

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Far-right Violence and Online Extremism

col/793 Janet Daby (Labour): To ask the Minister for Security and Economic Crime, in the light of the recent terrorist attacks against the Muslim community of Christchurch, New Zealand, to make a statement on the Government's strategy to tackle far-right violence and online extremism in the United Kingdom.

The Minister for Security and Economic Crime (Ben Wallace): ... The Government take all forms of terrorism and extremism seriously. Our counter-terrorism strategy, Contest, does not differentiate between what motivates the threat: it is designed to address all forms of terrorism whatever the ideology, whether Islamist, neo-Nazi, far-right or extreme left.

If we are to tackle terrorism in the long term, we must challenge those seeking to radicalise people. The Prevent policy is designed to safeguard our vulnerable citizens from being recruited or motivated into terrorism. That is why I always urge people to get behind the policy.

Our counter-terrorism strategy is agnostic to the threat: it is not relevant to us in what name terror strikes; it is the use of violence and hate that we seek to stop. Government and law enforcement will direct their funding wherever the threat emerges, and if we are to stay one step ahead as the threat changes so must the funding. We will continue to keep funding for protected security measures under review as that threat moves and will indeed consistently review it for places of worship and other areas that may be vulnerable.

Social media platforms should be ashamed that they have enabled a terrorist to livestream this evil massacre and spread this mantra of hate to the whole world. As the Home Secretary has made clear, enough is enough. We have been clear that tech companies need to act more quickly to remove terrorist content and ultimately prevent new content from being made available to users in the first place. This must be a wake-up call for them to do more. There can be no safe spaces for terrorists to promote and share their sick views. The online harm White Paper will be published imminently and will set out clear expectations for tech companies to keep

users safe and what will happen if they fail to do so.

This Government take the growing threat of the extreme right-wing extremely seriously, and I can assure the House and our Muslim communities that we will stand together to counter it wherever it manifests itself in our society.

col 794 Janet Daby: ... This type of racial hatred and violence, whether in the UK or elsewhere in the world, must not be tolerated. It brings with it such immense fear, worry and anxiety for our Muslim communities, for families, children and young people. This should not be happening to people in this country or other countries; this should not be how people live, and the Government need to demonstrate that everything is being considered and done to keep people safe from harm and to promote respect and acceptance of difference and others. Will the Minister therefore state how his Department will deal with social media offences, including the removal of extreme content, and protect free speech, while developing an efficient strategy to tackle hate speech online? Also will he confirm he will be increasing his commitment to financing mosque security?

Ben Wallace: ... First, on the money to protect vulnerable places—whether places of worship, schools or large public areas where people might gather—we of course continue to fund that where the threat requires it. ... Every single police force has a national counter-terrorism security adviser whose job is to go out and advise businesses, communities and places of worship about what they can do to mitigate any threat, even if it is threat unseen, and how they can make sure the people who use their premises are kept safe, and I urge people to do that.

On top of that, the National Counter Terrorism Security Office publishes an online manual to help places of worship, specifically, with tailor-made areas. ... There are different factors at play in the United Kingdom but nevertheless, as I said this morning, it is perfectly possible that this type of thing will happen here.

We are already seeing a growing threat from people moving into the extremist mindset of the extreme right wing and neo-Nazis, and that is the pool that terrorists of the future will recruit from. We must all get together—all of us—to make sure that we teach our children about tolerance and equality and that we understand that just because someone disagrees with us, they are not lesser people. If someone comes from a different religion, they are not lesser, and if they have a different colour, they are not lesser. Until we embrace that, extremism will grow. Doing that is the best way of heading off far-right and neo-Nazi extremism.

col 795 Nick Thomas-Symonds (Labour): ... an attack on anyone at worship is an attack on all peoples of faith and non-believers too, as they go about their lawful, peaceful business. The harrowing live streaming of events in Christchurch, on the other side of the world, raises questions about the role of social media platforms in facilitating a growing extremism. ... does the Minister accept that asking online platforms to act is not enough and that we need a new regulator with strong powers to penalise them if they do not curb harmful content? ...

col 796 Ben Wallace: ... Tolerance, respect and the underpinning of the British values of democracy and the rule of law are vital in our society, and the more we teach our children about that and the more we clamp down on those who do not believe in that, the better a place we will be. ...

col 797 Peter Bottomley (Conservative): ... This is not just about other faiths, but the whole community, and we must stand with the Muslims as we stand with the Jews. Will my right hon. Friend go on encouraging the Community Security Trust—the CST—to share with our mosques and Islamic societies the basic steps that people can take, within the law, to help to raise levels of confidence and security?

Ben Wallace: My hon. Friend makes the strongest point of all, which is that we will defeat this challenge through peer group pressure and by coming together to show what is unacceptable. The CST has already offered online material to help advise other places of worship in how to make themselves safe. But the fact is that our law

enforcement cannot do this on their own. The current threat is from sudden violent extremists—people who, in minutes, can step outside their front door, grab a knife or car and wreak murder on our streets. That is not going to be spotted by a police officer on every corner, or a large intelligence service, without the support of the public, who can understand their neighbours and bring any worries they have to the attention of the correct authorities, to make sure we say, “This is not acceptable.”

Joanna Cherry (SNP): ... I am sure the Minister will agree that Islamophobia must be combated and condemned wherever it raises its head. Does he also agree that politicians, journalists and those in the public eye should always be cautious never to cross the line on free speech and fair comment to risk stirring up the sort of hatred and “othering” that can feed into the narrative of the far right? ...

col 798 I noticed that on the radio this morning the Muslim Council of Britain was very concerned to ensure that its community should get the same sort of funding as the Jewish community has received to protect its places of worship against attack, and I was pleased to hear the Minister say on the radio that protective security tacks with the threat present. It seems that he does recognise the threat, but will he confirm that he will be meeting the MCB to discuss its requests and to look at directing funds where needed? ...

