

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 Written Answers

Antisemitism

Oliver Dowden [68057] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to improve the (a) security and (b) funding for security at synagogues and Jewish schools.

Ben Wallace: During 1016-17 the Government provided a grant of £13.4m to support security measures for the Jewish Community. On 01 March I was pleased to announce a continuation of the grant at the same level for 2017-18.

The Jewish Community Protective Security Grant makes funding available to all Jewish free, state and independent schools, colleges and nurseries to employ security guards during operating hours. Grant funding is also used to improve security at many synagogues through the implementation of a range of solutions including guarding and physical measures. These funded security measures supplement existing site security arrangements and policing measures put in place following the increase in the national threat level in August 2014, and enhanced after the shocking events in Paris and Copenhagen, which has resulted in heightened police activity around Jewish sites.

The Government has also ensured locations such as synagogues and educational establishments have access to high-quality advice and guidance, provided by the police and others, so they know what further steps they can take to reduce vulnerability.

Public vigilance, the work of the police, and of the security and intelligence agencies all contribute to make our communities safer.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-15/68057/>

Hate Crime: Elections

John Mann [68403] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what information her Department holds on the number of racist (a) incidents and (b) crimes occurring during electoral campaigns in each year from 2012.

Sarah Newton: The Home Office holds annual data on the number of racist hate crimes and incidents in England and Wales. We do not hold specific data relating to electoral campaigns.

In the most recent hate crime statistical bulletin, 'Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2015/16', an Annex was included on the level of racially or religiously aggravated offences around the time of the EU Referendum. This analysis, based on 31 forces who supplied detailed data to the Home Office Data Hub, showed that there was an increase in the number of these offences following the announcement of the referendum result. This publication is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2015-to-2016>

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-17/68403/>

Social Networking: Crime

Stephen Doughty [67847] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many (a) Facebook, (b) Twitter, (c) Google+, (d) YouTube, (e) Snapchat and (f) WhatsApp accounts have been closed or suspended on request of the Government due to involvement in (i) terrorism, (ii) hate crime and (iii) targeted harassment in each of the last 24 months.

Sarah Newton: This Government takes seriously the issue of online terrorist content, hate crime, and abuse.

We work in partnership with major technology firms across the spectrum of online harms, identifying ways to tackle threats.

In the UK our dedicated police Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) refers content that they assess as contravening UK terrorism legislation to industry. If industry agree that it breaches their terms and conditions, they remove it voluntarily. Through this process, in 2016 CTIRU secured the removal of over 120,000 pieces of terrorist material. The Home Office can only obtain the specific data requested on terrorism at disproportionate cost.

Last year we published a new Hate Crime Action Plan which focuses on reducing hate crime both on and offline, increasing reporting and improving support for victims.

As part of this, we agreed with internet service providers including Google, Facebook and Twitter that they would remove illegal content within 24 hours of it being posted, meaning people are better protected online. Snapchat and Whatsapp both contain end to end encryption on their messages, which means the content sent between their users is not publically viewable.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-14/67847/>

House of Lords Select Committee on Charities

Stronger charities for a stronger society

<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldchar/133/133.pdf>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel and Palestinians: Construction

Tom Brake [68140] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Israeli Government on the

disparity in the allocation of resources for building infrastructure in the Israeli settlements and Palestinian villages.

Tobias Ellwood: While we have not raised this specific issue, we have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concerns on the need for a planning process that adequately addresses the needs of Palestinian communities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-15/68140/>

Israel: Demolition

John Glen [68541] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if her Department will take steps to provide humanitarian assistance to Palestinians displaced by the expected demolition of Khan Al Ahmar in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Rory Stewart: The UK provides emergency response to communities facing demolition and displacement in Area C and East Jerusalem through core funding to the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-20/68541/>

Occupied Territories: Demolition

John Glen [68542] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Israel to reverse demolition orders relating to the village of Khan Al Ahmar in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Tobias Ellwood: The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), raised the UK's concerns about demolitions, including the village of Khan Al Ahmar, with Prime Minister Netanyahu during his visit to Israel on 8 March. The Israeli High Court has approved a temporary injunction extending the deadline for the demolition order against the structures in Khan Al Ahmar to March 30.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-20/68542/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL6002] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made regarding abuse towards, and denial of human rights and due process of law to, Palestinian children at the hands of Israeli security forces; and what action they intend to take.

