



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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UK Parliament Early Day Motion

John Mann (Labour) (2065) Community Security Trust incident figures – That this House notes the 2018 anti-Semitic incidents report by the Community Security Trust (CST); further notes that the stated record of 1,652 anti-Semitic incidents represents a 16 per cent rise on the previous year and for the third year running the highest annual total of anti-Semitic incidents that CST has ever logged; is concerned that there is now a pattern of consistently high incident figures for attacks against Jewish people; is further concerned that these figures suggest an enduring situation in which people with anti-Semitic attitudes appear to be more confident in expressing their views; resolves to continue to support CST's important work and that of other key organisations; and further resolves to ensure the safety of the Jewish community and to continue to work across public and civil life to eradicate and challenge anti-Semitic incidents wherever they occur.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/52563/community-security-trust-incident-figures>

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

James Brokenshire unveils next steps to building integrated communities

Better integrated communities and a stronger society based on the common themes that bind people and places together are the driving force in the Integrated Communities Action Plan, published today (9 February 2019). ...

This will create stronger, more confident and integrated communities, where people, whatever their background, can live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. ...

The government will be taking 70 actions, including:

- Improving the opportunities for those wishing to learn English ...
- Helping new migrants integrate into their communities ...
- Publishing a new Community Guide to Action ensuring that communities across the country, whatever their local interest, have access to the information and advice to enable them to improve their local area. ...

- Working in partnership with 5 Integration Areas to develop bespoke local integration strategies ...
- Collaborating with civil society to support refugees to rebuild their lives and integrate in the UK ...
- Reaffirming our support for faith communities and empowering faith leaders with the confidence and knowledge to meet the changing needs of their congregations. This would include helping them to identify issues like mental health concerns, as well educating them on UK marriage law. ...

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said: We are a successful, diverse democracy – open, tolerant and welcoming. ...

However, we cannot ignore the fact that too many places across the country have divides, the benefits and opportunities our great country offers are not always felt by everyone equally.

Our new action plan charts a course for how we will engage and work with communities to bring people together in recognition that there is more that binds than divides us. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/james-brokenshire-unveils-next-steps-to-building-integrated-communities>

Integrated Communities Action Plan (England)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777622/Integrated_Communities_Action_Plan.pdf

Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper Summary of consultation responses and Government response

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777160/Integrated_Communities_Strategy_Government_Response.pdf

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Holocaust

House of Commons Debate

Second Reading: Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

col 556 Theresa Villiers (Conservative): ... Just over two weeks ago, Parliament held its annual debate in anticipation of Holocaust Memorial Day ... And from across the House came the clear commitment that we must never let antisemitism and racism go unchallenged, because we have horrific proof in our history of where that can lead. I believe that that is an appropriate background against which to consider the Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill today.

This two-clause Bill has a simple objective: to retain on the statute book the Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009, which would otherwise lapse on 11 November this year. My Bill would remove the sunset clause that is section 4(7) of the Act, with the result that it stays in force.

The case to save the 2009 Act is strong. It empowers a list of our national museums and libraries specified in section 1 to return items lost, stolen, looted or seized during the holocaust to their rightful owners or heirs. Prior to 2009, certain institutions, such as the British Museum and the British Library, were unable to return works of art to the people from whom the Nazis stole them because legal restrictions forbade them from giving away

their collections. This was a bar even in cases when the museum was convinced of the merits of the claim and wanted to return the disputed item. ...

As well as the horrors of state-run industrialised mass murder, the Nazi campaign against Europe's Jewish community involved the widespread and systematic seizure of property. ... Throughout the long history of antisemitism in Europe, toxic tropes and lies associated with wealth, property and greed have been used again and again. Sadly, as last year's debate on antisemitism showed, venomous and hurtful slanders are still deployed against Jewish people by some individuals today. ...

col 557 The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009 was passed with cross-party support after extensive scrutiny, and a legislative consent motion has been secured for my Bill from the Scottish Parliament. ... This legislation is targeted and limited in scope to a specific period in history, a specific set of circumstances and specific type of object. It therefore has no bearing on wider debates about the potential return of museum objects to their countries of origin. ...

I want to highlight the 2016 case in which the British Library returned a book to the family of its owner Karl Mayländer, an Austrian Jewish art collector who was deported to the Łódź ghetto and subsequently murdered. ... The book was valued at just £20, but Anne Webber of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe said "every time a family gets a book back it always means a huge amount to them because it is something their relatives held in their hands and read and cared about". ...

