



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Teachers: Training

Lord Patten (Conservative) [HL11998] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment, if any, they have made of new religious teachers across different faith groups in England and Wales being assessed and trained through internal monitoring; and whether they consider this self-regulation adequate.

Baroness Berridge: Providing the best possible initial teacher training (ITT) is at the heart of the government's drive to improve teaching standards. In order to be awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) for all subjects and phases, including Religious Education, trainees must demonstrate that they have met the Teachers' Standards (2011), which include a requirement that they demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge, and do not undermine fundamental British values, such as tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

It is for accredited ITT providers who deliver teacher training to use their professional judgement to design and deliver the courses, but they must ensure that the content, structure, and assessment of programmes are designed to enable trainee teachers to meet all the Teachers' Standards for QTS across the age range of training. This includes Religious Education. The mandatory ITT criteria sets out the requirements that ITT providers must adhere to in order to remain compliant, this can be accessed here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-criteria/initial-teacher-training-itt-criteria-and-supporting-advice#c21-programmes>

Accredited ITT providers have full discretion in assessing trainee ability to meet the Teachers' Standards and recommending QTS. ITT providers must ensure that no trainee teacher is recommended for the award of QTS until they have met all the standards. Furthermore, Ofsted is responsible for testing the quality of teacher training and currently 100% of ITT providers are rated good or outstanding.

In addition, the performance of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) is assessed frequently throughout their induction period. The Appropriate Body (AB) has the main quality assurance role within the induction process and makes the final

decision as to whether an NQT continues to meet the Teachers' Standards (based on the headteacher / principal's recommendation). Further information about ABs and the induction period for NQTs is set out at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/923070/Statutory_Induction_Guidance_2019.pdf

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/hl11998>

The Standards referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665520/Teachers_Standards.pdf

Offences against Children

Lord Patten (Conservative) [HL11997] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the response by different faith groups in England and Wales to historic cases of child abuse.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: In 2015, the Government set up the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) to consider the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have failed in their duty to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation. The Inquiry operates independently of Government and decides for itself what it investigates and how. As part of its work programme, the Inquiry held three investigations into child sexual abuse in religious institutions:

The Inquiry held an investigation into the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Anglican Church in England and the Church in Wales. The investigation considered the adequacy of the Past Cases Review of the Church of England and the Historic Cases Review of the Church in Wales. It considered two case studies: The Diocese of Chichester, where there have been multiple allegations of sexual abuse, and numerous investigations and reviews; and the case of Peter Ball, formerly Bishop of Lewes and subsequently Bishop of Gloucester. This investigation is now complete and a report setting out the Inquiry's findings was published in October 2020, and can be found here:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/publications/investigation/anglican-church>

Separately, the Inquiry investigated the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. The Inquiry examined the English Benedictine Congregation and the Archdiocese of Birmingham, which have been the subject of numerous allegations of child sexual abuse. This investigation is now complete and a report with the Inquiry's findings and recommendations was published in November 2020, and can be found here:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/publications/investigation/roman-catholic-church>

More recently, the Inquiry investigated the current child protection policies, practices and procedures in religious institutions that have a significant presence in England and Wales, including non-conformist Christian denominations, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The public hearing into this investigation concluded in August 2020. An investigation report will be published in summer 2021, and more details can be found here:

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigation/child-protection-religious-organisations-and-settings>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/hl11997>

Home Office

William Shawcross to lead independent review of Prevent

The government has ... announced that William Shawcross has been appointed as the new Independent Reviewer of Prevent.

William Shawcross was formerly the Chair of the Charity Commission between 2012 and 2018 and became the Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. ...

The independent review will consider the strategy and delivery of the Prevent programme, and will make recommendations for the future. The terms of reference will be published shortly.

Lords Minister Baroness Williams said: Prevent plays an essential role in stopping vulnerable people being drawn into terrorism and I am grateful to those who work tirelessly, including throughout the pandemic, to turn lives around and keep our communities safe. ...

Independent Reviewer of Prevent William Shawcross said: ... As Independent Reviewer, I look forward to assessing how Prevent works, what impact it has, and what further can be done to safeguard individuals from all forms of terrorist influence. I look forward to hearing from a wide range of voices, particularly those who have had experience of Prevent in practice.

