

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 Oral Answers

Business of the House

John Mann (Labour): On 23 November 2016, 30 March 2017, and 9 February 2018 I wrote to the Government to ask for a debate in Government time on anti-Semitism. Over those 18 months, on all three occasions I was told that there would be such a debate. Now that it has been scheduled, and considering the importance of the issue, half a day is simply insubstantial and insignificant. We need a full day's debate, and I am sure that Labour Members would be happy to agree to a rearrangement of business to give it a full day. Will the Leader of the House please take that suggestion away and consider it?

Andrea Leadsom: I share the hon. Gentleman's grave concern about anti-Semitism, and in recent weeks we have seen some appalling examples of anti-Semitic behaviour, which is utterly unacceptable. I will take away his request, but he will appreciate that there are lots of competing demands on time in this Chamber.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-03-29/debates/F7499B1F-B8C1-46F0-8D9B-0460A10CEDA1/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-F16FC52E-22C2-4FCB-8BFD-2E2A4565AF3C>

The debate referred to above has been scheduled for 17 April

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-03-29/debates/F7499B1F-B8C1-46F0-8D9B-0460A10CEDA1/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-3812C39D-B57F-4F3C-B8B7-CB0A533463F1>

Business of the House

Craig Tracey (Conservative): On Tuesday I was delighted to host, along with my hon. Friend the Member for Nuneaton (Mr Jones) and the Sikh Channel, a "Respect the Turban" event here in Parliament. It was fantastic to see many right hon. and hon. Members hearing of its significance. Sadly, the event was required due to a recent mindless attack on a Sikh gentleman outside Parliament. Will my right hon. Friend join me in thanking the Sikh community for their valuable contribution to the UK over many decades, and may we have a statement on what more the Government can do to prevent hate crimes in our society?

Andrea Leadsom: I join my hon. Friend in thanking the Sikh community for the fantastic contribution that they make to the United Kingdom. I absolutely

commend him on hosting the recent event, and I was so sorry to hear about the unacceptable attack on a guest of the hon. Member for Slough (Mr Dhesi) just outside this Palace. All hate crime is condemned by all hon. and right hon. Members across the House. I can tell my hon. Friend that since 2010 we have published a hate crime action plan. We are working with the police and communities to tackle all forms of hate crime, including by improving police recording of such crime so that forces now capture data on all five monitored strands and can deal with it accordingly.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-03-29/debates/F7499B1F-B8C1-46F0-8D9B-0460A10CEDA1/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-2554ED9A-E14C-46E3-96AF-C3123A9E4DFE>

House of Lords Written Answer

Religious Hatred: Islam

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL6564] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take following reports of a letter campaign encouraging recipients to take part in a "Punish a Muslim Day" which allegedly awarded points for differently graded acts of violence against Muslims.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government condemns the content of the letters as clearly abhorrent, with no place in decent society. The letters are part of an ongoing investigation, and as such the Government is not in a position to comment further on them.

We continue to liaise with the police and community stakeholders to ensure that Muslims, alongside anyone of any race or faith, feel safe to go about their lives without fear of persecution or discrimination. We support Tell MAMA to encourage reporting of anti-Muslim hatred and to produce materials to support those affected by the letters, and we have worked with the Cross-Government Working Group on Anti-Muslim Hatred to reinforce this.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-21/HL6564/>

UK Parliament Petition: Government response

National Admissions Policy For Faith Schools

The petition of residents of Telford, Declares that the national admissions policy for faith schools is discriminatory; further that the Department for Education should abolish its current policy of a 50 per cent cap on faith-based school admissions; and, further, that a petition on this matter has gathered 155 signatures.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Department for Education to remove the 50 per cent cap on faith-based admissions, so that every child of faith can have access to faith school education.

And the petitioners remain, etc.—[\[Presented by Lucy Allan, Official Report, 29 January 2018; Vol. 635, c. 646.\]](#)

[P002101]

Observations from the Minister for School Standards (Nick Gibb): The Government remain committed to its long standing partnership with faith schools, which make up a third of all state-funded schools.