We all know that objects can provide a strong link to people we have lost. With that in mind, I want to read several comments from people involved in cases establishing the right to restore lost art and objects. ...

"... These books of our murdered grandmother ... have seemingly turned from passive objects to be read into witnesses whose voice will be heard and treasured".

Another family told the commission: "I have a need to get this painting back. It was a present from my grandparents to my parents. ... I lost my mother, I lost my father, they were both murdered, it all just gets stronger." ...

col 558 The last comment says: "70 years after the end of the Second World War, there are still many thousands of people looking for their looted property, objects that mean so much. These are not just impersonal items from a lost collection, but objects that carry a huge symbolic and emotional value, to many, part of the landscape of a lost family, of a life destroyed."

Although, sadly, there is nothing we can do to make up for the pain of losing family members in the holocaust, the return of a book or a cultural object could provide a unique connection to one of those 6 million souls whose lives were cut short by humanity's greatest crime. ...

Stephen Pound (Labour): ... One of the things stolen from the victims of the holocaust that we can never return is their lives, or their hopes, their dreams, their culture, their community and their ambition. That can never be returned, and that stain on humanity will always be there, deep and dark, but what we can do is acknowledge the looting, the theft, and the appalling way in which these priceless objects—many of them of religious significance—were ripped from those households and, in some cases, exhibited in the homes of the temporary victors within the Nazi party.

Imagine the agony of someone seeing their own cultural artefacts, perhaps a menorah or some other item of great symbolic or religious significance, being exhibited as a spoil of what was perceived to be a war. The pain must have been almost unendurable, which is why we in this country have to do what we can, with the support of our museums and all the cultural community, to return these items from whence they should never have been taken. ...

col 559 We must show them not just the emotional respect that they are entitled to demand, but tangible respect, where we say, "We will do all we can to return to your home, to your hearts, to your hearths these objects that should never, ever have been taken away."

These objects are not stone, canvas, metal or paint—they are culture. They are the cultural embodiment of that community. ...

col 560 Gillian Keegan (Conservative): ... The 1930s and 1940s were marked by Jewish people and minority groups having their property stolen and precious objects confiscated. In many countries occupied by the Nazis, special departments were set up to organise the stealing of Jewish property and items of value. ... It is estimated that about 100,000 items still have not been repatriated to their original owners or families, having been looted by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945.

In my view, one that I am sure will be shared by every Member who participates in this debate, there should be no time limit on trying try to right the wrongs of the past by returning lost possessions to the families affected by these atrocious crimes. ...

It was absolutely right that in 2009 Parliament enacted legislation to allow our museums to return items looted during the Nazi era. Thanks to the work of the Spoliation Advisory Panel, 23 works of art have been successfully returned since it was set up in 2000. We have a moral duty to ensure that any other items held by our museums and galleries that were stolen in such awful circumstances are returned to their rightful owners. ...

Although not many objects have been discovered in Britain, we should not treat that as a reason to shut the door on heirs and families making claims in future. After all, these objects were cruelly and illegally stolen from victims who were often left with nothing. ...

col 561 Luke Pollard (Labour Co-op): ... the objects that we are talking about tell personal stories. They are not just the grand paintings that we can see in national galleries; they are the personal stories and personal objects of the people so cruelly killed by the Nazis. It was not just the Jewish community, but people from a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender background, trade unionists, socialists, Gypsies, Roma and the people with disabilities who were so inhumanely slaughtered in the pursuit of a corrupt and broken ideology. That is really important. ...

The removal of the sunset clause is a really important part of the Bill. I looked back at the debates in this place from 2009, when the sunset clause was described as “on the one hand, sufficient time to facilitate claims and identify objects, and, on the other,” enough time to give “certainty for the public collections concerned.” —[\[Official Report, 26 June 2009; Vol. 494, c. 1045.\]](#)

... We should send the message from this House that although that sunset clause was deemed appropriate a decade ago, we should now remove it and allow the original legislation to continue in perpetuity, because the message that would send about those looted artefacts—be they worth millions, or if their value lies in a family’s personal connection to an object once held by a family who are no longer here—is incredibly powerful. ...

col 562 Kevin Foster (Conservative): ... I can understand why, perhaps a decade ago, Parliament thought that these matters may be resolved or that we should allow a period for review. It clearly makes sense to allow claims to be made; we should not just have a legal cut-off date that was picked a decade ago. There are not just practical reasons for that, but symbolic ones as well.