Ben Wallace: ... If you want a good lesson on how to tackle intolerance, Mr Speaker, I should say that one of the early successful policies of the SNP was on dealing with anti-sectarianism. The SNP recognised in Scotland that this starts with anti-sectarianism and it grows into violent extremism. I have to commend the SNP for what it did all those years ago on that, taking strong steps, certainly among the football community, to stamp it out. ... We must focus in the communities and say what is not acceptable. We must embrace policies such as Prevent to make sure that everyone realises that this is ultimately about safeguarding.

On the issue relating to the community trust, the hon. and learned Lady is right. We will direct our funds as the threat changes ...

We will sense the fear that there currently is in some of those communities as a response to the attack in New Zealand and that there was even before that, given the growing rise of Islamophobia, spread through the evils of some of these chatrooms on the internet. We must, all of us, say that that is not acceptable ... Intolerance is where this starts as a small seed, and it grows into hate.

col 800 **Vicky Ford (Conservative):** ... Will my right hon. Friend confirm that our Muslim constituents are our friends, neighbours and colleagues; that they are vital to British society today; and that we as parliamentarians and Government Members will do everything to stand by them and keep them safe?

Ben Wallace: ... British Muslims are part of Britain. That is it. They are no lesser than any one of us; we are all the same. ... We stand shoulder to shoulder. We are not going to let these people spread their hate and we will put in all the resource we need to put in to counter it. It is very much incumbent on us all, from all parties, to do it together, because if we do not do it together, the bad people will exploit that difference and make it worse. ...

col 801 **Edward Davey (Liberal Democrat):** ... Will the Minister condemn without reservation Islamophobic language, whether used by individuals or in the media? ...

Ben Wallace: ... I condemn Islamophobia. It is racism; it is like any other type of racism. We should not even subdivide it. It is what it is. It is racism, just as antisemitism is racism. ...

col 802 On the definition of Islamophobia, I read the all-party group report and I looked at its definition. It is an interesting and good starting point. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary chaired on, I think, 5 March, a roundtable with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and members of the Muslim community to discuss Islamophobia and what can be done on it. We will look at the definition and at what we can do to start on that process. But all of

this comes back to this: if we over-define, if we start subdividing Islamophobia and antisemitism, we forget what this is really about, which is tolerance. It is really important that we accept that we are tolerant of people. That is what underlines extremism: where people choose not to be tolerant, they start to become extremists. When they think other people are lesser, that is where we are in trouble.

col 803 **Matthew Offord (Conservative):** ... I feel that it is a matter of some regret that this urgent question has been framed as one of right-wing extremists, because there are also left-wing extremists; this is terrorism, pure and simple. I am proud that my first question in this House was to ask for the finances to provide security at Jewish schools in my Hendon constituency. Indeed, the Community Security Trust is based in Hendon and provides that security. Now we need to make the same call on behalf of Muslim schools and Islamic institutions in our constituencies. Will the Minister take that suggestion to the Treasury and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and ask for resources to be made available to these communities, because any kind of extremism is not acceptable?

Ben Wallace: ... We are determined to make all our places of worship safe, and we will do what is necessary. ...

Stephen Doughty (Labour Co-op): ... I have previously raised with both of them the issue of an organisation called Radio Aryan, which is available on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. I have also raised this matter directly with the social media companies, and it is absolutely clear that they do not give a damn. That content is still online this morning. It advocates antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia and white supremacy. Why is it still on there and what are the Government going to do to remove it?

Ben Wallace: ... one of the reasons that some of these things remain online is that the servers of the companies are often abroad and out of our jurisdiction. ...

col 804 **Tom Tugendhat (Conservative):** ... I was particularly moved this afternoon to hear the Home Secretary using the Arabic words, “Bi-smi llāhi r-rahmāni r-rahīm”, meaning “In the name of God, the most compassionate, the most merciful.” We are fundamentally talking about a compassion and a mercy that were not shown to a community—this time in New Zealand, but sometimes at home—and a justice that we now need to extend to members of our own community who feel that they do not have access to the same security as others. ...

John Lamont (Conservative): I was reassured by the Minister’s remarks about the work the Department is doing to help mosques and places of worship to fight hate crime, but could he confirm that that work extends to Scotland and outline what discussions he has had with the Scottish Government in this regard?

col 805 **Ben Wallace:** My understanding is that matters relating to places of worship are devolved to Scotland. However, I am always in contact with officials and ministerial counterparts in Scotland, and I will continue to discuss this with them. ...

col 806 **Wes Streeting (Labour):** ... I want to say, in terms that I think my Muslim constituents would want me to use, that the kind of prejudice that slaughtered innocent people in Christchurch does not begin with a gunman mowing down people in their place of worship. It begins with unchecked prejudice in our workplaces, our schools and our communities, which is amplified in the pages of national mainstream media outlets that should know better. I am afraid it is also legitimised by people who purport to be mainstream politicians and aspire to the highest office who describe Muslim women as “bank robbers” and pillar boxes without any reaction.

On a day when HOPE not hate has called for action from the Conservative party to tackle Islamophobia within its ranks, when Baroness Warsi has again asked her own party to act and when my constituents are looking to the Government to act, they will have no confidence in this Government to tackle the prejudice they face unless they have confidence in the governing party to tackle racism within its own ranks. I say that with humility but great sincerity. Enough is enough. Condemnation in general is nothing

compared with specific condemnation. When will the Minister's party tackle the racists in its ranks, whether in this House or at the grassroots?

Ben Wallace: ... If we see racism or antisemitism in our ranks, we should deal with it. If we see Islamophobia in our ranks, we should deal with it; if I find it in my party association, those people should not be in the Tory party. ...

col 807 **Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op):** Will the Security Minister assure communities in Lancashire of the Islamic faith, of any other faith or of no faith that everything is being done through the security and intelligence services and the police to monitor and deter potential attackers from targeting places of worship, including online activity and political campaigns aimed at Muslims and other minority faiths? This should not just be about tolerance, which means accepting something whether we like it or not, but be about mutual respect. Let us talk more about mutual respect, not just tolerating something even though we might not like it.

