

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*  
**Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**  
**SCoJeC**

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Freedom of Speech: Student Campuses

11. **Douglas Carswell:** If she will make it her policy to issue guidance to higher education institutions on ensuring freedom of speech for students on campuses. [909329]

**The Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Joseph Johnson):** A broad range of higher education institutions are covered by an existing legal duty under the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 to take “reasonably practicable” steps to secure freedom of speech; and the Higher Education and Research Bill, which is currently in the other place, proposes to extend that to all registered providers. The hon. Gentleman will be interested to know that I have today written to the sector highlighting the importance of this duty, reminding institutions of their responsibilities in this respect and emphasising the importance of action when freedom of speech issues arise.

**Mr Carswell:** Notwithstanding the obligations under section 43 of the 1986 Act, does the Minister believe that action is needed to safeguard universities as places of free speech and challenging ideas?

**Joseph Johnson:** Indeed. Policies and codes of practice should not simply be allowed to gather dust; they are crucial to demonstrating to students that free speech should be at the heart of our university system. They need to be meaningful documents that students and staff understand and, crucially, respect.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-20/debates/5B2B73EC-BCF3-4010-972C-D4BAD4E22CED/FreedomOfSpeechStudentCampuses>

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Antisemitism: Publications

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

**John Mann** [67208] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received on the fact that books denying the Holocaust are available to buy on Amazon UK.

**John Mann** [67209] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what contact she has had with Amazon to discuss the fact that books denying the Holocaust are available to buy on Amazon UK.

**John Mann** [67210] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will take steps to prevent the sale of books denying the Holocaust on Amazon UK.

**Sarah Newton:** The Government deplores attempts to deny the Holocaust, including those views expressed in a pseudo-intellectual manner, and condemns any organisation or individual that does so. If Holocaust denial is expressed in a way that is threatening, abusive, or insulting and incites racial hatred, or is likely to do so, then that would be unlawful under the Public Order Act 1986.

DCLG officials attend the Cyber Hate Crime working group where Amazon is represented and will raise these issues with them at the next meeting.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-09/67208/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-09/67209/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-09/67210/>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

### **Naz Shah (1086) UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination –**

That this House welcomes the 2017 UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination as an opportunity to reaffirm and demonstrate its commitment to eradicating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting racial equality in the UK; is deeply concerned that 40 years after the 1976 Race Relations Act came into force people of BAME origin are still significantly under-represented in many key areas of public life, including membership of this House; notes the disturbing findings of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights major review of race equality in the UK, Healing a divided Britain: the need for a comprehensive race equality strategy, and its stark warning that failure to tackle deep-rooted race inequality will exacerbate divisions in our society unless urgent Government action is taken; further notes the significant challenges identified in Baroness McGregor-Smith's recently published review of race in the workplace and its clear message that the time for talking is over. Now is the time to act; calls on the Government and employers to implement the 26 recommendations of the McGregor-Smith review without delay; and further calls on the Government to develop and implement a comprehensive race equality strategy in line with the five recommendations of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights' review as a matter of urgency.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/1086>

## House of Commons Library

### **Briefing: UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2017-0092/CDP-2017-0092.pdf>

## Welsh Assembly

**Funding Guide: Community buildings, places of worship and faith groups – a guide for constituents**

<http://www.assembly.wales/Research%20Documents/FAQ17-001/FAQ17-001-web-English.pdf>

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## Holocaust

### House of Commons Written Answers

*See the three written questions under the heading “Antisemitism: Publications” that appear in the “Home Affairs” section above.*

### UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Peter Bottomley (1087) National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre** – That this House understands that the Government has accepted the recommendations of the Holocaust Commission whose report indicated suitable sites near Tate Britain at Millbank, near City Hall at Potters Field and by the Imperial War Museum; notes the apparent failure to consult locally and more widely before the proposal to try to shoe-horn an extensive, prominent Memorial and Learning Centre onto and into the small public open Victoria Tower Gardens; and calls on the Government to suspend the process in order to consider objections in the Jewish Chronicle by users of the Garden and by those who prefer a choice of one of the first three sites.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/1087>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Dalal Mughrabi**

**Ian Austin** [67423] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to the Partnership Principles, what discussions her Department has had with the Palestinian Authority on the endorsement by the District Governor of Ramallah, Laila Ghannam, of the decision of the Palestinian Liberation Organization Supreme Council for Youth and Sports to name a youth camp after Dalal Mughrabi.