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 regularly to advocate improvements to practices relating to Palestinian children in detention, most recently on 9 March.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-13/HL6002/>

United Nations

Israel Markedly Increased Settlement Construction, Decisions in Last Three Months, Middle East Special Coordinator Tells Security Council

The last three months had seen a high rate of Israeli settlement plans and construction in

the Occupied Palestinian Territory increased notably in the last three months, as did provocations from both sides, despite a call from the Security Council in late December 2016 to cease such activity, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process said ...

Nickolay Mladenov, briefing the 15-member Council on implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) — which called on Israel to take steps to cease all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory — said “no such steps have been taken during the reporting period”. Instead, there had been a marked increase in statements, announcements and decisions related to construction and expansion. ...

He pointed to a number of concerning legislative developments, underscoring that, on 6 February, the Israeli Parliament approved the so-called “Regularisation Law” which, if implemented, would effectively authorize confiscation of privately owned Palestinian land for settlement purposes. That contravened international law and was deemed unconstitutional by many Israeli legal experts, he stressed.

While the security situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained relatively calm, there had been an increase in certain incidents, namely rocket attacks, he continued. Palestinian extremists in Gaza had fired 10 rockets towards Israel and in response to those, the Israeli Defense Forces conducted 18 airstrikes at militant locations inside Gaza. Eleven Palestinians were killed and over 273 injured by Israel’s security forces and one Palestinian was killed while attempting to carry out a stabbing attack. Four Israeli soldiers were killed and 70 other Israelis were injured in attacks by Palestinians.

He also reported acts of provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, noting that reactions by Hamas officials to terror attacks against Israelis had been particularly reprehensible, with appalling and racist language inciting violence against Jews. Statements issued by Hamas celebrated terror attacks against Israel as heroic and Palestinian Authority officials did not condemn those attacks either. Provocative statements also continued on the Israeli side, where a number of politicians had called for the annexation of parts or all of the West Bank and for a categorical denial of Palestinian statehood. ...

Mr. Mladenov called on Israel to do more to improve the daily lives of Palestinians and noted that as foreign aid continued to decline, it was critical that the Palestinian Authority and its international partners work together in a transparent manner. ...

Underscoring that the two-State solution was the only means of realizing the national aspirations of both peoples, he said it was critical that the momentum built over the past year continued to expand and ultimately develop into a concrete vision to end the occupation and the wider conflict. International efforts must be accompanied by significant steps on the ground by all parties. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12765.doc.htm>

UN Human Rights Council

Human Rights Council concludes thirty-fourth regular session after adopting 41 resolutions and a Presidential Statement

... The Council adopted four resolutions related to the occupied Palestinian territory: on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law; on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination; on human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory; and on Israeli settlements. A text was also adopted on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan. ...

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21448&LangID=E>

Ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/GetFile?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/34/L.38&Lang=E&Type=DOC>

Right of the Palestinian people to self-determination

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/GetFile?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/34/L.39&Lang=E&Type=DOC>

Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/GetFile?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/34/L.40&Lang=E&Type=DOC>

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/GetFile?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/34/L.40&Lang=E&Type=DOC>

Human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/GetFile?OpenAgent&DS=A/HRC/34/L.11&Lang=E&Type=DOC>

Trends in Ecology and Evolution

'Nature Knows No Boundaries': The Role of Nature Conservation in Peacebuilding

[http://www.cell.com/trends/ecology-evolution/pdf/S0169-5347\(17\)30057-5.pdf](http://www.cell.com/trends/ecology-evolution/pdf/S0169-5347(17)30057-5.pdf)

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answer

Freedom of religion or belief

Jim Shannon: The Prime Minister stated in her speech last night that the UK sets an example for advancing freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also made a commitment at the October conference to pursue the freedom of religion or belief at the Human Rights Council. Will the Leader of the House arrange for the relevant Minister to make a statement to confirm that FCO and Department for International Development desk officers, as well as UK embassies, fully recognise the importance of religious freedom and promote it in their daily work?

Mr Lidington: I encourage the hon. Gentleman to seize his opportunities at questions to those two Departments. From my fairly recent experience of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I can assure him that human rights, including religious freedom, are taken very seriously throughout our network of posts abroad and in London. It is also sometimes the case that persecuted religious minorities themselves prefer for their plight to be addressed in the context of the expression of broader concerns about human rights, precisely because they do not want to be further singled out for additional persecution. There is an element of judgment in how we go about this task, but the centrality of that to the mission

of the FCO and DFID is something about which I hope I can give him some firm assurance.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-23/debates/21613DF3-90F7-4CE7-B62E-D23583C8366E/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-FA677F74-229B-49C5-8B21-4F2BB9D8AC54>

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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>

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 4 days**

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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