We must remember that the goal of the Nazis was not just to murder their victims, but to annihilate all trace of them, and to annihilate all trace of the Jewish people. They did not just murder those who were living; they demolished cemeteries, burned down synagogues and sought to erase the entire culture from Europe. That is why it is so important that where these artefacts are preserved and retained, they are returned, that they can be exhibited and be shown by families again as a reminder of what once existed. ...

col 563 Maggie Throup (Conservative): ... To understand the full extent of the holocaust and its lasting effect on victims and their relatives, we must also understand the events that led up to the final solution. From Hitler’s rise to power in 1933 to the passing of the Nuremberg laws in 1935 and Kristallnacht in 1938, the Nazis first marginalised and then

set about eradicating the Jewish population with increasing speed and intensity. One major element of the programme was the looting and pillaging of around 20% of Europe's cultural treasures, including hundreds of thousands of pieces of artwork owned by the Jewish community, and it is estimated that some 100,000 cultural objects remain hidden. ...

Since it was established in 2000, the Spoliation Advisory Panel has advised on 20 claims concerning looted artwork. In the case of 23 cultural objects, either they have been returned to their rightful owners or compensation has been paid out.

The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009 has been instrumental in facilitating this process, which had been hindered by rules governing the disposal of such items from UK collections. Although I have no doubt that the consultation conducted prior to the introduction of the legislation was sincere in its conclusion regarding the need for a time limit, it has become increasingly clear that we have a moral obligation to the last remaining survivors and their families to continue to allow UK institutions to reunite them with looted objects beyond the 11 November deadline, which is fast approaching. ... Although we will never be able to make right the atrocities of the past, we can and should right this small injustice. ...

col 564 Peter Heaton-Jones (Conservative): ... The holocaust is an horrific stain on human history. The murder of more than 6 million individuals cruelly cut short their lives and potential. ...

Those horrific crimes can never be remedied. As well as taking those people's lives, the Nazis stripped them of their possessions and property. Indeed, it is estimated that 20% of what we regard as Europe's cultural treasures are in fact the rightful property of the Jewish families who suffered in the holocaust. We must therefore do everything in our power to ensure that Nazi-looted works of art are returned to their rightful owners. ...

col 566 Tom Watson (Labour): ... Nothing can undo the horror of that period, but we should do everything we can now to reunite cultural objects that surface with their rightful owners. More than 70 years on from world war two, there are still families who have not been reunited with heirlooms that rightly belong to them. As many survivors of the holocaust are passing away, it is vital that their descendants have confidence that this Parliament and this Government are committed to ensuring that they get back what is rightfully theirs ...

col 567 It is important that we support this cause and the moral beliefs underpinning it when the spectre of antisemitism is on the rise once again. I was horrified to read in the news just days ago that antisemitic hate crimes hit a record number in 2018. That is something that should scare and anger us all, and we must do everything in our power to stamp it out. ...

As we unify and commit to supporting this Bill, let us not forget our honourable colleagues on both sides of the House who have been the subject of death threats, the subject of racist abuse, the subject of misogynistic abuse and the subject of bullying and antisemitism. As the deputy leader of my party, let me say to my friend and comrade, my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Luciana Berger), as I do to honourable colleagues facing that abuse, that she has our solidarity and she has our support as she battles the bullying hatred from members of her own local party. They bring disgrace to the party that I love.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Before I call the Minister, I want to add on behalf of the whole House that I am sure every Member of this place would echo what the hon. Gentleman has just said about the hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Luciana Berger). She has the support of all of us, and we must all stand together to stand up for her and defend her in every way possible. We must root out the sort of behaviour that is going on, which has no place in our free democracy.

col 568 The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Mims Davies): ... As we have heard, an estimated 20% of Europe's cultural

treasures were stolen or plundered by Nazi Germany, mostly from Jewish families, and more than 100,000 works remain lost and are presumed to be in private collections. ...
col/569 The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act 2009 allows 17 cultural institutions in the UK to return objects lost between 1933 and 1945, and it enables them to do that effectively, by using the appropriate advisory panel. Today we heard about the importance of having a fair and just way of returning to people those cultural objects lost during the Nazi era. The institutions covered by the 2009 Act are statutory bodies that would otherwise be prevented from doing that by Government legislation ...