**Rory Stewart:** The UK deplores incitement on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The UK considers the evidence carefully when deciding whether to raise an instance of incitement with the PA. The UK regularly presses the Palestinian Authority to tackle incitement.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-10/67423/>

#### **Israel**

**Ian Austin** [68011] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs,

pursuant to the Answer of 9 March 2017 to Question 66575, what evidence he has of officially sanctioned incitement or incitement to violence by the Israeli Government.

**Tobias Ellwood:** We have no evidence of any officially sanctioned incitement, or incitement to violence, by the Israeli government. We deplore all incitement to violence and raise cases of concern with both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities as required. We have urged the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid engaging in, or encouraging, the type of action and language which will make it more difficult to achieve a peaceful negotiated solution to the conflict. We continue to support Palestinian calls to reinstate the Tripartite Committee as the appropriate channel to deal with any such allegations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-15/68011/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-06/66575/>

### **Israel and Occupied Territories: British Nationals Abroad**

**Caroline Lucas** [67572] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of how the recently amended Entry to Israel Law will affect UK citizens travelling to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Tobias Ellwood:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 13 March (PQ 67071).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-13/67572/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-08/67071/>

**Tobias Ellwood:** *We are seeking clarification from the Israeli Government on the potential impact on British nationals.*

### **Palestinians: Education**

**Nigel Evans** [67713] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to review her Department's spending on all education projects in the Palestine authority to ensure those projects meet her Department's criteria.

**Rory Stewart:** The UK's bilateral funding to the Palestinian Authority education sector only goes to support the salaries of vetted teachers and public servants. Our support is helping around 25,000 young Palestinians go to school each year.. The UK is about to assess performance of this past year's support with the Palestinian Authority, including progress against the Partnership Principles, and tackling incitement in education. DFID OPTs regularly monitors programme performance, including through annual reviews. The Minister of State has also personally reviewed our educational programs on his most recent visit to Palestine and will be contributing to our portfolio review.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-14/67713/>

### **Yemen: Military Intervention**

**Alison Thewliss** [67541] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2017 to Question 66499, on Egypt: armed forces, how many of those service personnel are involved in operation in Yemen.

**Mike Penning:** None of the Service personnel stationed in Egypt are involved in operations in Yemen. Three are based in the Defence Section in the British Embassy in Cairo delivering UK Defence Engagement with Egypt, and two are deployed with the Multinational Force and Observers peacekeeping organisation in the Sinai, which exists to monitor the terms of the 1979 Treaty of the Peace

between Egypt and Israel and continues to make an important contribution to peace and stability in the Sinai.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-13/67541/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-03/66499/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel: Bedouin

**Lord Hylton** [HL5831] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they plan to take following the reported issuing on 5 March of demolition orders by the government of Israel relating to buildings at al Khan al Ahmar.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The UK Government is gravely concerned about demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities, including plans to demolish the Bedouin village of Khan al Ahmar. The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) raised UK concerns over demolitions with Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) raised this issue with the Israeli Ambassador to London on 1 March. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities on 28 February.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5831/>

### Israel: West Bank

**Baroness Tonge** [HL5846] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel following reports that Israeli military bulldozers have destroyed a drinking water pipeline that was funded by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the Central Plains of the occupied West Bank.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** While we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we continue to raise strong concerns about demolitions in the West Bank with the Israeli authorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5846/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge** [HL5847] To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of reports that visas have been denied to Palestinians, what representations they will make to the government of Israel to ensure that Palestinian visa applications are dealt with in the same manner as those for their Israeli counterparts.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities, as they are not under an obligation to explain their immigration policies to third parties such as the United Kingdom. The Government is not able to interfere or intervene in another state's immigration policies and procedures.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5847/>

