



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Northern Ireland Assembly Written Answer

Racial Equality Strategy

Keith Buchanan (DUP) [AQO 2462/17-22] To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025.

Racism across our society has a devastating impact on individuals, families and communities. It is a critical issue that requires a whole of government and whole of society approach to address. The Racial Equality Strategy aims to tackle racial inequalities and eradicate racism and hate crime. Full implementation of the strategy is a key priority for us. While there is still work to be done, progress has been made in a number of key areas.

The Racial Equality Subgroup and Racial Equality Champions have been established. A Thematic Group on Travellers and a Strategic Planning Group on Travellers and Roma have also now been established.

We have completed a review of the Minority Ethnic Development Fund (MEDF) and commenced implementation.

We have also reviewed the Race Relations Order and developed a draft Refugee Integration Strategy. We plan to consult on the draft and the legislative proposals later this year.

Research has been completed on the feasibility of introducing ethnic monitoring, and work has now begun on considering how best we might implement the key findings.

Whilst progress has been made, it is important to acknowledge that there is much more to do. And we are absolutely committed to redoubling our efforts to deliver on the remaining actions.

We have therefore asked our Permanent Secretary to take forward a stocktake of progress against the strategy with his counterparts across Departments to inform our work going forward.

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/printquestionssummary.aspx?docid=352067>

The Racial Equality Strategy referred to above can be read at

Israel

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

James Cleverly: The UK condemns this violent act against a Palestinian village in the South Hebron Hills by settlers on 28 Sept. We welcome @yairlapid's condemnation. Israel must tackle this problem and protect Palestinians.

Yair Lapid: מדובר במקרה מזעזע של אלימות וטרור. זאת לא דרכה של ישראל וזאת לא דרכו של העם היהודי. מדובר בחבורת שוליים סהרורית אלימה ומסוכנת ויש עלינו את החובה להביא את האחראים למעשה הנפשע הזה לדין.

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1444036874683699210>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Human Rights Council holds general debates on the Universal Periodic Review and on the human rights situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories

... **Christian Salazar Volkmann, Director of the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**, introducing the report on the allocation of water resources in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem ... said it ... found that water was unavailable in a sufficient and continuous manner in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with nearly 660,000 Palestinians having limited access to water. The report also found that water was inequitably distributed between Palestinians and Israelis. In addition, Israeli authorities treated the nearly 450,000 Israeli settlers and 2.7 million Palestinians residing in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) under two distinct bodies of law. This resulted in unequal treatment on a range of issues, including access to water.

In Gaza, about one million people – half of the population – was estimated as being in need of water and sanitation interventions. The quality of water in Gaza was of low standards and 96 per cent of households received water that did not meet drinking water quality standards. Israeli practices and policies affecting water infrastructure, destruction during military escalations, the impact of closures, power shortages and challenges in water governance, had all contributed to this situation. ...

The report included recommendations to all parties to increase efforts to treat and reuse water in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

Mr. Salazar Volkmann, presenting an oral update on the implementation of resolution S-30/1 under item 7, recalled that resolution S-30/1 decided to “urgently establish an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry, to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council, to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021”. On 22 July 2021, the President of the Human Rights Council appointed Navi Pillay of South Africa as Chair of the Commission, accompanied by Miloon Kothari of India and Chris Sidoti of Australia as fellow Commissioners. ... The secretariat was expected to

be fully recruited in early 2022 and ... Commissioners were due to undertake their first mission to Geneva by the end of the year ...

Israel was not present to take the floor.

Palestine ... [said] Israel's theft of water deprived Palestinians of the right to water. Ninety-seven per cent of the water available in Gaza could no longer be used. The share of water available to Israeli settlers was not the same as what was available for Palestinians. Sabotage work had been carried out by Israelis since the hostilities in May. Israel continued to Jewify Jerusalem and expel the Palestinian population. Palestinians, including children and women, had been killed and Palestinian territories and resources had been confiscated, and provocations by settlers had taken place. All of these were increasing. The 13-year blockade of Gaza had prevented reconstructions efforts and was an obstacle to distributing vaccines. All of these practices were a systematic apartheid type policy. Some said that Israel had a right to self-defence but the world had to realise the extent of the suffering of the Palestinians. The Palestinian occupation must end to allow the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination, create their own State and find a solution to the problem of the return of refugees.