I intend to lead a robust and evidence-based examination of the programme, to help ensure that Britain has a clear and effective strategy to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. ...

Prevent deals with all forms of terrorism, including Islamist and far right terrorism, and does not focus on any one community. ...

In the year ending 31 March 2020, there were 6,287 referrals to Prevent. This is an increase of 10% compared to the previous year.

Of those referred to Prevent in 2019 to 2020, 1,487 (24%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist radicalisation and 1,387 (22%) were referred for concerns related to far right radicalisation. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/william-shawcross-to-lead-independent-review-of-prevent>

Welsh Government

Updated guidance on funerals: COVID 19

<https://gov.wales/guidance-funerals-covid-19-html>

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Holocaust

Scottish Parliament Motion

Alexander Stewart (Conservative) [S5M-23956] Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 – That the Parliament acknowledges Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) on 27 January 2021; notes that HMD was established in 2000 and is marked each year on 27 January, which is the anniversary date of the liberation of the Nazi concentration and death camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau; acknowledges that, around this day, schools, communities and faith groups across the UK join together in national and local events to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and of more recent genocides across the world, such as Bosnia, Cambodia,

Darfur and Rwanda, and that this is an opportunity to consider the contemporary relevance of the Holocaust; notes that the day is co-ordinated by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, which was founded in 2005; further notes that, as the Holocaust Educational Trust marks HMD 2021, it encourages reflection on Jewish resistance during the Holocaust, and of the legacy of Holocaust survivors and of educating the next generation to carry these stories forward; acknowledges the HMD 2021 theme, Be the Light in the Darkness, and considers that, for most, the story of the Holocaust was not the story of successful resistance or rescue, or of survival, and that justice was not served.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-23956>

European Commission

Statement by President von der Leyen ahead of International Holocaust Remembrance Day

On 27 January, we mark the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau and remember the millions of Jewish women, men and children as well as all other victims, among them hundreds of thousands of Roma and Sinti, murdered during the Holocaust.

Antisemitism led to the Holocaust but, sadly, it did not end with the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps.

I am worried to see more hatred towards Jews again, in Europe and beyond. The times of the pandemic have fuelled a rise of conspiracy theories and disinformation, often promoting antisemitic narratives. We see a worrying rise of Holocaust distortion and denial. We must never forget.

As memorial sites closed down due to the pandemic, and the number of survivors is dwindling, we need to find new ways to remember.

As conspiracy myths spread on social media, we must educate our young generation against antisemitism.

As disinformation spreads, authorities, social platforms and users need to work together to ensure that historic facts are not distorted – online and offline.

Facts matter. History matters. We are determined to win this fight.

Europe thrives when its Jewish community and other minorities can live in peace and harmony.

This is why we will come forward with a strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life in Europe later this year.” ...

The Commission will put forward a strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life in 2021, to support EU countries and civil society in their fight against antisemitism. Holocaust Remembrance will continue to be an essential pillar of efforts to ensure that we never forget our history. ...

To read the full press release see

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_21_187

European Commission staff helps build digital archive through #everynamecounts initiative

On International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the European Commission encourages staff to take part in the crowdsourcing project #everynamecounts by the Arolsen Archive, by transcribing the information from the registration files of prisoners into a digital archive whilst remembering their names and stories. The archive contains around 30 million documents with references to the fates of 17.5 million people. In order to allow researchers and decedents to access the data, Arolsen are building the world's largest online archive

on people persecuted and murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators – [join the campaign](#)
https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=700275

United Nations

Secretary-General's remarks to the Park East Synagogue and United Nations International Holocaust Remembrance Service

... We meet today online and around the world to commemorate the 76th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, and to honour the memory of the six million Jews and millions of others who were systematically murdered in the Holocaust by the Nazis and their collaborators. ...

Today, we are prevented from gathering together in person by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has already cost two million lives and sickened more than ninety million people around the world. ...

The pandemic has put societies to the test. It has exacerbated long-standing injustices and divisions. And it has contributed to a resurgence of xenophobia, antisemitism, and hate speech.