### Israeli Settlements

**Baroness Tonge** [HL5848] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel with regard to continued illegal construction in

settlements and outposts across the West Bank.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** We regularly raise our grave concerns on this issue and strongly urge the Government of Israel to reverse its policy of settlement expansion. The Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) and the Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson) both expressed strong concerns about settlement activity when they met Prime Minister Netanyahu in London on Monday 6 February. The Foreign Secretary reiterated the UK's support for a two-state solution and our concerns about settlement activity to Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March. Since January 2017, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) has issued three statements condemning Israeli government plans to build over 6,000 settlement units in the West Bank including East Jerusalem. He also issued a further statement on 3 February condemning the passage of the Land Regularisation Bill, which seeks to retroactively legalise outposts.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5848/>

*The statements referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-on-settlement-units-in-east-jerusalem--3>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-on-settlement-units-in-the-west-bank--2>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-on-settlement-units-in-the-west-bank--3>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-tobias-ellwood-statement-on-israels-land-regularisation-bill>

### **Israeli Settlements**

**Baroness Tonge** [HL5849] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to take action to ensure that British pension funds are not used to support companies that do business with the Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** Investment decisions are the responsibility of the pension scheme trustee. The Investment Regulations require trustees to prepare a Statement of Investment Principles, including the extent to which social, environmental or ethical considerations are taken into account when making investment decisions. The Law Commission in 2014 concluded that trustees should consider long term financially material factors when considering the schemes investment objectives for their members; and where long-term environmental, social or governance (ESG) factors are financially material these should be taken into account.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5849/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge** [HL5850] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel with regard to the abuse of, denial of human rights to, and denial of due process of law for, Palestinian children resulting from action taken by Israeli security forces.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The UK continues to have strong concerns about reports of ill treatment of Palestinian minors, particularly those in Israeli military

detention. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv meet with the Israeli authorities on a regular basis to advocate for improvements to the practices surrounding Palestinian children in detention in Israel and have most recently done so on 19 January. The UK is firmly committed to the protection of human rights and compliance with international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5850/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge** [HL5851] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the one state solution for Israel-Palestine proposed by Knesset member Miki Zohar.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** Any one-state solution is incompatible with the national aspirations of both peoples. The Government is strongly committed to a two-state solution as the only way to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, once and for all. We continue to encourage direct negotiations towards a secure Israel, the homeland of the Jewish people, standing alongside a sovereign Palestinian state, the homeland of the Palestinian people.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5851/>

### **NATO**

**Lord Blencathra** [HL5819] To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to making representations to NATO to (1) widen its role and membership, (2) develop a homeland security-type function, (3) create a counter-terrorist command to work in conjunction with the security services of member states, (4) develop a new vision based on combating Islamist terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and (5) invite Israel, India, Japan, Australia and New Zealand to join.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** At its Summit in Warsaw in 2016 NATO reaffirmed its commitment to its three core tasks - collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security - as set out in the 2010 Strategic Concept. NATO's Open Door Policy, a founding principle of the Washington Treaty, remains in place and we hope to see Montenegro join the Alliance shortly. The North Atlantic Treaty does not make provision for non-European states to join the Alliance.

At its Defence Ministerial Meeting in February 2017, NATO restated the need to continue to adapt to address 21<sup>st</sup> Century threats. It is already involved in international efforts to counter terrorism. There are, however, no plans to create a counter terrorism command.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5819/>

## **Select Committee on International Relations inquiry into the Transformation of power in the Middle East and the implications for UK foreign policy**

### **Oral evidence session**

**Q219 Jon B Alterman (Director, Middle East Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies):** ... [The Trump Administration] are clearly much more sympathetic to the current Government of Israel than the Obama Administration were. That is not about being sympathetic towards Israel but being sympathetic towards a certain understanding of Israel's place in the world that is articulated both by the Prime Minister and people to the right of the Prime Minister. Israeli Prime Ministers have always

reliably kept their right wing in line by saying, "This would offend the Americans too much to do". One interesting implication might be that we are losing that guard-rail, which might result in Israeli policy moving right as US policy moves right. That could have consequences for the region.