Church and other faith schools make a hugely positive contribution to our education system as consistently high-performing and popular schools. Many faith schools also work hard to promote and support integration and community cohesion. We want to make sure all children learn the values that underpin our

society, which is why education was at the heart of the Integrated Communities Strategy.

Every child deserves access to a good school place and we want parents to have greater choice when it comes to their child's school.

We have made it clear that we want to create more good school places and that includes Church and other faith schools. Where there is parental demand and where there is a need for places, we want to support the creation of those new schools.

We will set out our response to the "Schools that work for everyone" consultation in due course.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-03-29/debates/18032963000079/NationalAdmissionsPolicyForFaithSchools>

Downing Street

Prime Minister's Passover message 2018

Today marks the beginning of Passover, as Jewish families around the world come together at the seder table to tell the story of their ancestors' deliverance from slavery.

Here in the UK, we can all take the opportunity to celebrate the incredible and enduring contribution made by our Jewish community, in every corner of the country and in every walk of life.

Of course, the Exodus from Egypt did not mark the end of anti-Semitic persecution. For millennia, the descendants of those Moses led to freedom have continued to face hatred, discrimination and violence. It's a situation that continues to this day, including, I'm sad to say, here in Britain.

It's something I have consistently taken action to tackle, both through investing in security to protect our Jewish communities and through education, with the creation of a National Holocaust Memorial to remind us all where hatred can lead if left unchecked.

The story of Passover teaches us that, while wrong may triumph for a time, the arc of history always bends to the righteous. So, at this special time of year, let us all pledge to stand up and make our voices heard in the face of anti-Semitism.

After all, as Elie Wiesel said, "Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Pesach – chag kasher v'sameach.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-ministers-passover-message-2018>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary's 2018 Passover Message

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said: Passover is a time of coming together, when Jewish communities commemorate the liberation of the people of Israel from slavery in ancient Egypt. It is a time to celebrate freedom as a basic human right.

Pesach Sameach to all Jewish families both in the UK and around the world. I wish them a happy and peaceful holiday.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretarys-2018-passover-message>

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Pilot scheme launched to help build sustainable future for listed places of worship

A new scheme to help build a sustainable future for listed places of worship will be piloted in urban and rural areas in England ...

Expert advisors will work with listed buildings used by all faiths and denominations in

Manchester and Suffolk to increase community engagement and vital heritage management skills.

The projects, expected to begin in early autumn, will receive a total of £1.8 million over the next two years.

Eligible listed places of worship in the pilot areas will be able to access a £500,000 minor repairs fund. ...

Heritage Minister Michael Ellis said: "Britain has an incredible array of historic buildings important to all faiths which tell the story of our shared history and our communities. However the costs of caring for and protecting many listed places of worship can be prohibitive and lead many to fall into disrepair. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pilot-scheme-launched-to-help-build-sustainable-future-for-listed-places-of-worship>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Response to "Punish a Muslim" Campaign

6. **Anas Sarwar (Labour):** To ask the First Minister what steps the Scottish Government is taking to reassure and protect communities in response to the "Punish a Muslim" campaign. (S5F-02197)

The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): I utterly condemn this disgusting, so-called campaign. I do so in the strongest possible terms and I am sure that that sentiment is shared by members across this chamber. We must all stand together against such hate and we must be clear that, in Scotland, we will always challenge prejudice and discrimination.

We are engaging with the United Kingdom Government, Police Scotland and the Muslim Council for Scotland to ensure the safety of our valued Muslim communities. On Tuesday, Police Scotland and Scottish Government officials attended the second meeting of the cross-party group on tackling Islamophobia at which the issue was discussed. We are also taking active steps to tackle prejudice and hate, as outlined in my recent correspondence with Anas Sarwar.

