

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 Lords Written Answer

Faith Schools

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat) [HL4854] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Yeshiva schools there are in England.

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Yeshivas provide religious education to male children and adults, and in the legal sense are not schools. They are not regulated at present, and consequently no information on them is collected centrally.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-17/HL4854/>

CST

Antisemitic Hate Incidents Reach New High in 2017

The number of antisemitic hate incidents in the UK reached a new high in 2017, according to figures released by the Community Security Trust (CST). CST ... recorded 1,382 antisemitic incidents nationwide in 2017, the highest total CST has ever recorded for a calendar year. This is a 3 per cent increase from the 1,346 incidents recorded during 2016, which was itself a record annual total. The previous record high was in 2014, when CST recorded 1,182 antisemitic incidents. CST has recorded antisemitic incidents since 1984. ...

The high incident levels throughout 2017 continued the pattern of 2016 in which high incident numbers were sustained by a combination of factors, including an increase in all forms of recorded hate crime and publicity regarding alleged antisemitism in the Labour Party. These factors may have caused higher levels of incident offending as well as encouraging more reporting of antisemitic incidents from victims and witnesses in the Jewish community. This differs from previous record highs, in 2014 and 2009, when conflicts in Israel and Gaza acted as sudden trigger events, that led to short-term, identifiable 'spikes' in incident numbers.

The record total in 2017 saw over 100 antisemitic incidents recorded every month from January to October inclusive. This continued an unprecedented pattern of monthly totals exceeding 100 incidents for 19 consecutive months from April 2016. In comparison, monthly totals only exceeded 100 incidents on six occasions in the ten years preceding

April 2016. Monthly incident totals did decline towards the end of 2017, with 89 incidents in November and 78 in December, but they remain roughly double the level they were at five years ago. ...

CST recorded a 34 per cent increase in the number of violent antisemitic assaults, from 108 in 2016 to 145 in 2017. ...

The most common single type of incident recorded by CST in 2017 involved verbal abuse randomly directed at visibly Jewish people in public. ...

CST recorded 247 antisemitic incidents that involved social media in 2017, comprising 18 per cent of the overall total of 1,382 incidents. This was a 15 per cent fall from the 289 incidents involving social media that CST recorded in 2016 ...

There were 81 incidents of Damage & Desecration of Jewish property in 2017; 1,038 incidents of Abusive Behaviour, including verbal abuse, antisemitic graffiti, antisemitic abuse via social media and one-off cases of hate mail; 95 direct antisemitic threats; and 12 cases of mass-mailed antisemitic leaflets or emails. ...

CST Chief Executive David Delew said: "Hatred is rising and Jewish people are suffering as a result. This should concern everybody because it shows anger and division that threaten all of society. We have the support of Government and Police, but prosecutions need to be more visible and more frequent; while too many others act in ways that encourage antisemites and isolate Jews."

Home Secretary Amber Rudd MP said: "Antisemitism is a despicable form of abuse that seeks to undermine our values of diversity and openness and which has absolutely no place in British society. I welcome this report's findings that the rise in reported incidents partly reflects the improving response to these horrendous attacks and better information sharing between the CST and police forces around the UK. But even one incident is one too many, and any rise in incidents is clearly concerning, which is why this Government will continue its work protecting the Jewish community and other groups from antisemitism and hate crime. ...

Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Andrew Gwynne MP, said: "The findings of this report are extremely concerning, and emphasise just how important it is that we all make a conscious effort to call out and confront antisemitism. No one should feel unsafe or discriminated against while going about their daily business in public places. Hate has no place in our country and we must root out antisemitism whenever and wherever it takes place. ...

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid MP said: "Antisemitism has no place in our society and this rise in incidents is completely unacceptable – we must all stand up and condemn bigotry against Jewish communities. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog>

Antisemitic Incidents Report 2017

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/a/b/IR17.pdf>

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Holocaust

United Nations

'I feel guilty I survived,' youngest Schindler's list Holocaust survivor tells United Nations her story

More than seven decades after the end of the Holocaust, Eva Lavi – the youngest living Holocaust survivor saved by German industrialist Oskar Schindler – still feels guilty that

she survived when so many of the Jewish children her age at that time were killed, including her cousins.

“It was not easy to be a child survivor after the War. I continued to hide. Why? My parents did not take me to the meetings with other survivors to not hurt the feelings of those that lost their children,” Ms. Lavi told the United Nations annual [Holocaust Memorial Ceremony](#), held Wednesday at the world body’s Headquarters in New York.

“Even now 73 years after the War, I feel guilty that I survived,” she lamented.

Born in Poland, Ms. Lavi was two years old when the War broke out. One day when the Nazis appeared at the door of her home, her mother was desperate and gambled by putting her outside the window. It was winter and minus 20-degrees Celsius, but Ms. Lavi held onto a pipe. It was freezing, but she survived. ...

Another featured speaker was Thomas Buergenthal, a Holocaust survivor and a retired Judge of the International Court of Justice, Professor at George Washington University Law School, in Washington, D.C. ...

Of the six million Jews who were murdered, more than a million were children, he noted.

“Think of the physicians, the scientists, the historians, the archeologists, the theologians, the poets, the philosophers, the writers, the engineers, the teachers and other professionals that these children might have become,” he continued, stressing that the world lost enormous intellectual, cultural, and scientific riches that would have benefited humanity as a whole, making the Holocaust “a human tragedy of catastrophic proportions” even without counting the other five million victims. ...

For his part, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, describing the Holocaust as a “culmination of hostility towards Jews across the millennia” and a “systematic campaign of extermination,” warned against signs that hatred, xenophobia and other types of discrimination exist in today’s world.