Ben Wallace: How we respond to that tolerance is about mutual respect: whether we disagree and disagree in a manner that accepts people as equals or whether we disagree and denigrate them for having a different view is about respect. ...

col 808 **Rushanara Ali (Labour):** ... Will the Minister look at how to take far-right activism, far-right groups and the threat more seriously? For years, we have campaigned for some of those groups to be proscribed, and the Government have fallen short. I ask him to take that much more seriously, to look at making online platforms responsible for the content of what they provide and to consider the German approach of fining online companies when hate crime material—online hate propaganda—is on those sites. ...

Ben Wallace: ... It was this Government who first proscribed a far-right, neo-Nazi group—National Action—over 18 months ago. We did that, and we have subsequently taken action against a number of people and organisers. On hate crime, which is also one of the planks we need to take away from extremists, we have funded a £1.5 million action plan. We have asked the Law Commission to review the hate crime legislation to make sure it is fit for purpose. No doubt, the Law Commission will look at hate crime in the online space as well, and I hope it can feed into the online harms White Paper that is coming soon.

col 809 **Naz Shah (Labour):** ... As a Muslim who has the largest Muslim constituency in the United Kingdom and who spent the weekend reassuring not only my constituents but my own Muslim family, I can tell the Minister how Islamophobia happens: it happens because it goes unchecked; it happens because people in politics have responsibilities that they do not meet. The Conservative party ran the most Islamophobic dog-whistle campaign against the Mayor of London, who happens to be Muslim. The party has yet to apologise for that campaign. Its former chair Baroness Warsi is crying out for an inquiry, as is the Conservative Muslim Forum. The Minister must check that his own house is in order before he can give me or my constituents any confidence that his party can safeguard the Muslim community.

Ben Wallace: ... I am not making excuses for Islamophobia. Islamophobia exists. Islamophobia is racism. Islamophobia should be dealt with. If it happens in my party, we should deal with it and we should deal with it forthwith, and I am happy to do that wherever I see it. We should all make sure we deal with it. I totally agree with the hon. Lady: it is racism and where we see it we should stop it in its tracks. ...

col 811 **Imran Hussain (Labour):** ... I want to emphasise the point that, tragically, far right and Islamophobic views are being tolerated and normalised more and more by those in the mainstream—those in power and responsibility, whether in the media, public life or public institutions. Frankly, that is feeding into the rise of the far right and Islamophobia. What concrete steps will the Minister take to address that and end all forms of racism, in particular Islamophobia?

Ben Wallace: When I see Islamophobia in the media, it breaks down into three reasons: laziness, because the journalist could not be bothered to find out about

what they were writing about; ignorance, because they do not know anything about the religion, people or communities they are writing about; and naked racism or aggression. We can deal with two of those factors quite well.

We need to make sure that we educate people about different faiths in this country, so that they understand the differences within the faiths and across the faiths. We need to bring more people together to understand our different communities. ...

Mohammad Yasin (Labour): ... What are the Minister's Government going to do now to tackle the rise in far-right attacks against British Muslims and other minority communities? ...

Ben Wallace: ... we asked the Law Commission to review hate crime to make sure that the legislation is fit for the 21st century, and can deal with, for example, the online aspect and how things have changed. We will fund that with £1.5 million. We will also make sure that we tackle the ignorance that I talked about in communities; that is the first thing we need to do. At the same time, we need to deal with online harm to make sure that people stop spreading it. We have also funded work with groups such as Tell MAMA, so that people can report hate crime better, because by them reporting it and our getting better data, we will be able to do something about it. ...

col 812 **Catherine West (Labour):** ... I challenge the Minister to discuss with the Department for Education how we can help our schools, particularly in areas that are predominantly non-Muslim, to visit mosques, synagogues, Hindu temples and churches in these times when people do not necessarily get taught any religion at home. That way, we can promote awareness across the piece—not just in areas where we have a lot of Muslim constituents, but across all our communities—and this attitude cannot just pop up in a spirit of ignorance.

Ben Wallace: The hon. Lady is right. This starts off in ignorance and is then exploited. ... I am very happy to write to the Department for Education to make sure that we redouble our efforts and spread that good practice across the country. ...

col 813 **Kate Green (Labour):** ... Will he also discuss with his colleagues in the Department for Education the problem of some parents choosing to withdraw their children from religious education classes, particularly when they think that the classes will be about Islam and Muslims? ...

Ben Wallace: ... ignorance is where this starts, and we must do everything we can to ensure that our children are educated about different faiths and religions. ...

Karen Buck (Labour): In November, I was at St John's Wood synagogue in solidarity after the Pittsburgh shootings, and on Friday, I was 500 yards away at the Regent's Park mosque after the Christchurch atrocity. Over the last couple of months, these communities have felt a level of risk, a level of abuse and a rising level of hate crime that are unparalleled in modern times. Our local police were there in strength on Friday, but they are stretched, as the Minister has heard from others today. We have lost one third of our police. Our safer neighbourhood teams are on the frontline, embedded in communities and helping to respond to these challenges, but they are being decimated. Please will he listen to the call for support for safer neighbourhood teams to work with our religious communities?

col 814 **Ben Wallace:** ... The calls are being heard, and we will see what we can do.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-03-18/debates/B29813B9-4628-4720-A661-BBB855102C55/Far-RightViolenceAndOnlineExtremism>

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office manual referred to above can be read at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375136/Places_of_Worship_Reviewed.pdf

and updated guidance can be read at

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee

The Macpherson Report: 20 Years On – evidence session

Q73 John Azah (Director, Kingston Racial Equality Council and Vice-Chair of the Met Police Independent Advisory Group): ... For me, the Stephen Lawrence inquiry report and its recommendations over the last 20 years break into two parts. In the first 10 years there has been tremendous change, where there was the setting up of independent Advisory Groups, the huge improvement of the Family Liaison service that supported families who had suffered critical incidents.

