

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Following the ruling by the Supreme Court that the prorogation of the UK Parliament in September was unlawful, the 2017-19 parliamentary session resumed on 25 September 2019. However, it has now been prorogued again and will not meet again until 14 October 2019. Prorogation is the period between the end of one session of Parliament and the State Opening of Parliament that begins the next session.

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Social Media

Ian Austin (Independent) [294113] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) racism, (b) abuse and (c) threats on social media platforms.

Matt Warman: The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems and processes in place to deal with harmful content on their services to keep their users safe. Compliance with this duty of care will be overseen by an independent regulator, which will have a range of enforcement powers.

Alongside the White Paper, the government published the Social Media Code of Practice. This voluntary guidance sets out actions that the Government believes social media platforms should take to prevent bullying, insulting, intimidating and humiliating behaviours on their sites. Government has also asked the Law Commission to conduct a second phase of its review of the legal framework around abusive and offensive communications online. This will make specific recommendations for legal reform and is due to report in early 2021.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-03/294113/>

The White Paper referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793360/Online_Harms_White_Paper.pdf

The Code of Practice referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793324/Code_of_Practice_for_providers_of_online_social_media_platforms.d.pdf

Information about the Law Society review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-to-undertake-phase-2-of-the-abusive-and-offensive-online-communications-project/>

Religious Hatred: Islam

Jim Cunningham (Labour) [294093] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to tackle Islamophobia.

Luke Hall: The government does not tolerate hatred of any kind and is taking a number of steps to tackle Islamophobia. We have some of the strongest legislation in the world to tackle hate crime and where groups incite racial hatred or are engaged in racially or religiously motivated criminal activity, we would expect them to be prosecuted.

To support security training for places of worship, we have committed £1.6 million through the places of worship security grant this year. and a further £5 million over three years. We have also supported Tell MAMA with over £2.5 million between 2016 and 2020 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred, and committed £1.5 million in new funding for hate crime projects including those tackling anti-Muslim hatred and racism in schools.

The government will also be appointing independent advisers to provide expert advice to government on a definition of Islamophobia. The first of these advisers, Imam Qari Asim MBE, was appointed on the 23 July 2019. Their work will draw on a wide range of opinions and they will work in close collaboration with the cross-government Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-03/294093/>

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Faith Engagement Adviser appointed

Colin Bloom has been appointed as Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

As Faith Engagement Adviser, Colin will lead a review into how best the government should engage with faith groups in England.

The adviser will make recommendations to the Communities Secretary about how the government can best celebrate and support the contribution of faith groups, break down barriers and promote acceptance between faiths, and promote shared values while tackling cultures and practices that are harmful. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faith-engagement-adviser-appointed>

Commission for Countering Extremism

Independent advisor calls for overhaul of extremism strategy

Sara Khan, who heads up the commission for Countering Extremism, has carried out the first-ever national conversation on extremism and reviewed the government's current approach. The commission is ... publishing its findings and recommendations in a new

report, Challenging Hateful Extremism.

The report identifies a new category of extremist behaviour outside of terrorism and violent extremism, which it calls hateful extremism. It summarises hateful extremism:

- behaviours that can incite and amplify hate, or engage in persistent hatred, or equivocate about and make the moral case for violence
- that draw on hateful, hostile or supremacist beliefs directed at an out-group who are perceived as a threat to the wellbeing, survival or success of an in-group
- that cause, or are likely to cause, harm to individuals, communities or wider society ...
- Examples of inciting and amplifying of hatred against others include the active propagation of anti-minority hatred from Far Right demonstrations in Sunderland or activists from Hizb ut-Tahrir spreading hate-filled views about LGBTQ+ people during the row over relationships teaching in Birmingham.
- Examples of making the moral case for violence include a director from an Islamist organisation describing a British suicide bomber's act as "a price worth paying" or an activist from a banned Far Right group tweeting that the man who murdered Jo Cox MP was "a hero, we need more people like him to butcher the race traitors".
- Examples of persistent hatred towards individuals including the shocking finding that three quarters of those countering extremism on the ground had personally received abuse, intimidation or harassment – because of their work. ...