“Since hatred and contempt of human lives are rampant in our time, [we must stand guard against xenophobia](#) every day and everywhere. Across the world, the state of hate is high,” Mr. Guterres told the event. ...

The UN chief said that “genocide does not happen in a vacuum” and “the Holocaust was the culmination of hostility toward Jews across the millennia.” ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58514#.WnMx-ZP1WnY>

As Neo-Nazism, White Supremacy Spread, People Must Unite to Prevent Normalization of Hate, Secretary-General Says in Remarks for Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony

... The annual Day of Commemoration is about the past, but also the future; it is about Jews but also all others who find themselves scapegoated and vilified solely because of who they are.

Today we have two fundamental duties. First, to remember the Holocaust and its victims. Second, to be vigilant about hatred today.

Genocide does not happen in a vacuum. The Holocaust was the culmination of hostility towards Jews across the millennia. It was planned — a systematic campaign of extermination. And it was abetted by pseudoscience and propaganda that poisoned millions of minds.

Step by step, social order broke down. A society admired for its heights of cultural achievement lost its moorings and morality. International order crumbled as well. Societies shattered by the First World War failed to pick up the pieces. The League of Nations proved unsustainable. Borders proved vulnerable to aggression.

And then, utter tragedy — from the Nazi death camps and gas chambers in German-occupied Poland, to the killing fields farther east, known today as the “Holocaust by bullets”.

We must never forget these facts. We must not lose sight of what went wrong. And since hatred and contempt of human lives are rampant in our time, we must stand guard against xenophobia every day and everywhere.

Across the world, the state of hate is high. Anti-hate organizations are tracking hundreds of pro-Nazi and white supremacist groups. Decades after the Holocaust, Nazi symbols and slogans remain chillingly present. ...

Anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise. In two countries with large Jewish communities, they increased in 2017 by 60 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. At the same time, as the former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, Lord Jonathan Sacks, once said: "The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews."

Indeed, today we are seeing a sharp increase in other forms of prejudice. Anti-Muslim hatred is leading to discrimination, intimidation and assaults. Hatred is also targeting migrants and refugees — including children. And at times, we hear things said about certain minorities — about their practices, traditions, holy books — that would never be tolerated if said about majorities or, indeed, about other minorities.

There should be no hierarchies of hatred; all people deserve respect, protection and equality before the law. And all of us have a duty to recognize this right — and to defend it.

Neo-Nazis and their supporters are very actively doing something else that is a source of concern. They are busily trying to rebrand themselves — to present a kinder and gentler image to win wider appeal. They choose to seem less crude to be more dangerous.

Their goal is clear: as one Nazi apologist has said, it is "to make the mainstream come to us". They seek to align with others on the far right to push the boundaries of acceptable conversation farther and farther. Through a logic of penetration, they seek to infiltrate their slogans, symbols and ideas into more mainstream movements and parties. Sometimes they employ the tactics of the dog whistle, using words and phrases that may sound benign to the average listener, but are coded in hate.

And they are succeeding. ...

We must never be bystanders when lives and values are at stake. I take heart from the strong reactions against bigotry that we have seen around the world. ...

At times, hatred may seem to be on the march. But I firmly believe that with unity, across borders and generations, we can build a world of pluralism and peaceful coexistence — and thereby, at long last, show we are heeding the still-urgent lessons of the Holocaust. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sqsm18880.doc.htm>

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Lord Ahmad speech: Why it matters to be intolerant of intolerance

Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon delivered a speech on religious tolerance at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Italy ...

Freedom of religion or belief, including the freedom to change religion, is a fundamental human right and one that I believe passionately should be enjoyed by everyone, everywhere.

The reason I believe it matters – why the British Government believes it matters and why our Prime Minister Mrs May believes it matters – is not just for its own sake, or even because we know that more than three quarters of the world are guided by their faith.

It matters because where such freedoms are absent or indeed restricted, intolerance and mistrust flourishes, it splits communities down religious fault lines. Once communities are divided in this way, it does not take too much for tensions to spill over into violence.

The connection between religious tolerance and stable societies is another reason why

we think promoting freedom of religion or belief is so important. There is clear evidence to suggest that tolerant and inclusive societies are better equipped to resist extremism. And most importantly, by ensuring that everyone can contribute, it makes society as a whole better. ...

The landscape of my country the UK is no longer graced exclusively by spires and steeples, that we celebrate, but also by minarets and menorah, domes and temples.

As you look over the tapestry that is modern Britain today, we have more than 1,700 mosques, 400 synagogues and 300 Gurdwaras, often standing side by side with churches and cathedrals.

I am proud of our religious diversity, but it would be wrong to suggest that it is always easy to integrate religious minorities into a society where there is already a dominant religion. When we promote religious tolerance in other countries we know from experience how challenging it can be. ...

When a temple is built on your street or a halal butcher opens in the market it forces you to accept that your religion is one of many, and not the only one. At times this can be difficult, and the battle of ideas is by no means won, even in the UK.

Therefore it is important for governments and faith leaders to keep making the argument that we have nothing to fear from accepting other faiths into our society; that mutual respect is a sign of strength, not weakness; and that when faiths take the difficult step of defending each other's rights, they are spreading the universal message of tolerance, respect, understanding and peace – the universal message of all religions. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/lord-ahmad-speech-why-it-matters-to-be-intolerant-of-intolerance>

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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

**** European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

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

Second reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-31/debates/6E9F9C26-27A7-4157-B6FF-115044A62448/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-31/debates/6E9F9C26-27A7-4157-B6FF-115044A62448/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-31/debates/1E0DE5FF-2281-4ED2-8D68-168B86721E0E/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-31/debates/1E0DE5FF-2281-4ED2-8D68-168B86721E0E/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee Report

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/lddelreg/73/73.pdf>

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

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