

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

## Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Religious Buildings: Islam**

**Thelma Walker (Labour)** [243562] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allocating funding to mosques for security on a risk-assessed basis.

#### **Religious Buildings: Security**

**Thelma Walker (Labour)** [243563] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the level of threat to places of worship by far-right politically motivated violence in the UK; and what plans he has to support those places of worship.

**Victoria Atkins:** The threat to places of worship from far-right violence is considered independently of government by the police and Joint Terrorism Assessment Centre (JTAC) and the police consider appropriate action to be taken in light of these assessments.

The Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme is a key Home Office commitment in the Hate Crime Action Plan to respond to concerns about faith-based hate crime. The scheme is open to Christian, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faiths and provides funding for physical security measures at places which are vulnerable to hate crime.

Decisions on funding are based on eligibility criteria set out in the Home Office guidance to applicants and the recommendations of the multi-faith independent advisory panel (with security expertise), this process therefore includes an assessment of vulnerability to hate crime. Last month, we announced an uplift of funding for the 2019/20 Places of Worship scheme to £1.6 million. This is double the amount awarded in 2018/19.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-10/243562/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-10/243563/>

Information about the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

The Hate Crime Action Plan referred to above can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/543679/Action\\_Against\\_Hate - UK Government s Plan to Tackle Hate Crime 2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf)

The announcement referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Religious Buildings: Security**

**Thelma Walker (Labour)** [243564] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent representations he has received from community faith groups on the security of places of worship.

**Thelma Walker (Labour)** [243565] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 2 April 2019 to Question 236388 on Religious Buildings: Security, what plans are in place to enable his Department to consult communities on the security of places of worship.

**Victoria Atkins:** The Places of Worship Protective Security Fund (POW) is a key commitment in the Hate Crime Action Plan published in 2016. The scheme has been running for three years, and we ensure we continuously listen to feedback from faith communities on the scheme, including the independent panel to the scheme made up of representatives across faith groups. This feedback has resulted in improvements being made for each year of the scheme.

In March the Home Secretary announced an increase in the amount of funding for the POW scheme to £1.6m, for 2019-20. We are working urgently to make commercial improvements to the scheme to make it easier for places of worship to apply, reducing the administrative burden and widening the eligibility criteria.

More widely, following the events in Christchurch, the Home Secretary committed to consulting with faith communities to understand what more could and should be done to help protect faith communities at their places of worship. We will be working with groups such as the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, Tell Mama and those representing other faiths as part of this consultation. This engagement with communities is starting immediately with opportunities for wider consultation, including from people feeding in on individual basis, following thereafter. We will be outlining how to engage on Gov.UK shortly

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-10/243564/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-10/243565/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-25/236388/>

Information about the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

The Hate Crime Action Plan referred to above can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/543679/Action\\_Against\\_Hate - UK Government s Plan to Tackle Hate Crime 2016.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf)

The announcement referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Coroners

**Lord Popat (Conservative)** [HL15012] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that requests to expedite decision-making by coroners on religious grounds are implemented, following the judgment of the Administrative Court in R (Adath Yisroel Burial Society) v Senior Coroner for Inner North London (2018 EWHC 969 (Admin)).

**Lord Keen of Elie:** Coroners are independent judicial office holders and, as such, it would not be appropriate for Ministers to interfere in their decisions.

Following the judgment of the Administrative Court in R (Adath Yisroel Burial Society) v Senior Coroner for Inner North London (2018) EWHC 969 (Admin), the Chief Coroner issued guidance to coroners on handling urgent decisions, including those concerning faith issues. The Guidance is a practical guide to assist coroners in situations where:

- a bereaved family has made a request to the coroner for urgent consideration of the death of a loved one and/or early release of the body; or
- the coroner or coroner's officers otherwise become aware of features of a particular death which may justify treating it as especially urgent.

The Guidance provides a summary of the guiding principles and is available at:

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/guidance-no-28-report-of-death-to-the-coroner-2010517.pdf>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-02/HL15012/>

*The judgment referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/aybs-v-hmcoroner-judgment.pdf>

*The Guidance referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/guidance-no-28-report-of-death-to-the-coroner-2010517.pdf>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Catherine West (Labour) (2303) Tackling Islamophobia and Religious Hate Crimes** – That this House remains deeply concerned by the rise of Islamophobia and other hate crimes within communities; stands in solidarity with the victims of such crimes and with the wider Muslim community in both the London Borough of Haringey and across the UK; supports the Metropolitan Police in their actions to tackle such crimes; recognises the important contribution the Muslim community makes to society in the UK; reaffirms the need to protect religious groups from such acts of hatred; and calls on the Government to condemn acts of Islamophobia and to bring forward tighter regulation to tackle this and other forms of religious and racial discrimination.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/52829/tackling-islamophobia-and-religious-hate-crimes>

TOP

## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Middle East: Politics and Government

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [243409] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and

Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish the outcomes of the Warsaw Conference on 14 February 2019 in Poland that was attended by representatives of Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Tunisia, France, Germany, the US and the United Kingdom.

**Mark Field:** The Foreign Secretary held constructive discussions during and on the margins of the Warsaw Conference in February. He discussed a wide range of issues related to Middle East security, and on 13 February the Foreign Secretary co-hosted a meeting of the Yemen Quad, where they highlighted their commitment to progress on Yemen, which is at a critical juncture.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-10/243409/>

## Church of Scotland

### **World Mission Council Special Report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: Strategic Review: Church of Scotland in Israel and Palestine**

*'Blue Book' section 10/1 (34 pages)*

<https://ga.churchofscotland.org.uk/download/publications/2019-assembly-reports-blue-bookpdf.pdf>

### **World Mission Council Report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland**

... 'I had left for Israel/Palestine not knowing what to expect, but I certainly was not prepared for what I was to experience. Working men queuing in silence at 4am patiently shuffling their way through cages to a checkpoint. The eyes of a Palestinian shopkeeper in Hebron haunted by the humiliation of his treatment at the hands of the authorities. There is no one left to come to his shop, but still he opens it every day. A doctor tells us of the poverty and despair in Gaza. A Rabbi talks of the ethical injustice in the treatment of Palestinians. Nobody cares it seems. Early on, my faith was challenged. Where are you now God? I was soon to discover. Every single day we met with leaders of non-violent organisations working towards peace, justice and harmony. Hopeful Jews, Muslims and Christians cheerfully staying close to overcome great resistance to their work. Here was God. Alive. ...

*'Blue Book' section 9/3.2*

<https://ga.churchofscotland.org.uk/download/publications/2019-assembly-reports-blue-bookpdf.pdf>

TOP

## Other Relevant Information

### Church of Scotland

#### **Council of Assembly Report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland**

There are two main initiatives which the Interfaith Officer will be progressing into 2019. The first is the continued dialogue with the Jewish community, this year with professional facilitators. One of the outcomes of this is to put energy into internal facing conversations about the meaning of antisemitism within the Christian tradition. It is important that we deal with this issue within the Church of Scotland.

*'Blue Book' section 7/9.4.1*

<https://ga.churchofscotland.org.uk/download/publications/2019-assembly-reports-blue-bookpdf.pdf>

TOP

## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

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

#### **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>

TOP

## **Consultations** \*\* new or updated today

#### **Online Harms White Paper** (closing date 1 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

TOP

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