There was the recording of racist incidents that became hate crimes and incidents, the transparency really within policing, where before the Lawrence inquiry police officers, the police service, barely shared any information with anybody and as a result of the inquiry the services opened up their services. People like myself, independent advisers, attended critical incidents, goal groups and so on and so forth and there was huge transparency, which resulted in the setting up of community safety units that dealt with racist incidents and hate crimes.

There was the huge change in legislation as a result of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, when the Race Relations Act was amended. Further down the road it resulted in the Equality Act 2010, and as I mentioned, critical incidents became a huge issue, but also critical incident training, things that the police service did with communities where people like myself did senior management of counselling and training, we started groups and critiqued the training. That was the first 10 years.

The second half of the 20 years resulted in a gradual erosion, if you can call it that, of the way Independent Advisory Groups were used. Therefore if you go back the last five years I, as Vice-Chair, have hardly attended any critical incidents at all in the Metropolitan Police or across the country, so there was that lack of use. There has been a gross loss of funding for racial equality councils, where race equality as an issue lost focus and was no more a priority. ...

Q74 Chair (Yvette Cooper, Labour): Do you think institutional racism is still an issue that needs to be addressed?

Melanie Field (Executive Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy, Equality and Human Rights Commission): ... we see BAME communities falling behind across all areas of life, which suggests that there are systemic issues in society. The police force is part of society and plays a massively important role and it will not be immune, and clearly the evidence of disproportionality in the use of powers suggests that there are still issues to be dealt with.

Chief Constable Sara Thornton (Chair, National Police Chiefs Association): I think that there are some officers who are racist. I think that there are some policies and procedures that can be unintentionally discriminating, but do I think that we are organisationally racist? No, I do not ...

Q75 Chief Constable Thornton: In the last 10 years in particular the focus on equality has broadened to all the protected characteristics. ...

We are doing a lot of peer review, we are doing lots of conferences and we are also saying to the inspectorate, "Can you come and inspect forces?" so we are determined to turn this strategy into action ...

John Azah: ... I think institutional racism is still a big issue for the police and for society and I have to disagree that the police service is not still institutionally racist. ...

They are not interested in systemic change that embraces the issue. ...

Two things: they do not want to hear about institutional racism, because it does not impact on their lives, and secondly, a number of them, quite a majority of them, have never heard about Stephen Lawrence. They were not born when Stephen Lawrence was murdered and therefore there is not anything within the service that says, "This caused a cathartic effect on policing and therefore we ought to continue to remind ourselves that the challenge remains and to do something positive about addressing it" and therefore they become almost laidback about institutional racism. ...

Q76 John Azah: When you talk to Dr Neville Lawrence, the one thing that he thought was effective when the report was published was the Home Secretary and a whole series of senior officers and Ministers pulling together on a monthly or quarterly basis looking at what was being reported, what was laid down within the recommendations. For some reason that was suddenly stopped and his view is that because there is not anybody with high enough authority monitoring what is being done with the recommendations it has been allowed to lapse. ...

Q79 Kate Green (Labour): What are the mechanisms for holding people to account?

Chief Constable Thornton: ... the police and crime commissioner sets the Police and Crime Plan, holds the chief to account for the delivery of that plan and holds them to account for the carrying out of their duties. ...

Q80 Kate Green: Is that going to be sufficient to drive forward progress across the country in relation to the Macpherson recommendations?

Chief Constable Thornton: It could be. ... I think we need to be very careful about saying, "Let's bring it all into London. Let's ask the Home Office to do it" because the issues about diversity do vary right across the country and one size does not fit all. ...

Melanie Field: I think this balance between centralised and local is interesting and important. I wonder if the balance is slightly wrong, so as I have said before, I think we need a Government race equality strategy with clear ownership and leadership from the centre, and clarity about what the key issues are on which progress needs to be made to shift the pattern across the board of entrenched disadvantage that our BAME communities experience.

I would like to see some national expression of the important outcomes that all forces should be working towards. ...

Q83 Stuart C. McDonald (SNP): ... why are disproportionately more black and minority ethnic officers leaving the police force compared to white officers, both voluntarily and through dismissal, and why has that persisted for a decade essentially?

Melanie Field: ... we do not know, because there is not enough information on it. ...

Chief Constable Thornton: In terms of BAME officers leaving early, the data is, I am afraid, reasonably clear. They are much more likely to be dismissed than their white colleagues and in terms of voluntary exit they are more likely to leave before they have completed 30 years of pensionable service. ...

There are several potential causes posited, particularly in terms of misconduct, that whereas very often issues of maybe performance before they reach the conduct stage will frequently be dealt with quite informally, but this maybe is not happening as much because supervisors fear that they will be accused of being racist. There is also a suggestion that there might be some unconscious bias creeping in, but also a failure to deal with difference and assuming, "Everybody is like me" rather than, "Everybody is quite different and it is a strength". ...

Q85 John Azah: My answer is quite stark about why BAME officers are leaving the service and why there is disproportionality. Before coming here I did a bit of work in trying to get some data from the Metropolitan Police and talking to police officers who I know, and if you look at a case study within the Metropolitan Police, I am told that there are six BAME chief superintendents. Five of those, as of today, are either under suspension or on special

duties, and special duties is you have been accused of something and you do not get operational duties and you get a desk job. ...

My evidence, in talking to police officers, is that there is a two-track system that operates in the service, where BAME staff feel that they are under more scrutiny than their white counterparts, that things that their white counterparts pick up where somebody puts an arm around him or her and says, "Well, let us try to sort this out" for a BAME officer gets escalated to misconduct or discipline. ...

Q88 Stuart C. McDonald: In 2016 your organisation, the EHRC, found significant weaknesses in the Metropolitan Police's handling of discrimination claims by staff. Has the Metropolitan Police made sufficient changes, to your mind, to address those failings?

