



Representing, connecting and supporting Jewish people in Scotland

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government

#### **Communities Secretary commits funding to tackle online hate**

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP today (15 September 2019) confirmed £100,000 funding to stem the spread of antisemitic material online, as he underlined this government's absolute commitment to tackling hatred in all its forms.

The additional funding will support the Antisemitism Policy Trust's ongoing work to tackle the spread of racist tropes online and challenge harmful narratives about Jewish people. This forms part of the government's wider agenda to tackle all forms of religiously and racially motivated hatred.

The organisation will use the funding to develop short, educative videos to counter, debunk, and undermine the proliferation of hateful antisemitic material online.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said: Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society and I am committed to tackling it at its root.

Online hatred can be a pernicious force that not only causes immediate harm to its victims but can embolden its perpetrators.

By funding innovative programmes that educate future generations and stem the spread of harmful ideologies we will stamp out this scourge, wherever it appears.

In a speech at a Board of Deputies of British Jews event, Mr Jenrick is also due to commit to writing to all councils and universities this week demanding that they adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition as a matter of urgency.

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore MP said: There is no place in our society for hatred or any form of harassment and it is frankly appalling that the battle against antisemitism still exists.

Universities should recognise the internationally renowned IHRA working definition of antisemitism accepted by the government.

I have already written to all vice chancellors earlier this year urging them to do so, but in recent weeks there have been alarming incidents demonstrating the need for further action and for universities to protect the welfare and act seriously on the concerns of Jewish students.

Universities must not risk damaging their reputation by not acting swiftly to root out

antisemitism when it reveals itself.

Antisemitism in the UK continues to be a cause for concern. The most recent national hate crime statistics published by the Home Office last October showed that Jewish people were the most likely group to experience religiously motivated hate crime.

The Community Security Trust (CST), the leading Jewish organisation monitoring and supporting victims of antisemitism, recorded 1,652 reported antisemitic incidents in 2018 – their highest annual total on record for the third year running. ...

**To read the full press report see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-secretary-commits-funding-to-tackle-online-hate>

### **Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick speech to Board of Deputies of British Jews**

... As the UK's longest-established religious minority, our Jewish community has led the way with its incredible contribution to our national life.

And the Board of Deputies of British Jews has been at the heart of this for more than 250 years. ...

As our Prime Minister has said: our nation would be less without our Jewish citizens. Married to a Jew and with three Jewish daughters, I cannot imagine a Britain without our Jewish friends, neighbours and loved ones.

But I am all too aware of the challenges you face. The scourge of antisemitism is a stain on our society.

Whether on our streets or in the comfort of our own homes using social media, there is no place for antisemitic abuse, and this Government will do everything possible to ensure Jewish people feel safe wherever they are.

This Government led the way by adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism – the first Government to do so. But I regret that this lead has not always been followed.

Sitting on the front line of our democracy, our local councils have a duty to act and stamp out antisemitism wherever they find it. So it's troubling that, in some cases, we're seeing the reverse. As Secretary of State for Local Government, I will be writing to all councils insisting that they adopt the IHRA definition at the earliest opportunity and use it on all appropriate occasions, including in disciplinary proceedings.

Boycotts, divestment and sanctions against the State of Israel are also damaging and divisive – I will not tolerate them on my watch.

Councils should not be wasting time and taxpayer's money pursuing their own foreign policies - often seemingly obsessed with Zionism – to the detriment of delivering high quality services for residents.

My British wife was born in Israel and I've visited many times, so I am well placed to say that Israelis are often the fiercest critics of their government's policies.

Israel's vibrant democracy allows for lively debate and the country is about to head to the polls for the second time in a year!

We are in dangerous times when some, including those in prominent positions in public life, cannot distinguish between legitimate criticism of the policies of a democratically elected government and blatant antisemitism.

Replacing the word "Jew" for "Zionist" when pedalling vile and offensive views can never sanitise them. Rejecting Israel's right to exist is antisemitic and suggestions that the IHRA definition of antisemitism curtails legitimate criticism of the Israeli government must be countered.

I am also concerned by the evidence coming out of our universities – the disgraceful experiences that Jewish students have lived through at certain universities. ...

We wrote to many universities urging them to adopt the IHRA definition. Yet some didn't even reply.