**Q220 Jon B Alterman:** ... I think [President Trump] is surrounded by people who believe that US policy has been deeply misguided and biased against Israel. In many ways, the most important address to affect US policy in Israel may be the way in which the Europeans deal with Israelis. Israelis often come to me to complain that Europe is unfairly biased against Israel and that all the rising countries in the world have good relations with Israel, including India, China and elsewhere. Of course, they have deepened their relations with Russia. In many ways the Israelis have written off Europe. The answer is not just about addressing the US Administration, which will be sceptical of European approaches because they are European. Part of the answer might be to change Israeli perceptions of European intentions. ...

**Lord Grocott:** You referred to the fact that the President may not be a great believer in Israel's position in the way that a lot the people around him are. We all saw the press conference at which he referred to the two-state solution, which can be interpreted in so many different ways. There has been near universal settled opinion for many years that two states is the objective to solve the insoluble problem. Yet so many of the witnesses to our inquiry have said that we have either reached the stage at which that is very difficult, because of the settlement activity, or gone beyond the point at which it is feasible. Do you have any observations on whether, if not the President, the people around the President have an objection to continuing settlement activity and the feasibility of a two-state solution? If there is not to be a two-state solution, what is it?

**Jon B Alterman:** ... There is plenty of room to negotiate what constitutes a settlement. The Israelis talk about all of Jerusalem being a unified capital and there are certainly negotiations that can be held on that, partly because the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem have changed so profoundly. The Israelis talk about the need to have natural growth in settlement blocks that would be part of land swaps. To me, the issue is whether there is something that looks like progress towards a settlement, and we can characterise it however we characterise it, or whether the two sides look warily at each other and continue to try to undermine each other and commit violence.

The issue is not so much what the end-state is going to be, although it is important to understand that there need to be some objectives. The real issue is: does there seem to be a forward-moving process? I would argue that there is not a forward-moving process. Like a bicycle, if you are not moving forward you are falling down. The important thing is not the exact shape of what we are going to but that Palestinians feel that something is happening that can lead to them accomplishing some of their needs; and that Israelis feel there is some prospect of becoming a more normal state with a more normal set of security concerns, instead of the existential security concerns that Israelis feel. Creating that process creates its own virtuous cycles. The problem is that we do not have that process.

A number of Israelis have looked into what has happened in the past six years in the Arab world. They have said there is no certainty and that now is not the time to make a deal because they have no idea if the Government are going to be around, and that the last thing they want is greater democratisation in the Arab world because the public hates them even more than the Governments do. In many ways the Israelis are leaning away. The Palestinians are tremendously conflicted with their own internal issues, including corruption in the Palestinian Authority and the tensions between Gaza and the West Bank. It seems to me that neither have the interest or bandwidth to engage in diplomacy. But engaging in diplomacy and giving some sense of forward movement is important. It is possible that the Administration could get some of that going. One concern I have is that the Administration, by telegraphing so much support for the right wing in Israel, could drive the right wing even further to the right. That would make it harder for centrists in

Israel, of which I would say Benjamin Netanyahu is one, to make compromises. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/international-relations-committee/transformation-of-power-in-the-middle-east-and-implications-for-uk-policy/oral/48903.html>

## House of Commons Library

**Briefing: Recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories**

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7689/CBP-7689.pdf>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**UN expert warns of deteriorating situation for human rights defenders in Palestine and Israel**

Human rights defenders working to draw attention to abuses associated with Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territory are being increasingly targeted as a result of their work, according to a new report from a United Nations human rights expert.

Michael Lynk - the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 - expressed deep concerns about the shrinking space for civil society in the Occupied Palestinian Territory ...