The principle of correcting past injustices, as exemplified in this case, has not been affected by the passage of time. In fact, arguably that principle is strengthened as memories start to fade, as we have heard today. It is not necessarily easy to make sense of what happened more than 70 years ago. With fewer survivors among us, we must rely increasingly on written testimony and second-hand accounts.

col/570 Today, Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate from 1988 to 2017, and the National Museum Directors' Council's lead on spoliation from 1998 to 2017, issued the following statement:

"The UK has been an international leader in responding to the challenges associated with Spoliation claims. The creation of the Spoliation Advisory Panel in 2000 established a model and a procedure that has been adopted by other countries. In recent years, new claims have become less frequent, but there is a strong moral case to remove the 'sunset' clause that provides for a time limit on cases being considered. It is important that potential claimants should not feel that the door is being slammed in their face."

It is worth noting that claimants are unlikely to be able to pursue a legal claim for the return of their property through the courts. Referral to the Spoliation Advisory Panel is, in nearly all cases, the sole remaining route for pursuing the return of cultural objects lost in these circumstances. Just last week, the Government announced that the UK has joined four other European countries—Austria, France, Germany and the Netherlands—to form a new network for increasing international co-operation on the return of works of art looted during the Nazi era. The UK has always sought to lead by example, so it is absolutely right that we all support the Bill. ...

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-02-08/debates/07B342B0-BBE2-4E0B-BE35-A1423D4A1C82/Holocaust\(ReturnOfCulturalObjects\)\(Amendment\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-02-08/debates/07B342B0-BBE2-4E0B-BE35-A1423D4A1C82/Holocaust(ReturnOfCulturalObjects)(Amendment)Bill)

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

The following five questions all received the same answer

Trade Agreements: Israel

Richard Burden (Labour) [216929] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if he will place in the Library a copy of the draft UK-Israel agreement that has been agreed in principle for trading arrangements after the UK leaves the EU.

Richard Burden (Labour) [216930] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the trade deal agreed in principle between the UK and Israel for trade after the UK leaves the EU announced on 23 January 2019 will continue to distinguish in relevant dealings between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

Richard Burden) [216931] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the new UK-Israel agreement-in-principle contains a territorial clause limiting its application to within Israel's pre-June 1967 borders.

Richard Burden (Labour) [216933] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how his Department defines the territorial scope of pre-existing agreements between the UK and Israel.

Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat) [216949] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the agreement in principle with the Government of Israel to roll over the EU-Israel Free Trade Agreement, what specific territory that agreement applies to.

George Hollingbery: The UK and Israel have a strong and important trading relationship. However, we do not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), including the settlements, as part of Israel. The OPTs are not covered by the current EU-Israel Association Agreement, nor by the Continuity Agreement agreed in principle between the UK and Israel.

We are also working to finalise the transition of the current EU Interim Association Agreement with the Palestinian Authority.

We have committed to informing Parliament as soon as agreements are signed with partner countries. The agreement will be laid in Parliament and we will be publishing a full report on trade agreements, once they are signed.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-05/216929/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-05/216930/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-05/216931/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-05/216933/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-05/216949/>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Sheep Meat: New Zealand

David Drew (Labour Co-op) [215077] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will discuss with his New Zealand counterpart how that country labels exports of sheepmeat to include information on pre-stunning.

David Rutley: Defra officials regularly meet with their New Zealand counterparts to discuss a range of issues including the New Zealand requirements around slaughter and food labelling. Officials have discussed the issue of stunned sheepmeat exports from New Zealand.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-01-31/215077/>

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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>

Second Reading, House of Commons

See "*Holocaust*" section above for abstract

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-02-08/debates/07B342B0-BBE2-4E0B-BE35-A1423D4A1C82/Holocaust\(ReturnOfCulturalObjects\)\(Amendment\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-02-08/debates/07B342B0-BBE2-4E0B-BE35-A1423D4A1C82/Holocaust(ReturnOfCulturalObjects)(Amendment)Bill)

International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill

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

Letter from Baroness Manzoor to Lord Hughes of Woodside

[http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2019-0154/Baroness Manzoor letter to Lord Hughes- Organ Donation Bill.pdf](http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2019-0154/Baroness%20Manzoor%20letter%20to%20Lord%20Hughes-%20Organ%20Donation%20Bill.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>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 5 days**

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/>

Racial harassment in higher education (closing date 28 February 2019)

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

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission – Draft Strategic Plan 2019-22

(closing date 15 March 2019)

<http://www.nihrc.org/news/detail/ni-human-rights-commission-draft-strategic-plan-2019-2022-consultation>

Scottish charity law (closing date 1 April 2019)

<https://tinyurl.com/y9ln88df>

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