holocaust-memorial-and-learning-centre>

TOP

## Israel

*See also the House of Lords Written Answers on “City, University of London: Freedom of Expression” and “Universities: Freedom of Expression” included in the Home Affairs section above.*

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Topical Questions: International Trade

**T2. Bob Blackman (Conservative):** ... With UK exports to Israel up 30%, what steps will my right hon. Friend take to ensure that we increase trade with Israel as we move forward outside the European Union? [908348]

**Liam Fox:** Israel is a very important trade partner for the United Kingdom, and our bilateral co-operation has increased. When I met Prime Minister Netanyahu a few weeks ago, we agreed to have a bilateral trade and investment conference in 2019, to increase those relations as far as possible.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-12-20/debates/5729D276-A912-49AD-A736-DD6013E429AF/TopicalQuestions#contribution-CBFA2966-F7DF-4611-ABAF-4C7055DAFA90>

#### Topical Questions: International Trade

**Nigel Huddleston (Conservative):** The UK Israel Tech Hub estimates that the tech partnerships that it has created have an economic impact on the UK of around £800 million. What can we do to continue to grow this mutually beneficial relationship?

**Liam Fox:** The Tech Hub has been a huge success and a great example of the sort of model that we should be looking at, but we hope to be able to expand that relationship through the trade and investment conference that we will hold in 2019, which will be a celebration not only of our record of trade with Israel, but of the future of our trade with Israel.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-12-20/debates/5729D276-A912-49AD-A736-DD6013E429AF/TopicalQuestions#contribution-E7A804F4-2ACF-4FA9-A4C4-C492F2E8C4B8>

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### Overseas Trade: Israel

**Nigel Huddleston (Conservative)** [908327] What recent discussions he has had with the Government of Israel on bilateral trade and investment.

**Bob Blackman (Conservative)** [908329] What opportunities he identified for further trade co-operation with Israel during his recent visit to that country.

**Liam Fox:** I met with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Minister of Economy and Industry Eli Cohen during a visit to Israel in November, when we discussed our record levels of trade and investment and noted the good progress made on our continuity trade arrangement. I agreed with President Netanyahu to increase trade cooperation through joint Government sponsorship of a high-level trade and investment conference in 2019.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-20/908327/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-20/908329/>

### **Hamas: Terrorism**

**Emily Thornberry (Labour)** [201605] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the terror capabilities of Hamas.

**Alistair Burt:** We remain deeply concerned by the attempts of Hamas to rearm and rebuild militant infrastructure, including the tunnel network, in Gaza. Hamas' actions undermine efforts to improve the situation in Gaza and harm the prospects for peace and stability in the Middle East.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-12/201605/>

## **House of Lords Written Answers**

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Recognition, Reparation, Reconciliation Conference: British Council**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12140] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the adequacy of the investigation carried out by the British Council when it decided to continue to sponsor the Recognition Reparation Reconciliation conference, held on 5 December at Stellenbosch University, after Israeli and Palestinian academic contributors were caused to withdraw.

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL12141] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of the adherence of the British Council to the Equality Act 2010 and to the principle of the universality of science in its sponsorship of the Recognition Reparation Reconciliation conference, held on 5 December at Stellenbosch University, from which Israeli and Palestinian academic contributors were caused to withdraw.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made any assessment of these issues. We understand the British Council, an executive non-departmental public body that is independent from the British Government, was not a sponsor of the conference and its support was to enable UK-based academics to attend the conference and share their experience of the Northern Irish Peace Process and its impact. The British Government's position on boycotts is clear. While we do not hesitate to express disagreement with Israel whenever we feel it necessary, we are firmly opposed to boycotts. We believe that imposing sanctions on Israel or supporting anti-Israeli boycotts would not support our efforts to progress the peace process and achieve a negotiated solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-10/HL12140/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-10/HL12141/>

## Gaza: Health Services

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL12270] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to support the healthcare system in Gaza, particularly in relation to dealing with complex and serious gunshot wounds.

**Lord Bates:** DFID provided £1.5m in funding to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 2018, supporting 11 hospitals across Gaza with surgical equipment, drugs and disposables, and wound-dressing kits. Our support to the ICRC also helps to provide rehabilitation services to 4,000 people with physical disabilities, and supports the Artificial Limb Centre in Gaza, helping individuals recover from the effects of complex and serious injuries.