Melanie Field: I think it is important to say that our investigation did not establish that equality law had been breached, but we did find a number of weaknesses and poor practice. ...

Then we did conclude that there was some reluctance within the Metropolitan Police to admit mistakes and apologise. Going back to your first set of questions about institutional racism, I think the difficulty with that term—and I do believe that those issues exist in all institutions—is that it creates an oppositional or defensive culture or response and the important thing is for the community and the institutions to work in partnership to deal with these issues. I am concerned about anything that gets in the way of that. ...

Q93 Tim Loughton (Conservative): ... the recruitment figures for BAME police officers have remained excruciatingly slow over the last 10 years, and for other police staff, not just frontline officers. Mr Azah also mentioned the lack of BAME police officers in senior positions. Why is that and to what extent are the two linked? ...

Chief Constable Thornton: ... Of course as the population of the country is changing, so do the targets. We had the 7% target for 2009. The current position is that we are nearly at 7% but the population is now 14%. ...

Q94 Tim Loughton: ... How would positive discrimination help? ... the problem is not that there is a load of BAME potential recruits coming forward and a lot of white recruits coming forward and the BAME ones are being disproportionately rejected. BAME candidates are not coming forward. ...

Chief Constable Thornton: It is not true to say that people are not applying. ...

Q95 Tim Loughton: Chief Constable, are you seriously saying that potential black recruits are being disproportionately rejected when they apply?

Chief Constable Thornton: No, I am not. ...

Q102 John Woodcock (Independent): Briefly, Chief Constable, could you say something more about the way in which vetting needs to change to address issues that may be disbaring BAME?

Chief Constable Thornton: ... one of the issues that I feel quite strongly about is that we are allowed to make use of what would normally be spent convictions, so cautions from when people were children. If you take the view that because of structural issues in society some groups are much more likely to have had those convictions or cautions, if you are not careful, you will be identifying those for more candidates and unless you have flexibility and discretion, there is a potential that those rules could act to discriminate against people from certain backgrounds. ...

Also there are sometimes issues about people who have spent quite a long time out of the country and our ability to liaise with police forces, whether they have been noted or in trouble or in difficulty with the police force in that country. People who have been out of this country for a long time, sometimes that is more likely to apply to certain communities than to others because of families across the world.

Q105 John Woodcock: Yes, thank you. Finally, I want to take you back to the evidence that each of you has given on the issue of institutional racism. ...

Chief Constable Thornton: As I said when I answered the question earlier, there are definitely some racist officers and some of the things that John was talking about might be about direct racism. I completely agree that policies, procedures and practices can discriminate. My issue is—

Q106 John Woodcock: Forgive me, they do discriminate, so that is institutional racism.

Chief Constable Thornton: My point for the last 20 years has always been that it is just not a helpful term because it is heard as, “This force, this police service, is organisationally racist”. I know people would say that that is not what it means, but that is how it is heard and therefore I do not think it is helpful. ...

Melanie Field: ... There are many definitions of institutional racism, but if you look at the encapsulation of the concept that Macpherson used, that does meet the definition. I do not have any problem with saying that those structural issues exist in the police and in many other institutions and in society more generally. I do not have any problem with calling that institutional racism. I none the less acknowledge that the use of that term can lead to entrenchment of positions and a lack of willingness to engage positively to solve those issues.

Q107 John Woodcock: ... Chief Constable ... Your position is that the police force should never have been labelled institutionally racist. Your position is not that, yes, there was a case to say that it was at the time of the Macpherson report, but now it is no longer so. It is the case that it was always an unhelpful label.

Chief Constable Thornton: I have always held the view that it is not a helpful label. I do believe the issues are very serious. ...

John Azah: ... I advocate that every one of us has a bit of racism in us—I cannot describe what my own racism is, as a racist—but it is that phenomenon that we struggle with. Therefore, as I said in the beginning, police forces need to embrace this definition and work positively to address it rather than saying it gets in the way ...

Q108 Chief Constable Thornton: I do not agree that we are not doing enough. Of course we could do more. ...

Q111 Chair: ... It just feels as if this is not matching the scale of the problem and the scale of the challenge. I am not saying they are not very worthwhile, the things you are doing, but relative to the scale of the problem, given what feels, frankly, like glacial progress on this ...

Chief Constable Thornton: ... we have developed and agreed a strategy in the last two or three years. ... this has been on the agenda at the Chiefs’ Council and a lot of people are very concerned about it and driving it. It is about race, but it is also about diversity, equality and inclusion right across the board. ...

To read the full transcript see

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/the-macpherson-report-twenty-years-on/oral/98026.html>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Protective security at Places of Worship

Sajid Javid (The Secretary of State for the Home Department) [HCWS1428] The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with New Zealand against terrorism and we will not falter in our commitment to uphold the values of tolerance, religious freedom, and democracy. I have discussed with police and religious leaders further measures we can take to protect our mosques and communities from any threats here in the UK.

The police have increased the number of reassurance patrols around mosques and are increasing engagement with communities of all faiths, including giving advice on how

people and places can protect themselves.

This Government recognises that our communities remain anxious. We are committed to working with faith groups and engaging them on existing measures that fund and protect all places of worship. We will be working with groups including the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, Tell MAMA and those representing other faiths to review what more can and should be done to protect faith institutions. This engagement will start immediately. The Government is committed to acting quickly in response to these concerns. We are therefore announcing today an uplift of funding for the next year of the Places of Worship Protective Security Fund to £1.6 million. This is double the amount awarded last year. The fund will provide financial support to places of worship for the purchase of physical protective security measures such as fencing, lighting and access control. We will make it easier for places of worship to apply, reducing the administrative burden whilst widening the criteria so places no longer need to show they have already experienced hate crime. Our focus will be on helping those who are vulnerable to hate fuelled attacks. Physical security measures are only part of the solution. That is why the Government is also announcing a new £5 million fund over 3 years to provide security training for Places of Worship. We will be working closely with communities and faith leaders to develop this new scheme and will, as soon as possible, be opening up a competitive process. We are proud of all our faith communities and we are absolutely committed to ensuring they are able to worship and live their lives in safety, and free from fear.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2019-03-19/HCWS1428/>

Home Office

Places of worship to get security funding boost

The Home Secretary has boosted funding for next year's places of worship protective security to £1.6 million to reassure communities and safeguard mosques and other places of worship. This is double the amount awarded last year. In addition a new £5 million fund will be opened to provide security training. ...