These organisations are recipients of public money – failure to act is unacceptable.

As Secretary of State, I will be writing to universities asking them to adopt the IHRA

definition. And as with council leaders, I will be calling Vice Chancellors personally to press for action if none is forthcoming.

The figures compiled by the Community Security Trust not only showed antisemitic incidents in 2018 at an all-time high for the third year running, but a very significant increase in online hate.

Today I'm pleased to announce on behalf of the Government that we are going to be providing £100,000 funding to tackle the spread of antisemitic material on social media. This funding will support the Antisemitism Policy Trust's ongoing work to tackle the spread of antisemitic tropes online and challenge harmful narratives about the Jewish community. ...

The Government also proscribed the antisemitic Hezbollah terror group in full earlier this year. The untenable distinction between a military and a political wing was dropped after years of campaigning by activists inside and outside Parliament, myself included.

It gives me great comfort that the Hezbollah flag, emblazoned with an automatic rifle, will no longer be flown with impunity on the streets of London or the UK. ...

In addition to the appointment of Rehman Chishti MP to succeed Lord Ahmad as Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief, I'm delighted that we now have two independent figures dedicated to tackling antisemitism.

Lord Pickles and John Mann come from very different political traditions, but both are strong campaigners and individuals of great integrity, committed to rooting out discrimination and will bring their considerable experience and energy to doing so.

I am pleased that Eric is continuing in his current role as Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues ensuring that the UK continues to play a central role in all international discussions on Holocaust-related matters ...

Eric will also continue to focus on the vital restitution of art and immovable property and promoting the implementation of the 2009 Terezin Declaration and Holocaust Era Assets programme.

John will be providing me as Secretary of State with independent advice on the most effective methods to tackle antisemitism within Britain.

As he has said, he will continue to call out those throwing stones of hatred at Jewish people and his role will be to advise me on combatting antisemitism wherever it is found in the United Kingdom ... We must ensure that the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre is built in Westminster. The centre has the complete and unshakeable support of the Prime Minister and myself. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/board-of-deputies-of-british-jews-speech>

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## Israel

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Updated Guidance: Overseas Business Risk - The Occupied Palestinian Territories**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-palestinian-territories/overseas-business-risk-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

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## Other Relevant Information

### European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

#### **Key findings Racist crime and institutional racism in Europe: Shadow Report 2014-18**

... Data suggest that racially motivated crimes are on the rise in many EU Member States. In France, the United Kingdom and Germany, there was an increase in antisemitic acts in 2018. ...

Major events such as terrorist acts - and the political rhetoric and responses to these attacks - can cause spikes in the numbers of recorded racist crimes. ...

The Crime Survey England and Wales 2015-2018 combined estimates show 101,000 race hate crime incidents a year. The number of race hate crimes reported to police in England and Wales in 2017- 2018 was 71,251 incidents, which shows possible under-reporting of 25%. ...

The EU Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law has resulted in a better understanding and state commitment to addressing racially motivated crimes, but the practice and implementation of laws, policies and guidelines remain limited. ...

The power of who declares what is and what is not a racist crime to be investigated is not in the hands of the victim but in the hands of the police officer, thus leaving the victim to be silenced if their definition or declaration of the 'racist' element is not shared with the police. ...

Several factors hinder the successful prosecution and sentencing of a hate crime with a racial bias, including: lack of proper recording of the racial elements of the crime by the police; poor and inadequate investigation by the police; compartmentalised working between the police and the prosecution; lack of clear definitions of hate crimes with a racial bias; lack of training and limited capacity for police and prosecution. ...

Subtle forms of racism persistently appear in the criminal justice system from the moment a victim reports a racially motivated crime to the police, through to investigation and prosecution. This leads to a 'justice gap': a significant number of hate crime cases end up being dropped as a hate crime. ...

**To read the full press release see**

[https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/key\\_findings.pdf](https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/key_findings.pdf)

#### **2014-2018 Shadow Report on racist crime and institutional racism in Europe**

[https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport2018\\_final-embargoed\\_12-09-2019.pdf](https://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/shadowreport2018_final-embargoed_12-09-2019.pdf)

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill**

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

#### **Domestic Abuse Bill**

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

## **International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill**

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

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

**Islamophobia in Scotland** (closing date 30 September 2019)

<https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=13027>

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