Sara Khan ... calls for a new focus on hateful extremism and a robust, victim-centred and rights-based approach to ensure we respond proportionately to the threat. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-advisor-calls-for-overhaul-of-extremism-strategy>

Challenging Hateful Extremism

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836538/Challenging_Hateful_Extremism_report.pdf

Public perceptions of extremism: interim summary report

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835681/Public_Perceptions_of_Extremism_Interim_report_Final_.pdf

An analysis of the Commission for Countering Extremism's call for evidence – Report 1: Public understanding of extremism

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836759/WP1_final_report.pdf

An analysis of the Commission for Countering Extremism's call for evidence – Report 2: Tactics and harms

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836762/WP2_final_report.pdf

Mainstreaming Islamism: Islamist institutions and civil society organisations

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836965/mainstreaming-islamism-islamist-institutions-and-civil-society-organisations.pdf

Mainstream Islamism in Britain: Educating for the "Islamic Revival"

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836571/Mainstream-islamism-in-britain-education-for-the-islamic-revival.pdf

Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answers

Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293452] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September to Question 286103 on Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, if he will name the organisations outside Government providing (a) public relations or engagement, (b) public affairs and (c) planning services in respect of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre; and how much is being paid from the public purse to each organisation.

Jake Berry: The organisations and amounts paid are set out below:

Organisation	Service	Spend to date from public purse including VAT
Big Ideas Community Interest Company	Community engagement	£69,296
Dp9	Planning services	£0
Four Communications	Communications	£70,748
Newgate Communications	Communications	£0

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293452/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-09-03/286103/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293453] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 31 July to Question 280921 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, which individuals were members of the property sub-committee of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation from November 2015 to January 2016.

Jake Berry: UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation members Mr Peter Freeman and Mr Gerald Ronson CBE were members of the property sub-committee.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293453/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280921/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293454] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 31 July to Question 280917 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, for what reason

sites identified by means other than the CBRE were not brought to the CBRE's attention to enable it to compare all potential sites.

Jake Berry: I refer my Rt Hon Friend to the answer to Question UIN 270267 of 27 June 2019, and remind the Rt Hon Gentleman that CBRE was only one element in the search for potential sites.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293454/>

The first answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280917/>

and the second at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270267/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293455] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the terms of reference were for the CBRE's search for potential sites for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

Jake Berry: To carry out an extensive search for potential sites for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in line with the criteria set by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293455/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293456] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 31 July to Question 280917 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, how many potential sites not among sites identified by the CBRE were identified by (a) Royal Parks, (b) Holocaust commemorative and educational organisations, (c) property owners and developers, (e) property agents, (f) London Borough authorities, (g) universities (h) museums and (i) cultural centres; and on what dates those potential sites were reported to the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation.

Jake Berry: As set out in the answer to Question UIN 229625 on 14 March 2019, almost 50 sites were identified by a wide range stakeholders and considered by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation during the latter part of 2015.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293456/>

The first answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280917/>

and the second at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-07/229625/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293457] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 July to Question 270267 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, for what reason paragraphs 4.20 to 4.23 of the Planning Statement submitted by his Department to Westminster Council do not refer to the elements in the property search other than that by the CBRE.

Jake Berry: The approach prior to appointment of CBRE is described in paragraphs 4.1.1-4.1.4 of the environmental statement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293457/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-06-27/270267/>

There are no direct links to the documents but the Planning Statement and Environmental Statement referred to above can be downloaded from the following link. The relevant Environmental Statement is entitled "ES Volume 2 Main Report"

<https://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PL0CVYRP27000>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293458] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 31 July to Question 280917 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, how many sites in addition to the 24 identified by the CBRE were considered by the board of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation for the first time on 13 January 2016.

Jake Berry: At its meeting on 13 January 2016 the Foundation reviewed the progress of the site search and concluded that there could be no better site than Victoria Tower Gardens to place the Holocaust Memorial.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293458/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280917/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293459] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 31 July 2019 to Question 280920 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, for what reason that Answer did not provide the information requested on communications with Royal Parks.

Jake Berry: Question UIN 280920 tabled by the Rt Hon Member for Gainsborough on 23 July 2019 was capable of inadvertently misrepresenting the government's January 2016 statement. The answer sought to remove any ambiguity.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293459/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280920/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293460] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 31 July to Question 280914 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, if he will publish the operating models the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation is considering to cover the running costs of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

Jake Berry: The Foundation has yet to complete its consideration of options.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293460/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280914/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293461] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answers of 15 and 31 July 2019 to Questions 274442 and 280922 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, on what date in November 2015 the property sub-committee of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation was asked to undertake a search of Government sites.

Jake Berry: The search for possible sites began in July 2015.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293461/>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-08/274442/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-23/280922/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [293463] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy not to introduce security checks for visitors to Victoria Tower Gardens other than people visiting the Memorial and Learning Centre after that centre has opened.

Jake Berry: In common with other public places in Westminster there will be no security checks for visitors to Victoria Tower Gardens.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293463/>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Overseas Trade: Israel

Ian Austin (Independent) [294687] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment has she made of the level of potential opportunities for (a) export and (b) trade with Israel.