Propaganda linking Jews with the pandemic, for example, by accusing them of creating the virus as part of a bid for global domination, would be ridiculous, if it were not so dangerous. This is just the latest manifestation of an antisemitic trope that dates back to at least the 14th century, when Jews were accused of spreading the bubonic plague.

Antisemitism is the oldest, most persistent and entrenched form of racism and religious persecution in our world.

From Imperial Rome to medieval Europe to the modern world, Jews and their communities have suffered two millennia of attacks, expulsions and periodic mass killings. In the 19th century, Jews were blamed for financial crashes in which they themselves were the main victims.

Antisemitism found its most horrific expression in the Holocaust.

The universal revulsion at this crime, followed by the founding of the United Nations and the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, promised an end.

But it did not end.

Antisemitism continues to blight our world.

It is sad, but not surprising, that the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered yet another eruption of this poisonous ideology.

We can never let down our guard.

Today, Holocaust denial, distortion and minimization are resurgent.

In Europe, the United States and elsewhere, white supremacists are organizing and recruiting across borders, flaunting the symbols and tropes of the Nazis and their murderous ambitions. ...

The Anti-Defamation League found that the American Jewish community experienced the highest level of antisemitic incidents in 2019 since tracking began in 1979. ...

As people spend more time at home and online, white supremacists and neo-Nazis are using social media platforms to disseminate propaganda and create fear and hatred.

They exploit the anxiety and social turmoil created by the pandemic to target minorities, based on religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, disability and immigration status. They even trade information on how to infect minority communities, by effectively making themselves into bioweapons.

Tragically, after decades in the shadows, neo-Nazis and their ideas are now gaining currency. ...

In some countries, neo-Nazi ideas can be heard in debates between mainstream political parties. In others, neo-Nazis have infiltrated police and state security services. ...

These attacks are dangerous and deliberate. ... When truth dies, it is far easier to exploit real and imagined differences between groups; invent scapegoats; demonize innocent people and communities; and break the social bonds that unite us all. ...

When the truth is just one version among many, lying becomes normalized and history can be distorted and rewritten. ...

When almost two-thirds of young Americans do not know that 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust, we have to ask whether this process is already underway. ...

As the number of Holocaust survivors diminishes every year, we must make ever greater efforts to elevate the truth and ensure that it lives on. ...

For many Jews, the end of the Holocaust was only the beginning of an unimaginably painful and difficult journey. ...

No Holocaust survivor could ever recover the life they had led.

The Holocaust changed the world forever; there was no going back. ...

We need coordinated global action, on the scale of the threat we face, to build an alliance against the growth and spread of neo-Nazism and white supremacy, and to fight propaganda and disinformation. ...

Prevention is key to the fight against antisemitism ...

There is no vaccine for antisemitism and xenophobia. But our best weapon remains the truth. ...

Our best tribute to those who died in the Holocaust is the creation of a world of equality, justice and dignity for all.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2021-01-25/secretary-generals-remarks-the-park-east-synagogue-and-united-nations-international-holocaust-remembrance-service>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

West Bank: Demolition

Philippa Whitford (SNP) [140823] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to make representations to the Government of Israel on the demolition or seizure of at least 114 EU-funded structures provided as humanitarian assistance to Palestinian communities in the West Bank.

Israel: Palestinians

Philippa Whitford (SNP) [140824] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to tackle the (a) increase in the demolition of Palestinian property and (b) subsequent displacement of 524 Palestinian children in 2020.

James Cleverly: The UK is concerned by the continued demolitions of Palestinian property and infrastructure by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process.

The UK regularly raises demolitions with the Government of Israel. I raised my concerns about demolitions of Palestinian and humanitarian structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020, and the UK Ambassador to Israel outlined the UK's position to the Israeli Authorities in Jerusalem on the same day. UK senior

officials raised demolitions with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 10 November 2020. The UK also urged the Government of Israel to end demolitions of property in the West Bank at the UN Security Council on 21 December 2020. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities, including to Khan al Ahmar on 20 November, Givat Hamatos on 22 October, the South Hebron Hills on 19 October, and Ras al Tin on 16 October. We are focused on preventing demolitions from happening in the first place through our legal aid programme, which supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or home eviction in both the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-20/140823>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-20/140824>