In the longer term, the UK is committed to a sustainable healthcare solution for the people of Gaza, which can only be achieved through a lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-12/HL12270/>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

### **Condemning Hizballah's illegal activities: Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council Briefing on the Middle East - UNIFIL**

... I'd like to join other colleagues in making clear that the United Kingdom also condemns Hizballah's building of tunnels leading into Israel. As others have noted Mr President, it is a clear violation by Hizballah of Security Council resolution 1701. It threatens Israel's security, it threatens Lebanon's security and it threatens regional stability. We are clear that Israel has the right to defend itself against Hizballah and all other armed militia groups which put the security of Israel at risk. All Israelis, all Lebanese, have the right to live in peace without fear for their security.

For too long Mr President, as other speakers have noted, we have witnessed Hizballah blatantly disregard UN resolutions. Their continued possession of weapons outside of Lebanese state control; their reported attempts to acquire dangerous new missile capabilities; as well as their statements threatening Israel, remain deeply alarming. Without an end to Hizballah's illegal activities in Lebanon, and the region, we will continue to see regional stability threatened.

The United Kingdom recognises the important work carried out by UNIFIL in maintaining calm and stability along the Blue Line over the last 12 years and we pay tribute to those nations who have provided commanders and troops for UNIFIL throughout that time. But the existence of the tunnels reinforces the importance of ensuring UNIFIL's mandate is effective and strong, and that it has full access to all areas within its operation. ...

Mr President, the United Kingdom has been clear in this Council on many occasions that we condemn Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty, whether by land, sea or air. Such actions undermine confidence and stability and we call for all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular 1559 and 1701, to be respected in full. In this regard, the UK welcomes the commitments by both Israel and Lebanon including the recent statement from the Lebanese Foreign Ministry on the full implementation of 1701, refusal to accept any violations and respect of the Blue Line. ...

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/condemning-hizballahs-illegal-activities>

### **Assistance to Palestinian People, Compliance with Court Ruling Concerning Violation of Convention on Consular Relations among Texts Adopted by General Assembly**

... Jan Kickert (Austria), speaking for the European Union delegation, introduced the draft resolution "Assistance to the Palestinian people" (document A/73/L.69). Voicing his concern over the situation of women and children in the occupied Palestinian territory, he stressed that in Gaza a humanitarian disaster was imminent. There must be increased assistance to reduce tensions and avoid conflict. He also called for the return of the Palestinian Authority to the Gaza Strip. Lasting results require addressing Israel's legitimate security concerns. The European Union will continue to assist Palestinians and Palestinian refugees and will continue to be a predictable supporter of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), he said.

Then, acting without a vote, the General Assembly adopted the resolution "L.69". Through it, the Assembly urges Member States, international financial institutions of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and regional and interregional organizations to extend, as rapidly and as generously as possible, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people. It also stresses the importance of ensuring free humanitarian access to the Palestinian people and the free movement of persons and goods.

The observer of the State of Palestine, speaking in explanation of position, thanked the Secretary-General for efforts to update reports that reflect the economic and social realities of the Palestinian people. He also noted that the European Union was providing funding for projects across multiple sectors and that such funding allows the UNRWA to continue assisting the Palestinian people. Calling for increased resources to ensure vital services remain available for all Palestinians, he said the Palestinian Government is developing a national programme that promotes human rights and prosperity with a focus on good governance and sustainable development. "Despite challenges emanating from Israeli occupation, the State of Palestine has made progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals," he noted, warning that the lack of a political solutions to the conflict was the greatest obstacle to sustainable development. ...

Further resolutions concerned permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources ...

***To read the full press release see***

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12115.doc.htm>

### **Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: assistance to the Palestinian people (A/73/L.69)**

<http://undocs.org/A/73/L.69>

### **Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (A/73/546)**

<http://undocs.org/en/A/73/546>

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>

Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee Report

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/lddelreg/259/259.pdf>

#### **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>

TOP

## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

#### **\*\* closes today**

**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>

**Islamophobia** (closing date 11 January 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2017/islamophobia-call-for-further-evidence-17-19/>

**Connected communities – Tackling loneliness and social isolation (Wales)**

(closing date 15 January 2019)

<https://beta.gov.wales/connected-communities-tackling-loneliness-and-social-isolation>

**The Macpherson Report: Twenty Years On** (closing date 16 January 2019)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/macpherson-report-twenty-years-on-inquiry-17-19/>

**Extremism in England and Wales** (closing date 31 January 2019)

<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/>

**TOP**

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