

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Antisemitism

**Andrew Gwynne (Labour)** [123962] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has sought the input of the Haredi community on tackling anti-Semitism; and if he will make a statement.

**Heather Wheeler:** As Minister for Faith, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth has discussed the issue of antisemitism with the Charedi community and has also visited a number of organisations providing services to the Charedi community.

In addition officials meet regularly with representatives of the Charedi community to discuss antisemitism and other concerns.

The department also funds through True Vision the police online reporting portal work to encourage the Charedi community to report antisemitism and to provide support during the court process to victims.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-22/123962/>

#### Ritual Slaughter

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

**Anna Turley (Labour Co-op)** [123953] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to regulate the non-stun slaughter of animals.

**Anna Turley (Labour Co-op)** [123954] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals on banning the slaughter of non-stunned animals.

**George Eustice:** The Government encourages the highest standards of welfare at slaughter. The Government would prefer all animals to be stunned before slaughter, but respects the right of the Jewish and Muslim communities to eat meat prepared in accordance with their religious beliefs.

We have stricter national rules aimed at reducing stress and providing protection for animals slaughtered in accordance with religious rites. These national rules include requirements for sheep, goats and bovines to be slaughtered immediately that they are restrained and not to be released from restraint until they are unconscious and at least 20 seconds have elapsed, in the case of sheep and

goats, and at least 30 seconds have elapsed in the case of bovines.

This year the Government is introducing mandatory CCTV recording in slaughterhouses. This will further enable official veterinarians to monitor and verify animal welfare standards in the slaughterhouse and ensure strict adherence to stand still time rules.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-22/123953/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-22/123954/>

### **Coroners: Greater London**

**John Spellar (Labour)** [124033] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to his Answer of 15 January 2018 to Question 121252, on Coroners, whether he has made an assessment of whether the actions of the Coroner for Inner North London are in line with that guidance; and if he will make a statement.

**Phillip Lee:** Coroners are independent judicial office holders. As such, it would be inappropriate for Ministers to comment.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-22/124033/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-05/121252/>

### **Ethnic Groups: Equality**

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

**David Lammy (Labour)** [123345] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to address the disparities and inequalities revealed by the race disparity audit, published on 10 October 2017.

**David Lammy (Labour)** [123346] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what resources he has dedicated to working on the Government's policy response to the findings of the race disparity audit, published on 10 October 2017.

**Reply from David Lidington:** Following the publication of the Race Disparity Audit's *Ethnicity facts and figures* website on 10th October, the Prime Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment to tackle the disparities identified by the Audit.

The Government has already launched an initial programme of work to tackle some of the disparities. This includes the Department for Work and Pensions taking action to improve ethnic minority employment rates in twenty targeted areas, action by the Ministry of Justice to implement recommendations made in the recent Lammy Review and the Department for Education taking forward an external review to improve practice in exclusions. Further announcements on future Government work will be made in due course.

Tackling these disparities involve not just Government but local public services, the voluntary sector and businesses. The Government has made a commitment that it will "explain or change" key ethnic disparities identified by the Audit. Where significant disparities between ethnic groups cannot be explained by wider factors, the Government will work with partners to change them.

The Race Disparity Unit in the Cabinet Office will be responsible for coordinating the Government's response to the Audit. The Unit consists of 20 members of staff, including digital, data and policy professionals.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-17/123345/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-17/123346/>

The audit referred to above can be read at

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/650723/RDAweb.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/650723/RDAweb.pdf)

The website referred to above can be read at

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/>

### Offences against Children

**Diana Johnson (Labour)** [121496] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and (b) the Home Secretary on the extending the definition of a position of trust to include (i) sports coaches, (ii) youth leaders and (iii) religious leaders; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:** The protection of children remains a priority for this Government and we keep this important area of the law under review.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is currently developing proposals to extend the definition of a 'position of trust' in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, to bring into that definition sports coaches who hold a position of trust in relation to a child aged 16 or 17 under their care. We will consider these further with them once developed. Although I have not yet had any discussions with the Home Secretary on this matter directly, given my recent appointment.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-08/121496/>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### USA: UNRWA

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [125084] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with his US counterpart on that Administration's decision to withhold funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees; and what assessment she has made of the effect of that decision on programmes operating in the Middle East.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK has discussed the situation in detail with the United States, all other main donors, and host Governments in the context of the recent United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Advisory Commission. The UK has highlighted our concern about the impact on the activities of UNRWA that any unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements might have.