The places of worship fund, established in 2016 as part of the government's hate crime action plan, provides financial support for physical protective security such as fencing, lighting and CCTV. Government previously committed funding of £2.4 million over 3 years. So far, more than a third of grants under the places of Worship Protective Funding scheme have been awarded to mosques.

The Home Secretary Sajid Javid said: " ... Nobody should ever fear persecution of their faith and it's vital we stand together to reject those who seek to spread hatred and divide us. I know many Muslim communities are feeling vulnerable and anxious. But they should seek comfort from knowing we are doing everything to tackle hate and extremism. ...

To increase uptake in the fund and ensure it reaches those most vulnerable to hate crime, the bidding process will also be simplified so organisations no longer have to prove they have previously experienced a hate crime incident directly. ..."

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost>

Home Secretary speech at London Central Mosque

... The horrific events in New Zealand – like the atrocities we have suffered in the UK – are an attack on the values that unite us all.

On our freedom to worship as we choose – or even not to worship at all. ...

The victims are our children, our parents, our friends. We share the agony of their loss.

From the darkness of the 2017 attacks came one glimmer of hope.

Communities across the UK united in their grief and support.

And that strength has been shown again this weekend.
Our churches, our synagogues, our temples, our gurdwaras our mosques – they have rung out with prayers for Christchurch.
We have come together today to share our pain.
To show that no faith, no race, no community will ever be alone.
No brother left unwelcomed.
The events that unite us are beyond tragic, but together we represent what is truly great about Britain.
An open and welcoming country, that finds strength in its diversity.
Where the Chief Rabbi and the Archbishop of Canterbury stand side by side in a mosque full of Imams from across the UK.
In front of an audience of determined young people, of every faith and none.
Where we all unite against hate and we say - not in my name. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretary-speech-at-london-central-mosque>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Trade Agreements: Israel

Andy slaughter (Labour) [231955] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason (a) article 4 of the Trade and Partnership Agreement between the UK Government and the Government of Israel describes the territoriality of only the UK and (b) the territoriality of Israel is referred to only in the explanatory memorandum; what legal force the explanatory memorandum has; and what assurances the Government has given to the state of Israel on accepting the territorial limitation of that UK-Israel agreement.

George Hollingbery: With regard to Israel, the EU-Israel Trade Agreements apply to the State of Israel and this same territorial application is incorporated into the UK-Israel agreement, without change. The UK has been clear that it does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), including the settlements, as part of the State of Israel and that the OPTs are not covered by the UK-Israel Agreement.

The incorporated territorial application of the EU-Israel agreements has had to change with regard to the UK, to reflect our departure from the EU. The UK-Israel agreement, therefore, makes clear that it applies to the UK and the territories for whose international relations it is responsible.

The Explanatory Memorandum is laid before Parliament to assist parliamentary scrutiny of the UK-Israel agreement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-13/231955/>

The trade agreement referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781440/CS_Israel_1.2019_Trade.pdf

The Explanatory Memorandum referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781559/EM_CS_Israel_1.2019.odt

Trade Agreements: Israel

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [231956] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Trade and Partnership Agreement between UK Government and the Government of the State of Israel presented to Parliament in February 2019, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the provisions of the UK-Israel Agreement are not applied to Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

George Hollingbery: The UK does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), including the settlements, as part of the State of Israel. The OPTs are not covered by the current EU-Israel Trade Agreements, nor by the UK-Israel Agreement.

Products produced in the Israeli settlements, located within the territories brought under Israeli administration since June 1967, are not entitled to benefit from preferential tariff treatment under the EU-Israel Trade Agreements. These areas are set out in a list of postcodes, which will be hosted on gov.uk, alongside a notice to importers. Tariff preferences will be implemented by UK customs authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-13/231956/>

The trade agreement referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781440/CS_Israel_1.2019_Trade.pdf

Trade Agreements: Israel

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [231957] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what provisions there are in the Trade and Partnership Agreement between the UK Government and the Government of Israel for monitoring the adherence by both parties to duties to respect democratic principles and human rights; how respect for democratic principles and human rights is defined; whether those rights are based on (a) international and (b) European law; whether respect for democratic principles and human rights (i) is limited to the territories of each party or (ii) includes territories annexed or under the control of each party; and what the effect on the agreement is of one party not respecting democratic principles and human rights.

George Hollingbery: The provisions of the EU-Israel Trade Agreements concerning human rights are incorporated into the UK-Israel Agreement, without modification. Accordingly, the UK-Israel Agreement provides that respect for democratic principles and human rights constitute an essential element of the Agreement. This is based on international obligations applicable to both parties.

The UK has long supported the promotion of our values globally and this will continue as we leave the EU. We are committed to upholding the UK's high standards and will consider the full range of mechanisms available to us in doing so.