Syria ... said Israel consolidated its occupation through settlements and their expansion, as well as confiscation of lands, looting of natural resources and transferring people to the occupied lands in order to methodologically change the demographics in a total disregard of its commitments under international law and the Geneva Conventions. Item 7 on the situation of human rights in Palestine and other occupied Arab States was an important tool to monitor and document the violations by Israel. Syria ... denounced countries, which pretended to be guarantors of human rights while adopting double standards with regards to Israeli violations. Israel, the occupying power, continued its illegal measures and settlement activities in the occupied Syrian Golan, which violated the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolutions. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israeli plans and pressures aimed at forcing Syrians to leave their land by besieging their villages and cities with settlements and settlement projects, preventing them from demographic and urban expansion, plundering their natural resources and using them to the benefits of settlements and settlement activities. Israel subjected Syrians to discriminatory treatment, imposed high financial costs on them to obtain medical care, and impeded the marketing of agricultural products, which constituted the main source of their livelihood. ...

Speakers strongly condemned the continuous grave violations and abuses committed by Israel. Israeli settlements were at the core of colonial occupation and were only made possible through the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The expansion of settlements also continued to deprive Palestinians of vital water resources needed for a decent standard of living, as indicated in the High Commissioner's report. Speakers urged the High Commissioner to continue updating the database of companies operating in settlements as mandated by resolution 31/36 of 2016.

Speakers condemned, in the strongest term, the violations of human rights as a result of the Israel occupation and excessive use of force, including practices of the occupying power that had severely impacted the enjoyment of Palestinians' rights to safe drinking water and sanitation - which was part of its obligations under international human rights law. Israel must fully comply with its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territories. ... Some speakers urged Israel to stop demolishing Palestinian houses and to acknowledge the rights of the Palestinian people, supporting the two-State solution and encouraging peace talks. ... A number of speakers regretted the continued boycott by some countries of item 7, which dealt with the situation of human rights in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

Some speakers said item 7 was created for no other purpose than to institutionalise the Council's obsession with Israel and to create a false record to demonise and delegitimise

Israel. The Office of the High Commissioner's report on water contained no Israeli Government data and was based almost entirely on unverified claims from the Palestinian Authority and non-governmental organizations, several of which were tied to a Palestinian terrorist group. Other speakers said that anti-Semitism permeated the United Nations' institutions and at the tip of the iceberg lay item 7. They regretted that the Human Rights Council—which included some of the largest violators of human rights—had enshrined criticism of Israel in its procedures with item 7. No other State, regardless of how egregious their human rights record, was singled out except the one Jewish state, a liberal democracy. One speaker said that the United Nations anti-Israel bias legitimised and enabled violence against Jews. The Council was urged to abolish the anti-Semitic item 7. Some speakers said peace in the Middle East required the dismantling of hatred. It was time for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to stop hiring teachers who glorified Hitler, promoted anti-Semitism, and incited terrorist attacks against Israelis.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27592&LangID=E>

The allocation of water resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session48/Documents/A_HRC_48_43_AdvanceUneditedVersion.docx

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Other Relevant Information

University of Bristol

Statement on Professor David Miller

... We have a duty of care to all students and the wider University community, in addition to a need to apply our own codes of conduct consistently and with integrity. Balancing those important considerations, and after careful deliberation, a disciplinary hearing found Professor Miller did not meet the standards of behaviour we expect from our staff and the University has concluded that Professor Miller's employment should be terminated with immediate effect.

The University regards the principle of academic freedom as fundamental and would like to reiterate that we take any risk to stifle that freedom seriously. The investigation included an independent report from a leading Queen's Counsel who considered the important issue of academic freedom of expression and found that Professor Miller's comments did not constitute unlawful speech.

We recognise that these matters have caused deep concern for people on all sides of the debate, and that members of our community hold very different views from one another. ... Professor Miller has a right of internal appeal which he may choose to exercise and nothing in this statement should be taken to prejudge that prospective process. ...

The University remains committed to fostering a positive working and learning environment that enriches lives and where the essential principles of academic freedom are preserved.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/news/2021/october/prof-miller-statement.html>

Antisemitism and Misogyny: Overlap and Interplay

<https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Antisemitism-and-Misogyny-Overlap-and-Interplay.pdf>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

Charities Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Education (16 to 19 Academies) (Religious Character) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2946>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

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** new or updated today

The Scottish Government's international work (closing date 29 October 2021)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cteea/international-engagement-external-affairs/>

Labelling for Animal Welfare (closing date 6 December 2021)

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-market-interventions-and-labelling/labelling-for-animal-welfare/>

Proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally ill Adults (Scotland) Bill (closing date 22 December 2021)

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/proposals-for-bills/proposed-assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

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