"As human rights defenders – Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals – persist with their intrepid activism to investigate and oppose the regime of human rights violations that is integral to the occupation. All indications are that they will continue to be the prime targets of those who are intolerant of their criticisms, yet alarmed by their effectiveness," Mr. Lynk said.

The Rapporteur noted with alarm that Palestinian human rights defenders have been subjected to attacks, arrest, detention, and threats to their lives and safety. "They have experienced sophisticated interference with their vital work, and have faced toxic denunciations aimed at silencing them and discouraging their supporters," he continued.

Mr. Lynk also drew attention to the work of Israeli human rights organizations which call attention to human rights abuses that occur in the context of the occupation. He noted that these organizations "are enduring an increasingly hostile public atmosphere in Israel and from the settlement movement, stoked by the Israeli political leadership and the media, as well as obstructive legislation enacted or being considered by the Knesset." ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21417&LangID=E>

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967**

[http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session34/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_34\\_70\\_AUV.docx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session34/Documents/A_HRC_34_70_AUV.docx)

**Human Rights Council discusses human rights situation in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories**

... State of Palestine, speaking as the concerned country, expressed deep concern about the continuous Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory even though it was a full member of the United Nations and party to instruments of international law. Israel continued to daily violate international law and to occupy all facets of Palestinian life. The decade-old blockade of Gaza was a collective punishment for all citizens, and violated the right to life, health, movement and expression. If it continued, it would be catastrophic and unsustainable by 2020.

Israel was not present in the room to take the floor as the concerned country. During the interactive debate, many delegations condemned the excessive violations of human rights by Israel, including imposing an apartheid regime, excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, construction of illegal settlements, obstruction of freedom of movement, demolition of houses, violations of the right to education and health, and the illegal seizure of camps. They deplored Israel's refusal to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur, thus undermining international human rights mechanisms and the spirit and purpose of the Charter of the United Nations. Speakers supported the work and recommendations of the Special Rapporteur, and affirmed that they would support his mandate and the rights of the Palestinian people. They called upon the international community to support the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Some speakers called upon the Human Rights Council to also recognize the rights of Jewish people internationally and not to focus only on the rights of Palestinians. They noted the anti-Israel bias of the Human Rights Council, as the Special Rapporteur was focused solely on investigating violations by Israel while those committed by the Palestinians, including by the terrorist organization Hamas, were ignored. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21411&LangID=E>

### **Human Rights Council holds a general debate on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance**

... Israel drew attention to the promotion of incitement and hate speech against Jews in the Middle East. Israel believed that education and dialogue were fundamental tools to eliminating discrimination, fighting racism and encouraging a peaceful co-existence between different segments of society. ...

Palestinian Return Centre stressed that a recent United Nations document confirmed that the Israeli Government was in fact institutionalizing racism against the Palestinian people. Israel had established an apartheid regime that dominated the Palestinian people as a whole. Israel was enforcing policies in place to prevent the Palestinian right to return, describing Palestinians as a "demographic threat". ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21414&LangID=E>

... United Nations Watch remained steadfast in the fight against racism and racial discrimination ... Palestine should sanction teachers who incited hatred among their pupils. CIRID (Centre indépendant de Recherches et d'Initiatives pour le Dialogue) remarked that the Palestinian people continued to suffer all forms of racism and racial discrimination at the hands of Israel, the occupying power. ...

Amuta for NGO Responsibility said the Durban Conference had targeted Israel, and non-governmental organizations engaged in promoting discriminatory boycotts, divestments and sanctions measures received money from the European Union with their propaganda reports. ...

Meezaan Centre for Human Rights reminded that Israel placed its approximately 1.5 million Palestinian citizens under a system of racial discrimination and exclusion that privileged Jews over non-Jews. More than 50 Israeli laws discriminated against Palestinian citizens. Recently, incitement to racism, hatred and violence against Palestinians had increased. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21419&LangID=E>

## UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

The report *Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid: Palestine and the Israeli Occupation* which was included in Political Affairs Digest for 17 March, has been removed from the ESCWA website, and the head of ESCWA, Under Secretary General Rima Khalaf, has resigned.