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on human rights and legal issues relating to the occupation, including settlements and the treatment of Palestinian children in military custody.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-13/231957/>

The trade agreement referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781440/CS_Israel_1.2019_Trade.pdf

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL14191] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the reduction in remittances of tax revenue to the Palestinian Authority; and what assessment they have made as to whether that reduction is contrary to the Paris Protocol agreement.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned about the impact of Israel's decision to withhold tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority (PA). The Israeli decision will have significant consequences for stability and security, and will impact the humanitarian and economic situation for ordinary Palestinians. We expect economic and fiscal agreements between Israel and the PA to continue to be fully implemented, including Israel's obligations under the Oslo Accords and Paris Protocol. We raised our concerns about Israel's decision with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 21 February. We also remain concerned about the Palestinian system of payments to prisoners and lobby the PA on this issue. But this is not a justification for withholding agreed tax revenues.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-04/HL14191/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL14226] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel following reports of the use of army attack dogs against unarmed Palestinian civilians in their homes.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli Government. In our dialogue with the Israeli authorities we have recognised their legitimate need to deploy security measures to address violence. We encourage them to deploy these in a way which minimises tension and use appropriate force. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-04/HL14226/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL14227] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to government of Israel regarding the reported use of tear gas on Palestinian workers within the confines of Checkpoint 300.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. We recognise the Israeli authorities' legitimate need to deploy security measures in some circumstances, but we have encouraged them to avoid excessive use of force and to act in a way which minimises tensions. When there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have urged the Israeli authorities to conduct swift and transparent investigations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-04/HL14227/>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Commission urges Israel to review rules of engagement before Gaza protest anniversary

... The one-year anniversary of the protests is less than two weeks away. We hear that crowds are going to be large at the official protest sites. The excessive use of force that

took place on 30 March, 14 May and 12 October 2018 must not be repeated,” the Chair of the Commission, Santiago Canton of Argentina, told the Human Rights Council.

“We noted that a senior Israeli official recently stated to international media that each and every bullet received authorization by an experienced commander. When examining the Israel Defence Forces’ use of live fire against the Palestinian protestors, the Commission, however, found that application of lethal force was in the majority of cases authorized unlawfully. ...

The Commission found there was no justification for Israel’s security forces killing and injuring persons who pose no imminent threat of death or serious injury to those around them, including journalists, health workers and children.

The Commission found that the Israeli security forces’ Rules of Engagement contributed to the unlawful actions. These rules identified so-called “key inciters” or “key rioters” who could be shot in the legs for acts such as burning tires, cutting or breaching the fence, or exhorting or leading the crowd in approaching the separation fence.

“We strongly disagree with the suggestion that the targeting of these demonstrators meets the high human rights standards for using lethal force. Under these rules of engagement, 4,903 unarmed persons were shot in the lower limbs, many while standing hundreds of meters from the snipers,” said Canton.

“The Commission has reasonable grounds to believe that during the protests, labelled the Great March of Return, Israeli soldiers killed and gravely injured civilians who were neither participating directly in hostilities nor posing an imminent threat to the Israeli Security Forces, or to the civilian population in Israel. ... “Some of those violations may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity, and must be immediately investigated by Israel”, said Commissioner Kaari Betty Murungi of Kenya. ...

“Our investigations found that Israeli snipers used high velocity bullets and long-range sniper rifles equipped with sophisticated optical aiming devices. They saw the target magnified in their sight and they knew the consequences of shooting, but still pulled the trigger, not once or twice but more than 6000 times,” said Commissioner Sara Hossain of Bangladesh. “The snipers killed thirty-two children, three clearly marked paramedics, and two clearly marked journalists. They shot at unarmed protestors, children and disabled persons, and at health workers and journalists performing their duties, knowing who they were,” ...

The Commission took note of the Israeli claim that the protests by the separation fence masked “terror activities” by Palestinian armed groups. The Commission found however that the demonstrations were almost entirely civilian in nature, with clearly stated political aims and did not constitute combat or military campaigns. ...

The Commission found that some members of the Higher National Committee organising the protests, which includes Hamas representatives, encouraged or defended demonstrators’ indiscriminate use of incendiary kites and balloons, causing fear among civilians and significant damage to property in southern Israel. The Commission found Hamas, as the de facto authority in Gaza, responsible for failing to prevent these acts.

“We also call on the organisers in Gaza, and on all protestors, to keep the demonstrations entirely peaceful and non-violent, in accordance with the principles set out by the initiators of this movement,” Santiago Canton added. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24348&LanglD=E>

Report of the detailed findings of the independent international Commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session40/Documents/A_HRC_40_74_CRP2.18March.pdf

Human Rights Council holds interactive dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry

... **Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967**, reminded once again that, contrary to its solemn obligations as a member of the United Nations, Israel had not allowed him to visit the occupied territory since he had assumed this mandate three years ago. That was part of a broader pattern of Israel's non-cooperation in recent years with various human rights mechanisms of the United Nations. The Special Rapporteur reminded that the situation in Gaza was moving from a tragic human-made crisis to a humanitarian catastrophe. Under international law, Gaza remained an occupied territory. ... Mr. Lynk endorsed the findings of the Commission of Inquiry that the use of lethal fire by Israel against the demonstrators who had not posed an imminent threat was unlawful. He also supported the Commission's recommendations, including two of its most important ones: that Israel must immediately lift its suffocating blockade of Gaza, which was the source of many human rights and humanitarian law violations; and there must be full accountability for the unlawful behaviour of the Israeli military.

The Special Rapporteur recalled that the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, also presented significant human rights issues as the Israeli occupation deepened and thickened. ... Even though annexation under modern international law was strictly forbidden, Israel continued full-steam with settlement expansion ...

The Temporary International Presence in Hebron, which had provided some measure of protection to the Palestinian residents of Hebron, had been unilaterally shuttered by Israel. Forced evictions continued to occur in Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. Mr. Lynk highlighted the perilous situation of human rights defenders in Palestine and Israel, as Israeli authorities were continuing their efforts to silence them ...

He condemned the violent suppression by Hamas of the popular demonstrations in Gaza against living conditions over the past several days which had resulted in the reported arrest of 500 people and the beating of journalists and human rights defenders. ...

Israel was not in the room to take the floor as the concerned country.

State of Palestine, speaking as the concerned country, thanked the Special Rapporteur and condemned Israel's refusal to participate in the process. Israel was attempting to hide these crimes and violations of humanitarian law, flouting the norms of international treaties and laws which Israel was a member of. ...