My officials are working closely with UNRWA, the United States, and other European Union partners to understand the risks to UNRWA's programmes and to ensure the continuity of services for Palestinian refugees. The UK is concerned about the impact on UNRWA's activities whenever unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements occur and, in particular, how this may disproportionately affect the most vulnerable refugees. We are liaising with UNRWA on their plans for service continuity. UNRWA has publically stated their determination to continue services in all their fields of operations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-25/125084/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Palestinians: Overseas Aid

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4777] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their announcement on 16 November 2016 concerning future UK support to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, how much funding they provided to the Palestinian Authority in (1) 2016–17, and (2) 2017–18; what was the reason for any significant change in the level of that funding; and whether there has been any shift in UK policy towards such funding.

**Lord Bates:** In 2016/17 we provided £25 million of financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Figures for 2017/18 will be published after the end of the financial year. UK financial assistance to the PA continues to be provided in accordance with the Government response, "Future UK support to the Occupied Palestinian Territories" published on 16 December 2016.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-16/HL4777/>

*No formal announcement about support to the Palestinian Authority was issued on or around 16 November 2016, but the question above may refer to replies to oral questions on that date which can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-11-16/debates/10511A96-01A1-430B-82BC-E4D5D435194B/TopicalQuestions#contribution-049DF7FB-6478-42F8-B560-1EBE2676ED5F>  
and

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-11-16/debates/10511A96-01A1-430B-82BC-E4D5D435194B/TopicalQuestions#contribution-3783C275-2891-4038-97B6-91B07491E5E0>

### UNRWA: Finance

**Baroness Helic (Conservative)** [HL4890] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they are proposing to other UN Relief Works Agency donors to meet the shortfall in funding for the agency in the light of the decision of the government of the United States to reduce its support.

**Lord Bates:** The UK has engaged in the recent UNRWA Advisory Commission meetings which include the US, all main donors and host Governments to discuss UNRWA's continuity of services. The UK has so far provided around £50 million in 2017/18, based on the Agency meeting rigorous performance indicators, and is one of the largest donors to UNRWA. We contributed more than expected for this financial year to help manage UNRWA's funding gap in December.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-18/HL4890/>

## European Commission

### **New assistance package for Palestine : EU strongly committed to support socio-economic revival of East-Jerusalem**

... The European Commission has adopted a new €42.5 million assistance package benefiting Palestinians, including substantial support in East Jerusalem.

Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, said: "*With this new assistance package the EU continues to support the Palestinians on their way towards the establishment of their own state as part of the two-state solution, with Jerusalem as capital of both Israel and Palestine. The European Union is, and will remain, Palestine's most reliable and important donor, investing in businesses, youth and schooling, helping to provide access to clean water in Gaza, strengthening civil society and investing on education and health.*"

The newly adopted €42.5 million assistance package includes:

- **€14.9 million** for activities in **East Jerusalem** to preserve the Palestinian character of the city and counter the worrying deterioration of socio-economic indicators that include widespread poverty. Projects will focus on advocacy and protection actions, youth and education and support to the private sector, with the overall aim to boost economic development.
- **€27.6 million** to support the building of a **democratic and accountable Palestinian State** through targeted policy reforms, fiscal consolidation, reinforcing businesses and SMEs, strengthening of Palestinian Civil Society and providing access to water and energy.

The package comes in addition to already adopted EU funding of €158.1 million in direct financial assistance to support the Palestinian Authority in meeting its recurrent expenditure (salaries and pensions, assistance to vulnerable Palestinian families, arrears of East Jerusalem hospitals) and the delivery of public services. €107 million was also provided to UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. Finally, €18 million was provided for supporting productive investments both in the West Bank and in Gaza. ...

**To read the full press release see**

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-368\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-368_en.htm)

## United Nations

### **Amid funding crunch, UN agency seeks \$800 million in lifesaving aid for Palestine refugees**

Facing an acute funding shortage, the United Nations agency for Palestine refugees is seeking more than \$800 million for its emergency programmes for Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The appeal would enable the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to “continue delivering [desperately needed relief](#) to those affected by deepening emergency situations,” UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl said at a launch event in Geneva.

“However, the Agency’s critical financial crisis following the reduction in US funds threatens our ability to deliver these vital services,” he added. ...

Mr. Krähenbühl explained that the majority of Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory and from Syria “rely on UNRWA to provide aid which is literally life-saving, including food, water, shelter and medical assistance.” ...

In Gaza, with employment opportunities stifled by the decade-old blockade – the unemployment rate remains among the highest worldwide – almost one million Palestine refugees are dependent on UNRWA for emergency food assistance, a tenfold increase on the 100,000 that required such support in 2000. ...

The situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains fragile. Palestine refugees continue to experience difficult socioeconomic conditions rooted in occupation-related policies and practices imposed by the Israeli authorities. ...