Anas Sarwar: I ask members to imagine that they are a Muslim woman or child—I emphasise "woman" because there is a clear gendered nature to racism and Islamophobia—and that they are reading the following:

"Punish a Muslim ... There will be rewards based on actions taken ...

10 points: Verbally abuse a Muslim

25 points: Pull the head scarf off a Muslim 'woman'

50 points: Throw acid in face of a Muslim

100 points: Beat up a Muslim

250 points: Torture a Muslim using electrocution, skinning, use of a rack

500 points: Butcher a Muslim using gun, knife, vehicle or otherwise

1000 points: Burn a ... mosque"

That is shocking, shameful and sickening. Will the First Minister and, indeed, the Parliament send a message to all our diverse communities that Scotland is as much their country as anyone else's, that this is their home and that we stand with them, and that we ask them to go about their daily lives more vigilantly, look out for each other and, if they see or suspect anything, report it to the police? Will the First Minister and the Parliament send a message to the haters that an attack on one Scot, regardless of faith or race, is an attack on all Scots and we will never let them win? *[Applause.]*

The First Minister: In some ways, I do not need to add to Anas Sarwar's comments, because he has captured everything that needs to be said, but, to be clear that the message comes from me as strongly as it does from anybody else, I will add some comments.

I find it difficult to find words that are adequate to describe or condemn what Anas Sarwar just read out. It is sickening, appalling, disgusting and deeply disturbing. It is all of that and more, but none of that does it justice and it certainly does not do justice to what I feel and what I know we all feel about it. As many of us do, I have many friends and constituents in the Muslim community, so I know and see first hand the impact that such prejudice, hate and discrimination has on them, and I feel deeply for every one of them.

It is very important for us to recognise that the attacks are directed at the Muslim community and not all of us can pretend to know exactly how that feels, but all of us should be absolutely clear when we say that we treat such attacks on the Muslim community or any individual Muslim as attacks on all of us. For all our political divisions and debates, this is one Scotland and, for anybody who chooses to live here—no matter their faith and no matter the country that they come from—this is their country and their home. We value them and we want them here. That is the message that should ring out from this Parliament. Whatever else divides us, let us be absolutely united in saying that the people who perpetrate hate crime—that is what it is—of that nature will never be allowed to win, because Scotland will stand united against them, and that unity will always prevail. *[Applause.]*

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11452&i=104062#ScotParlOR>

TOP

Holocaust

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-11402 Kenneth Gibson (SNP): Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – That the Parliament commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, which began on 19 April 1943 and ended on 16 May 1943; notes that, in the lead up to the uprising, shortly after the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, more than 440,000 Jews were confined to an area of the city that was just 1.3 square miles in size and which was later sealed by a brick wall patrolled by armed guards; understands that residents of the ghetto were forced to live in appallingly squalid conditions, with an average of 7.2 people per room, and that the food rations supplied to the ghetto by the German authorities were not sufficient to sustain life; is aware that, although tens of thousands of Ghetto inhabitants died of starvation and disease, this was not happening fast enough for the Nazi authorities; recognises that, in July 1942, Heinrich Himmler, Reichsfuhrer SS, ordered that Warsaw's Jews were to be removed and, within two months, it was estimated that 265,000 Jews had been deported from the Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka extermination camp, while more than 20,000 others were sent to forced-labour camps or killed during the deportation process; acknowledges that, in response to the deportations, several Jewish underground organisations formed an armed self-defence unit known as the Jewish Combat Organization, which was led by 23-year-old Mordecai Anielewicz and consisted of around 200 members; notes with sadness that, on 19 April 1943, Himmler sent in SS forces and their collaborators with heavy artillery and backed by tanks and aircraft to liquidate the Warsaw Ghetto, where they were met with heroic resistance from the Jewish Combat Organization, which battled German forces for nearly one month, armed with just a small cache of light weapons; realises, however, that, during this time, the SS razed the ghetto buildings and destroyed the bunkers in which tens of thousands of the remaining residents had hidden and that, on 16 May 1943, the Nazis destroyed Warsaw's Great Synagogue as a symbolic act to

cement their control of the ghetto; welcomes the fact that the 75th anniversary will be commemorated by the people of Warsaw laying yellow daffodils upon the grave of Marek Edelman, the last surviving uprising commander, and hopes that the bravery of the Jewish resistance fighters who stood up to genocidal oppression will be commemorated internationally for years to come.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11402>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Occupied Territories

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op) [133735] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether any UK-supplied military-related equipment has been used in Israeli police or military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the last three years.