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### Religious Freedom

**Lord Alton of Liverpool** [HL5808] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 1 March (HL5421) stating that it is their policy to promote freedom of religious belief, why there was no mention of freedom of religion or belief in the UK's opening statement at the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council.

**Baroness Anelay of St Johns:** The UK's opening statement at the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council did not provide an exhaustive list of our priorities for the session. During the current session the UK has however, underscored its commitment to promoting freedom of religion or belief by participating in the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur, where we expressed concerns about the situation of religious minorities in the Middle East, including Christians, Yazidis, the Baha'is, and some Muslim minority groups.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-06/HL5808/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-02-20/HL5421/>

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## Other Relevant Information

### European Union

#### **Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the European Union on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

... Far from being eradicated, hate speech and other manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, are on the rise. This affects equality, freedom, solidarity and justice all over the world.

The EU is continuing in its commitment to fight all forms of racial discrimination, inside and outside our borders. We work with Member States, civil society and international partners on actions that can make a difference: we agreed with major IT companies to take action against hate speech on the internet. We created platforms, such as the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. We foster exchange of best practices. We work to improve the understanding between communities and we address the concerns of affected groups, including the Jewish and the Muslim communities. We are seeking better integration of migrants, and fostering

quality education. Both within the EU, as well as with our partner countries, we are working towards preventing and countering racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. In our global engagement, we also continue to be a steadfast supporter of the UN Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. We work continuously for the global implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action of the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://tinyurl.com/lnojb76>

## European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

### **Education to promote inclusion and mutual respect is essential to counter hate speech**

Promoting inclusion and mutual respect through education and strong positive narratives are essential to prevent incitement to hatred and counter hate speech in the digital age, the heads of three European human rights institutions said in a joint statement on today's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. ...

"We all play a crucial role in promoting mutual respect and inclusion, ensuring that we live in societies that foster respect for the rights and dignity of every person, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, religion or belief or any other identity," said ODIHR Director Link. "Political and community leaders have a greater responsibility, and must address intolerance in all its forms, so as to effectively counter hate speech, which can lead to violence and hate crimes and dangerously undermine security and social cohesion." ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/press-release/2017/education-promote-inclusion-and-mutual-respect-essential-counter-hate-speech>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **States urged by UN experts to act now against racial profiling and incitement to racial hatred**

UN human rights experts are calling on governments around the world to take action now to stop fear and misinformation about minorities and migrants which are fuelling increasing incitement to racial hatred and racial profiling. ...

"Political leaders and media voices that stigmatize certain ethnic groups, migrants and refugees as prone to criminality or terrorism, or as responsible for economic malaise, encourage racial contempt that can provoke prejudice, discrimination and even verbal and physical violence," the experts said.

"This chain of cause and effect has become all too clear, given the rising incidence of racist hate crimes in countries where minorities and migrants face increasingly hostile rhetoric," they stressed. ...

"When this discrimination is normalized, it exacts an increasingly heavy toll, as targeted individuals risk internalizing a sense of stigma and marginalization. More broadly, disproportionately high criminal conviction rates and penalties for minorities erode their trust in government institutions and reinforce the discrimination they experience," the experts said. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21416&LangID=E>

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/arbitrationandmediationservicesequality.html>

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/assisteddying.html>

#### **Lobbying (Transparency) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/lobbyingtransparency.html>

#### **Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

#### **Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/promotionofisraelipalestinianpeaceunitedkingdomparticipation.html>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

#### **\*\* closes in 2 days**

#### **Reforming GCSEs, AS and A levels in biblical Hebrew** (closing date 23 March 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-gcse-as-and-a-levels-in-biblical-hebrew>

#### **The UK's policy towards the Middle East Peace Process** (closing date 30 March 2017)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/middle-east-peace-process-inquiry-16-17/>

#### **Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill** (closing date 10 April 2017)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/adoption-and-children-northern-ireland-bill>

#### **Workplace Diversity (Wales)** (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

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