The UK speech to the UN Security Council, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/seeking-cooperation-in-order-to-achieve-a-two-state-solution>

House of Lords Written Answers

Palestinians: Coronavirus

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL12016] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Amnesty International on 6 January that "the Israeli government must stop ignoring its international obligations as an occupying power and immediately act to ensure that COVID-19 vaccines are equally and fairly provided to Palestinians living under its occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip"; and what steps they are taking in response to that statement.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We recognise that under International Humanitarian Law, Israel, as the occupying power, has the duty of ensuring and maintaining public health and hygiene, to the fullest extent of the means available to it, including in relation to combating the spread of contagious diseases and epidemics, in the OPTs. We also recognise the Palestinian Authority's responsibilities for vaccinations under the Oslo Accords (under Article 17). We welcome the steps that the parties have taken so far to coordinate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and encourage further dialogue in this regard. The UK regularly engages with both the Government of Israel and Palestinian Authority and will continue to raise timely and appropriate access to COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/hl12016>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/01/denying-covid19-vaccines-to-palestinians-exposes-israels-institutionalized-discrimination/>

Issa Amro

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL12017] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the conviction of Issa Amro by a military court in Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem attended Mr Amro's court hearing on 6 January. The UK remains concerned about the challenges facing human rights defenders and human rights organisations operating in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We continue to urge

the Israeli Government to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations. We have also raised concerns with the Palestinian Authority about the narrowing of space for civil society to operate in the West Bank.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/hl12017>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL12018] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by B'Tselem on 1 January 2020 that "in 2019, Israeli security forces killed 133 Palestinians, including 28 minors"; and what steps they have taken in response to that statement.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians, including children, killed by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We regularly raise the issue with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/hl12018>

The statement referred to above can be read at

https://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20200101_2019_fatalities

Gaza: Borders

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL12091] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the Israel Defence Force fire machine guns in the border areas of the Gaza Strip when there is low visibility due to fog in order to deter any attempt by those wishing to infiltrate the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza. The UK has repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defence Forces police the border areas, including use of live ammunition. We will continue to do so.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-11/hl12019>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel's conviction of human rights defender shows disdain for international obligations, say UN experts

UN experts said today Israel must immediately stop using its array of military security tools to obstruct the legitimate and indispensable work of human rights defenders.

Their comments come after an Israeli military court convicted Issa Amro, a Palestinian human rights defender and founder of Youth Against Settlements, a Hebron-based group which opposes settlement expansion through non-violent civil resistance.

Amro was convicted of six charges on 6 January 2021 related to his human rights activities between 2010 and 2016. The experts said they fear he will be imprisoned when he is sentenced on 8 February, 2021.

"This is part of a clear and systematic pattern of detention, judicial harassment and intimidation by Israel of human rights defenders, a pattern that has increased in intensity recently," the experts said. They said Israeli authorities had arrested Amro numerous times, with the aim of silencing those who would defend the human rights of others.

"Rather than prosecuting human rights defenders, Israel should be listening to them and correcting its own human rights conduct. Israel must obey its international obligations to

provide protection to human rights defenders," the UN Special Rapporteurs said. ... His conviction appeared to be politically motivated, the experts said. "This conviction is part of a pattern where Israeli military law is used to restrict and penalise Palestinians for exercising their inviolable political and civil rights." ...

"The Israeli military court system in the West Bank is deeply flawed and has been repeatedly used to silence human rights defenders. The system follows a vague interpretation of offences and military orders fail to clarify what conduct can result in criminal offence," the experts said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26688&LangID=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2622>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2592>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>

Freedom of Speech (Universities) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2820>

Genocide Determination Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2621>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2608>

Marriage (Approved Organisations) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2537>

Marriage (Authorised Belief Organisations) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2795>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2584>

Scottish Parliament

Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill>

**** Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

Notice of amendments

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/stage-2/daily-list-of-amendments-25-january-2021.pdf>

Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Introduction of a statutory opt-out system for organ donation for Northern Ireland

(closing date 19 February 2021)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/organ-donation>

Human Rights Act Review (closing date 3 March 2021)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/138635/call-for-evidence-the-governments-independent-human-rights-act-review/>

Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19

(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

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