Graham Stuart: Israel remains a strategic priority for UK trade with total trade in goods and services between the UK and Israel totalling £4.2bn in 2019.

Total UK exports to Israel amounted to £2.4bn in 2019 and our Embassy team in Tel Aviv, supported by the Department for International Trade (DIT) team in London and across the UK, continues to support and engage with business on a daily basis both to assess and realise potential opportunities for UK business in line with the Export Strategy, the government's plan to increase UK total exports as a proportion of GDP to 35% and make Britain a 21st century exporting superpower. The strategy, which focuses on all global markets, including Israel, will encourage and inspire more businesses to export; inform businesses by providing practical assistance on exporting; connect UK businesses to overseas buyers and

opportunities; and help provide finance through UK Export Finance to enhance the HMG offer to UK exporters. Through this strategy we will also continue to promote the UK as a bilateral trading partner, reassuring Israeli businesses that the UK remains open for business and remains an advocate for free trade and open markets.

On trade more broadly, the Trade Continuity Agreement signed between the UK and Israel last February reflects the importance both countries attribute to the respective trading relationship and the potential opportunities that exist. I am delighted that the Hon. Member will be supporting the important and exciting work that builds on the agreement as our recently appointed Trade Envoy for Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-04/294687/>

The Trade Continuity 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

Palestinians: Health Services

Laura Smith (Labour) [294741] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, for what reasons the Government did not support the UN Commission of Inquiry's report into potential violations of international law and the protection of healthcare in Palestine.

Andrew Murrison: The UK abstained on the UN Human Rights Council resolution calling for a Commission of Inquiry on the basis that the substance of a resolution must be impartial and balanced. We could not support an international investigation that refused to explicitly call for an investigation into the action of non-state actors such as Hamas. It is clear that Hamas hold significant responsibility for encouraging violent protest in Gaza, which is totally unacceptable. However, our vote does not mean that we will hold back from voicing or raising concern about Israel's actions when warranted. The UN and its member states have every right to address these grave matters in a measured, balanced and proportionate way. In future, the UK will continue to support scrutiny of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the Human Rights Council, so long as this scrutiny is justified and proportionate. We have repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defense Forces police non-violent protests and the border areas, including the use of live ammunition. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-04/294741/>

Omar Barghouti

Richard Burden (Labour) [292826] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason there was a delay in Omar Barghouti being informed of the approval of his visa to travel to the UK from the Occupied Palestinian Territories in September 2019 after that visa was approved.

Seema Kennedy: We do not routinely comment on individual cases.

Our service standard is to decide straightforward applications within 15 working days, although more complex cases take longer.

We routinely contact customers once it becomes apparent that we may not be able to resolve their application within the service standard.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-01/292826/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israeli Settlements

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL17664] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Foreign Secretary raised concerns over settlement building with Israel's Foreign Affairs Minister Israel Katz during their meeting in London on 28 August, further to the government of Israel's approval of more than 2,000 settlements in the Occupied West Bank last month.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise our concerns on this issue with the Government of Israel and urge it to reverse its policy of settlement expansion. The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-09-03/HL17664/>

West Bank: Electricity

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL17806] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take following the decision of the Israel Electric Corporation to cut off electricity supplies to villages in the Palestinian West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The British Government is aware of the decision of the Israel Electric Corporation to cut power to parts of the West Bank, citing outstanding payments from Palestinian power distributors. We continue to urge both sides of the dispute to reach a prompt and pragmatic resolution, ensuring minimum disruption to the lives of ordinary Palestinians.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-09-25/HL17806/>

Gaza: Israel

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL17807] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they intend to make to the government of Israel about the situation of stateless female cancer patients in Gaza who require specialist treatment in Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the matter of medical permits with the Israeli authorities. Israeli restrictions severely restrict the movement of medical professionals, patients and families from Gaza, hampering the provision of quality health services, as well as impacting Palestinians in the West Bank. The situation in Gaza is particularly acute, and is compounded by frequent closure by Egypt of the Rafah crossing, preventing urgent medical cases from seeking treatment in Egypt. A lasting resolution to the situation is needed that will ensure that all those who are in need of medical attention and their families have unimpeded access to healthcare provisions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-09-25/HL17807/>