Alistair Burt: The UK has exported a number of items to Israel over the last three years, including body armour, equipment to deal with military improvised explosive devices, and components for targeting equipment, military communications, tanks and military support aircraft and vehicles. We do not collect data on the use of equipment after sale. UK arms exports are subject to export controls. All decisions to approve export licences to Israel are considered on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (Consolidated Criteria). Decisions are based on the most up-to-date information and analysis available, including reports from our overseas network and military contacts. The Consolidated Criteria provide a thorough risk assessment framework and require us to consider the impact of providing equipment and its capabilities. We do not issue export licences where, for example, we assess there is a clear risk that the goods might be used for internal repression. We keep our approach to all countries under continual review.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-21/133735/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL6399] To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last made representations to the government of Israel about arrests, treatment in custody, detentions, and trials of young Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem; and what was the result of those representations.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities about the situation for Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. The Minister for the Middle East most recently raised this matter with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 27 February. We have also offered to arrange expert-to-expert discussions focussed on addressing the sensitive issue of children in detention with the Israeli Government. This offer remains in place and we hope Israel will take us up on it.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-15/HL6399/>

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL6400] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to discuss with the government of Israel ways of preventing violations of the human rights of young people in the Occupied Territories, with full consideration as to the best interests of the child, reduced plea bargaining, suspended and community sentences, the use of civilian judges or magistrates, the improvement of court translation services, and the introduction of restorative justice.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise the issue of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Government of Israel, including the situation for young people. We funded and facilitated the independent report 'Children in Military Custody' by leading British lawyers and have urged Israel to implement the recommendations made in the report. British Ministers and our Ambassador in Tel Aviv have spoken and written to both the Israeli Justice Minister and the Israeli Attorney General to urge Israel to take action on the report. Specifically, we advocate the mandatory use of audio-visual recording of interrogations of minors, a reduction in the use of single hand ties, alternatives to night arrests and for the Israeli authorities to inform detainees more consistently of their legal rights. We are also concerned by the continued transfer of Palestinian child and adult detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-15/HL6400/>

The report referred to above can be read at

http://www.childreninmilitarycustody.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Children_in_Military_Custody_Full_Report.pdf

UNRWA

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL6497] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking to support the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in its work and to address its current financial crisis; and what representations they have made to the government of the United States following that government's decision to withhold more than half its funding to UNRWA in 2018.

Lord Bates: The UK remains unequivocally committed to supporting the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), and has so far provided around £50 million in 2017/18 to help the Agency provide key services to Palestinian refugees across the region including basic education and health. On 15 March 2018 the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa, Alistair Burt, announced that the UK has offered to deliver its next round of financial support earlier than originally planned, to help alleviate the pressure that UNRWA is currently facing. Minister Burt has spoken to United States (US) counterparts to discuss how best to ensure the sustainable delivery of UNRWA's services, and UK officials are also in discussion with US representatives.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-20/HL6497/>

United Nations

UN chief calls for probe into deadly clashes along Israel-Gaza border

The UN chief's call for a probe came as the Security Council convened an emergency meeting so its members could be briefed on the deadly incidents.

Thousands of Palestinians marched to Gaza's border with Israel earlier Friday to protest the long-standing blockade of the enclave. A UN political official said the Palestinian

Health Ministry confirmed that 15 Palestinians were killed and more than 1,000 were injured, including by teargas suffocation.