**To read the full press release see**

[https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58506#.WnHq\\_ZP1WnY](https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58506#.WnHq_ZP1WnY)

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **UN rights office issues report on business and human rights in settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory**

The UN Human Rights Office on Wednesday issued a report detailing its work on producing a database of business enterprises engaged in certain, specific activities in the occupied Palestinian territory that are either explicitly linked to Israeli settlements or form

part of processes that “enable and support the establishment, expansion and maintenance of Israeli residential communities beyond the Green Line.”

The UN Human Rights Council mandated the Office in March 2016 to produce a database of all business enterprises engaged in specific activities related to Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, in consultation with the Working Group on business and human rights, recalling the illegality of the settlements under international law.\*

The Human Rights Council resolution followed the report of the *Independent International Fact-Finding Mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* which, in 2013, found that business enterprises had “directly and indirectly, enabled, facilitated and profited from the construction and growth of the settlements.” The Fact-Finding Mission’s report provided a list of 10 activities that are either explicitly linked to the settlements or enable and support their establishment, expansion and maintenance. ...

To date, given the limited resources available, the Office has contacted 64 of these companies, informing them of the listed activities that they appeared to be engaged in. The Office is considering the responses received to date and continues to work on making determinations regarding those companies’ involvement in the listed activities. Once it has been in touch with all 206 companies, and subject to its determinations, the Office expects to release the names of all those companies engaged in listed activities. ...

“The violations of human rights associated with the settlements are pervasive and devastating, reaching every facet of Palestinian life,” the report recalls. “Owing to settlement development and infrastructure, Palestinians suffer from restrictions on freedom of religion, movement and education; their rights to land and water; access to livelihoods and their right to an adequate standard of living; their rights to family life; and many other fundamental human rights.”

“Businesses play a central role in furthering the establishment, maintenance and expansion of Israeli settlements,” the report adds, stressing that as part of the due diligence process for companies seeking to operate in a complex environment like the occupied Palestinian territory, “business enterprises may need to consider whether it is possible to engage in such an environment in a manner that respects human rights.” ...

The report also challenges the explanations put forward by companies involved in the listed activities that the businesses provide jobs to Palestinian families and help to support the Palestinian economy. It states that the presence of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory in fact serves to depress the Palestinian economy and reduce opportunities for Palestinian businesses to thrive, as well as having a direct effect on the job market. The report also emphasizes that the corporate responsibility to respect human rights exists over and above compliance with national laws and regulations. ...

“I am satisfied, given the resource constraints and the unprecedented nature of such a request from the UN Human Rights Council, that significant progress has been made in the Office’s efforts to operationalize the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,” High Commissioner Zeid said. “I urge all sides to avoid misrepresenting the contents of this report, which has been produced in good faith on the basis of the mandate laid down by the Human Rights Council. We hope that our work in consolidating and communicating the information in the database will assist States and businesses in complying with their obligations and responsibilities under international law.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22617&LangID=E>

The new report referred to above can be read at

[http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session37/Documents/A\\_HRC\\_37\\_39\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session37/Documents/A_HRC_37_39_EN.pdf)

## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Hezbollah

**Sammy Wilson (DUP)** [124546] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to proscribe the political wing of Hezbollah in the UK.

**Ben Wallace:** I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to the Hon. Member for East Renfrewshire on 28 June 2017 (UIN 556).

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-23/124546/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-22/556/>

**Ben Wallace:** We do not routinely comment on whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription. A decision to proscribe an organisation must be based on a belief that it is concerned in terrorism as defined in the Terrorism Act 2000.

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/666576/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/666576/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf)

#### **\*\* European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

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

Second reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-30/debates/4F0C20C9-C072-4E51-B76F-C8ECAABE779D/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-30/debates/4F0C20C9-C072-4E51-B76F-C8ECAABE779D/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-30/debates/DEF7D976-EE5D-4150-BC6D-2F2C928719C5/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-30/debates/DEF7D976-EE5D-4150-BC6D-2F2C928719C5/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

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

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

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

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

## Scottish Parliament

### Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105269.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes today**

**Draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill** (closing date 31 January 2018)

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-health-and-welfare/consultation-on-the-animal-welfare-bill/>

**Introducing 'opt-out' consent for organ and tissue donation in England** (closing date 6 March 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-opt-out-consent-for-organ-and-tissue-donation-in-england>

**Promoting Organ Donation and Transplantation in Northern Ireland** (closing date 9 March 2018)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/promoting-organ-donation-and-transplantation-northern-ireland>

**Electoral Reform (Scotland)** (closing date 12 March 2018)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00529431.pdf>

**Human Rights (Scottish Parliament)** (closing date 16 March 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/106453.aspx>

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