Occupied Territories: Economic Situation

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL17808] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the UN Conference on Trade and Development Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, published on 10 September, in particular its conclusion that the Palestinian economy is at risk of collapse as a result of Israeli occupation.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains gravely concerned about the economic and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). Our Government officials regularly propose measures to improve the

situation in the OPTs with Government of Israel officials. These include the adoption of a more transparent process for allowing goods into Gaza and permitting greater exports from the strip. The UK is supporting direct measures to support job creation in Gaza. We will more than double the amount of UK aid spent on economic development in the OPTs to around £38 million over the next five years (2018-2023). We have also repeatedly raised with the Government of Israel our concerns about its decision to withhold tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority (PA). 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.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-09-25/HL17808/>

The report referred to above can be read at

[https://undocs.org/TD/B/EX\(68\)/4](https://undocs.org/TD/B/EX(68)/4)

Lebanon: Refugees

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL17809] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of Lebanon's efforts to restrict undocumented foreign labour, and of the impact of such restriction on unemployment among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not yet made an assessment of this particular matter, the UK supports refugees remaining in host countries in the region, and supports host countries to accommodate them. As part of this, we are working in partnership with host countries to help them to expand job and education opportunities for refugees in a way that will enable them to better support themselves and give them skills for the future. We are also helping host countries to cope with the impact of refugees on local services.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-09-25/HL17809/>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Public Appointments

Eddie Hughes (Conservative) [293703] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what progress his Department has made on appointing a director-general level champion for freedom of religious belief.

Heather Wheeler: Rehman Chishti MP, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, is overseeing the implementation of the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review. Work has begun to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. We are considering how to take forward the recommendation to appoint a Director General champion for freedom of religion or belief.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293703/>

The Review referred to above can be read at

<https://christianpersecutionreview.org.uk/storage/2019/07/final-report-and-recommendations.pdf>

Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review

Eddie Hughes (Conservative) [293704] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians; what progress he has been made on naming the phenomenon of Christian discrimination and persecution.

Heather Wheeler: Rehman Chishti MP, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, is overseeing the implementation of the recommendations from the Bishop of Truro's Review. Work has begun to implement the recommendations in a way that will bring real improvements in the lives of those persecuted because of their faith or belief. On naming the phenomenon of Christian discrimination and persecution, we believe that a definition is best agreed upon by the Christian communities themselves. If a term is agreed, we will consider how it might add value to our work on freedom of religion or belief.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-02/293704/>

The Review referred to above can be read at

<https://christianpersecutionreview.org.uk/storage/2019/07/final-report-and-recommendations.pdf>

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Other Relevant Information

Council of Europe

Secretary General condemns anti-Semitic attack in Halle, Germany

Council of Europe Secretary General Marija Pejčinović Burić has condemned the anti-Semitic attack in which two people were killed in Halle. "I am deeply saddened and concerned by this cold-blooded attack aimed against the Jewish community on Yom Kippur. I extend my condolences to the families of the victims and express my solidarity with all those affected, and dealing with the aftermath of this heinous crime. Anti-Semitic attacks are on the rise in Europe and all of us, whether as citizens or in public office, must do all we can to combat anti-Semitism in all its forms, in word and deed, and intervene to stop it at its roots at", she said.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/secretary-general-condemns-anti-semitic-attack-in-halle-germany>

United Nations

Secretary-General Strongly Condemns Deadly Attacks in Halle, Germany

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres:

The Secretary-General strongly condemns the attack that took place today on a synagogue in Halle, Germany, in which at least two people were reportedly killed. He regards this as yet another tragic demonstration of anti-Semitism — perpetrated on the holy day of Yom Kippur — which needs to be fought with the utmost determination.

The Secretary-General sends his deep condolences to the families of the victims, the Government and people of Germany. He wishes a swift recovery to those who were wounded in the attack.

In this context, the Secretary-General recalls the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites and calls for all Governments to support that plan. Houses of worship around the world must be safe havens for reflection and peace, not sites of bloodshed and terror.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sqsm19801.doc.htm>

The Plan of Action referred to above can be read at

<https://www.un.org/sq/sites/www.un.org.sq/files/atoms/files/12-09-2019-UNAOC-PoA-Religious-Sites.pdf>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

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

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

The Bill failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the session. This means the Bill will make no further progress.

**** Domestic Abuse Bill**

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

The Bill will be carried over to the next session, following a decision on 2 October 2019. This means the Bill can continue its progress through Parliament from the start of the next session.

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

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

The Bill failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the session. This means the Bill will make no further progress.

**** Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

The Bill failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the session. This means the Bill will make no further progress.

**** Online Forums Bill**

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

The Bill failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the session. This means the Bill will make no further progress.

**** Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

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

The Bill failed to complete its passage through Parliament before the end of the session. This means the Bill will make no further progress.

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Welsh Government Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-24 (closing date 19 November 2019)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-09/strategic-equality-objectives-2020-2024-consultation.pdf>

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