A [statement](#) issued by a UN spokesman said the Secretary-General is deeply concerned by the reports of the deadly clashes and that he appealed to those concerned to refrain from any act that could lead to further casualties, particularly measures that could place civilians in harm's way. ...

Meanwhile, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, the deputy UN political affairs chief, told the Security Council that around 30,000 people participated in and around the March at various locations in Gaza. Soon after the demonstrations started, the situation turned deadly in several spots.

Some of the casualties were reportedly the result of live ammunition used by Israeli security forces during the March. Other casualties followed armed clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, including the shelling of a Hamas observation point.

Mr. Zerihoun, who is the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, said reports indicate that most of the demonstrators stayed well away from the border fence and were not violent.

"However, there are also reports that some protestors engaged in stone-throwing and violent behavior; some reportedly carrying weapons," he added. He told the Council that according to reports from Israeli security forces, militants tried to get through the fence in an attempt to plant explosives. Palestinians also reportedly sent a nine-year-old girl through the fence, but Israeli forces were able to send her safely back.

Hamas leaders were reportedly also present at some of the gatherings.

Violence also broke out in the West Bank, where an estimated 900 Palestinians demonstrated, mostly in cities such as Ramallah and Hebron. According to the Red Crescent, 27 Palestinians were wounded in clashes near Nablus, he said.

"Prior to the March, Israel had increased its forces along the border, deploying snipers, special units and drones, and sent out warnings that it would act to prevent any breach of the border fence or violations of Israel's sovereignty," Mr. Zerihoun noted. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/03/1006341>

Security Council Members Condemn Killing of Palestinian Civilians in Clashes at Israel-Gaza Border after Peaceful Protest Turned Violent

The Security Council members, in an emergency meeting tonight, condemned the killing of civilians in Gaza during a peaceful protest that had erupted in violence. ...

Mansour Ayyad Sh. A. Alotaibi (Kuwait) said that today, the world had seen the extent to which the Israeli State was arrogant and unjust. Israel's illegitimate expansionist activities continued in flagrant violation of Council resolution 2334 (2016). He firmly condemned Israel's practices. "Let us be clear here, what happened today was a peaceful demonstration to express their desire for their legitimate rights. These were defenceless people," he said, stressing that the perpetrators of the attacks against the Palestinians must be brought to justice. Palestine could not be the exception to the international commitment to protect civilians from atrocities and grave violations. ...

Walter Miller (United States) regretted that Israel was not able to participate in the meeting due to the Passover holiday. It was vital that the Council be balanced in its approach to all matters before it and an arrangement should have been found allowing for all parties to participate. The United States was deeply saddened by the loss of life in Gaza and urged those involved to take steps to lower tensions and reduce the risk of new clashes. ...

Vladimir K. Safronkov (Russian Federation) urged both sides to demonstrate restraint and ensure the protection of civilians. Diplomatic efforts must be strengthened to de-escalate tensions. The Russian Federation would work with regional partners to consolidate Palestinian parties. That was a precondition for the economic recovery of

Gaza and to realize the aspiration of the Palestinian people. ...

Jonathan Guy Allen (United Kingdom) regretted that Israeli colleagues were unable to participate in the meeting. His delegation was appalled by the deaths and injuries suffered during the incident in Gaza. "There must be an immediate end to the violence and we call for calm and restraint," he said, adding that all parties must engage constructively to bring an end to the violence. An urgent and durable agreement was needed to address the underlying causes of the conflict. The United Kingdom remained committed to supporting vulnerable Gazans, including through UNRWA, and encouraged all parties to work towards a durable solution. A renewed commitment for negotiations towards a two-State solution was needed. ...

Carl Orrenius Skau (Sweden) said he was appalled by the loss of life, including Palestinian children. The events must be immediately and properly investigated by the authorities. The use of force must always be proportional and lethal force must always be used as a last resort. Israel must uphold international human rights law and the right to peaceful protest. ...