Israel had spread a colonizing and racist system, added to which were the crimes of individual settlers against Palestinians. They had seen systematic attacks against their people to deprive them of their security. ... They had seen children die, as the emergency services had not been able to intervene after fire and so forth. ...

Independent Commission for Human Rights of the State of Palestine stressed the need to hold to account and investigate Israel for the war crimes it perpetrated. The High Commissioner was called on to submit reports on Israeli violations to the International Criminal Court and called the Prosecutor of the Court to open a formal investigation into the Israeli crimes.

United Nations Watch called attention to the inherent discrimination in the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, and asked that his mandate be expanded. The organization had repeatedly drawn the attention of the Special Rapporteur to him ignoring the victimization of the Palestinians and Israelis by Hamas, which prejudged the outcome of the findings.

Santiago Canton, Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests in the occupied Palestinian territory, said this Commission was mandated by the Council to investigate the large-scale protests in the Gaza Strip starting 30 March last year. He confirmed that these were not military operations, but civilian protests and were overwhelmingly unarmed, if not always peaceful. He regretted that the

Israeli Government had not cooperated with the Commission or allowed entry into Israel or occupied Palestinian territory. The Commission therefore had relied on media recordings, 325 interviews with witnesses and other documentation to create a solid body of over 8,000 supporting documents to the report.

The Commission found that Israeli Security Forces had committed serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law which warranted criminal investigation and prosecution. One hundred and eighty-nine Palestinians were killed, of which 183 with live ammunition, including 35 children, persons with disabilities, two journalists and three paramedics. There were two occasions in north and central Gaza which may have constituted an “imminent threat of life or serious injury” to Israeli Security Forces, but in all other cases, the use of live ammunition was unlawful. The Commission found that the targeting of an unarmed demonstrator based solely on political affiliation or membership in an armed group was unlawful. ...

State of Palestine welcomed the report. ... Israel considered itself above the law and rejected resolutions of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. Atrocities and murder of civilians had been committed by Israel, killing many civilians, medical teams and journalists.

Independent Commission for Human Rights of the State of Palestine ... called on the Council to adopt and approve the report of the Commission of Inquiry, and on Member States to adopt a resolution on the extension of the Commission’s mandate. ... it urged the Prosecutor of the court to open a formal investigation into the Israeli crimes, to hold Israel to account for the war crimes it had perpetrated, and to prosecute all those involved in them. War crimes were not subject to any statute of limitations. Israel’s persistent violations and aggressions were a result of impunity, which encouraged Israeli forces to perpetrate more crimes against Palestinian civilians. ...

United Nations Watch said the march for peace was an outrageous attempt to break through the border fence and slaughter Israelis. They accused the Commission of misrepresenting the actions of Hamas and appealed to every Member State of the Commission to repudiate its findings. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24353&LangID=E>

Human Rights Council holds general debate on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories

... **Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights**, introduced four reports [see below] of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and other occupied Arab territories. ...

... this was another very difficult year in terms of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory. The most shocking development had been a huge loss of life, leading to an already crippled healthcare system being completely overwhelmed. ... Mr. Gilmour expressed concern at the Israel authorities’ failure to protect Palestinians when attacks occurred. The situation in Hebron was especially worrying, and he regretted Israel’s decision not to renew the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, which had played a critical role in mitigating human rights violations and bearing witness to those violations that did occur. ... Mr. Gilmour deplored the brutal repression carried out by Hamas security forces in recent days and reiterated that human rights violations by all sides were not just symptoms of the conflict, but further perpetuated the cycle of violence. That was why those responsible must be brought to justice. ...

Israel was not in the room to take the floor as the concerned country.

State of Palestine, speaking as the concerned country, reaffirmed its readiness to shoulder its legal responsibilities and underlined that the lion's share of the responsibility to end the violence and bring about peace lay with the occupying power. ... The State of Palestine furthermore expressed concern about the recent adoption by Israel of a racist law on the Jewish nation-state as it denied the ties of the Palestinian people to their land and abolished the possibility of two States. The law was a confirmation that the Israeli Government was not committed to peace. ...

Syrian Arab Republic, speaking as the concerned country, noted that the children in the occupied Syrian Golan still held on to their Syrian identity, despite the violations perpetrated by Israel. The punitive and discriminatory measures of the occupying power were a clear demonstration of the negation of their civil and political rights. ... The occupying power pillaged property in local villages and asked Syrians to provide deeds to their property. ...

International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists said that the main obstacle to the efficiency of the Human Rights Council was its disproportionate focus on Israel. The human and financial expenses were predominantly focusing on this subject. The Council had adopted 25 resolutions condemning Israel and this made up 30 per cent of the overall number of resolutions condemning States for human rights situations. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24354&LangID=E>

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session40/Documents/A_HRC_40_73.docx

Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

<http://undocs.org/A/HRC/40/41>

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session40/Documents/A_HRC_40_42.docx

Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session40/Documents/A_HRC_40_43.docx

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Written Answer

Hezbollah

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL14197] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact on UK–Lebanese diplomatic relations as a result of the decision to proscribe Hezbollah in its entirety.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government has proscribed Hezbollah's military and security wings since 2008, and has long had a no contact policy with the entirety of the organisation. The Home Secretary was clear in his statement to

the Commons that our support for Lebanon will remain unaffected by the decision to extend proscription. We remain committed to the security and economic stability of Lebanon and the region, and continue to work closely with our Lebanese partners towards these goals. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa visited Lebanon last week where he underlined the UK's commitment to supporting Lebanon.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-04/HL14197/>

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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>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-03-18/debates/7B40B2E1-CB4B-4ACF-8A11-8EA999DDC3DA/Holocaust\(ReturnOfCulturalObjects\)\(Amendment\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-03-18/debates/7B40B2E1-CB4B-4ACF-8A11-8EA999DDC3DA/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>

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

Scottish charity law (closing date 1 April 2019)

<https://tinyurl.com/y9ln88df>

TOP