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, called for an immediate end to the massacre and for bringing the perpetrators to justice. The Council must take a stance and condemn the massacre while providing protection for the Palestinian people. He said he came before the Council with "a sense of repugnance and urgency". ... The majority of those killed had been participating in a peaceful demonstration marking the forty-second anniversary of Land Day, when six Palestinians had been killed while protesting against Israel's illegal expropriation of Palestinian land, he said. ...

Today's demonstration had been meant to begin six weeks of peaceful protests leading up to the commemoration of Al-Nakba, marking 70 years of the expulsion of 800,000 Palestinians from their homes and lands. "Today's vicious attacks by Israel against unarmed and unprotected Palestinian civilians were premeditated and deliberate," he said. Israeli officials had been preparing for them with provocative, violent rhetoric, which had led Amnesty International to issue a warning on Thursday to the Israeli occupying forces to refrain from using excessive force. In addition to snipers, the Israeli officials had used live ammunition against unarmed civilians, unleashing attack dogs and occupying forces.

"We call on the Council to swiftly uphold its Charter duties and the integrity and authority of its resolutions in light of the violations and provocations against the rights and legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people," he said. The international community must condemn unequivocally Israel's criminal and illegal actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel must be held fully accountable for its crimes. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13273.doc.htm>

Briefing Palestinian Rights Committee, Permanent Observer Urges Nations to Guard against 'Creeping Danger' of One-State Reality

The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine ... urged States to guard against the "creeping danger" of a one-State reality, as the Palestinian Rights Committee considered the situation on the ground in the territory occupied by Israel and the "destabilizing" impact of sharp humanitarian cuts by the United States.

Riyad Mansour, briefing the Committee — known formally as the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People — recalled that the international community had stood united following the United States provocative decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem and recognize the city as the capital of Israel. In the Security Council, 14 out of 15 members had voted in defence of past resolutions deeming any changes in Jerusalem's legal status to be illegal, null and void. In response to a subsequent General Assembly vote, the United States had cut its support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the

Near East (UNRWA) by more than 50 per cent, while also eliminating a \$48 million food programme for the people of the Gaza Strip.

Noting that the United States Administration had recently decided to expedite its embassy move — now planned for 14 May — he emphasized that all those actions would compound the outrage of the Palestinian people. ...

Recalling the proposal by Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, to convene an international summit in mid-2018, as well to create a mechanism to salvage the two-State solution and end the Israeli occupation, he said Arab ministers were meeting with Security Council members to push forward his nation's 2011 application for full admission to the Organization. Warning against the "creeping danger" of the one-State reality, he said such efforts were a way to help protect the two-State solution. Engagement was also under way on the implementation of Council resolution 2334 (2016), which upheld the illegality of the Israeli settlements and the principle of differentiation between "Israel proper" and the Occupied Territory. ...

... without addition 2018 funds, UNRWA would be forced to eliminate several of its activities ... Expressing particular concern over the increasingly fragile situation in the Gaza Strip, where 1.2 million Palestinian refugees lived, he said the Agency provided food to thousands there and had created much-needed mental health clinics. The largest humanitarian agency in Gaza could not continue to function "with its hands tied behind its back", he stressed. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gapal1404.doc.htm>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Religious Freedom

Fiona Burce (Conservative) [134207] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many posts there are in his Department relating to policy on freedom of religion or belief.

Mark Field: Many departments within the FCO promote freedom of religion and belief as part of their work. The same is true of staff at Embassies and High Commissions overseas. It is therefore not possible to give an exact figure for the number of staff working on this issue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-26/134207/>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

** European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

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

Notice of amendments

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2017-2019/0079/18079-R\(a\).pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2017-2019/0079/18079-R(a).pdf)

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

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>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 4 days**

Creating a Parliament for Wales (closing date 6 April 2018)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=292>

Integrated Communities Strategy green paper (closing date 5 June 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

TOP

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