

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

Prime Minister's Questions

Jeremy Corbyn (Labour): ... We should also reflect on the fact that Doreen and Neville Lawrence fought for years to get justice for the death of their son. The Macpherson inquiry showed that institutional racism was a major factor in the inquiry. We need to drive out institutional racism in all its forms, wherever it raises its head within our society.

The Prime Minister: It is absolutely right that across this House we should all be absolutely clear in our determination to ensure that we stamp out racism in every form.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-04-25/debates/0B64A943-B80B-4AAF-8B88-10F22D0CCFD3/Engagements#contribution-9FD2F1ED-A7D2-4DB7-9D91-B5DA8CCADC20>

Prime Minister's Questions

Theresa Villiers (Conservative): Does the Prime Minister agree that events since the very powerful debate on anti-Semitism that we held in this Chamber have demonstrated that Labour is still not taking these problems seriously and that it now needs to take urgent action to root out this form of racism from its party?

The Prime Minister: Of course, my right hon. Friend raises an extremely important issue. As I said at the beginning in response to the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, it is important that everybody across the House takes action to stamp out racism in all its forms. I include anti-Semitism in that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-04-25/debates/0B64A943-B80B-4AAF-8B88-10F22D0CCFD3/Engagements#contribution-25FB2263-B2CA-40E1-AB83-11E3DBA31E0B>

House of Commons Written Answers

Social Media: Antisemitism

Tulip Siddiq (Labour) [136145] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to establish codes of conduct for social media companies and industry bodies on the treatment of antisemitic content on their platforms.

Margot James: We treat all hate crime with equal seriousness. There is simply no

place for treating victims differently regardless of their race, religion, gender identity, sexuality or disability.

As announced by the Prime Minister in her speech on 6 February, we intend to publish the Government response to the Internet Safety Strategy consultation in the spring. This will include further details about our social media code of practice which will help tackle abusive conduct online.

The Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism's Cyber Hate Working Group has been engaging with industry and one of its achievements is the agreement of a 'Best Practice' document which is published by the Anti-Defamation League and has been signed by all the major companies based in the United States, but does not specifically call for the removal of illegal content within 24 hours.

The Government supports the European Commission's initiative to agree a second generation of this agreement, which commits the signatories to removing illegal hate speech within 24 hours.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-17/136145/>

The Prime Minister's speech referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-standards-in-public-life-6-february-2018>

The Best Practice guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.adl.org/best-practices-for-responding-to-cyberhate>

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Westminster Hall Debate

Protecting Children in Conflict Areas

col 367WH Stephen Twigg (Labour Co-op): ... Child protection is central to UNRWA's work. Given the volatile nature of the region, Palestinian refugee children have faced enormous challenges, including as a consequence of the conflict in Syria, the impact of the Israeli occupation and the blockade of Gaza, and simply the protracted nature of their displacement. Even faced with all those crises, UNRWA has come up with innovative ways in which to ensure that children caught up in them are protected and given an education. When the Select Committee visited Jordan and Lebanon, we visited an UNRWA school in Jordan, and were impressed by the quality of education provided for those Palestinian children.

In Syria, UNRWA has developed a series of self-learning materials for children in hard-to-reach or besieged areas who have been out of education for prolonged periods. A series of summer learning activities and catch-up classes is provided to students who have missed out on education, to help them to catch up with their peers. The agency also runs recreational spaces supervised by teaching staff and support counsellors, where refugee children can learn and engage in recreational activities, hopefully free from the threat of violence. In 2012, UNRWA launched its own education TV channel, broadcasting from Gaza and providing additional educational support to students and parents. It broadcasts English, maths, Arabic and science lessons to refugee children across the region, to ensure they do not miss out on learning the vital skills they need for their future.

I urge the Government, and the Minister if she has time in her response, to both reaffirm the UK's long-standing commitment to UNRWA, and say that we will work with other donors to ensure that funding cuts by the US do not hit the vital work it does. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-04-25/debates/DD7E5F64-014A-4D65-8A8B-45446AA55B00/ProtectingChildrenInConflictAreas>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

International Development Fund

2. Ivan McKee (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what scope there is through its international development fund to support projects that are not in its four partner countries, Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia and Pakistan. (S5O-02008)

The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan): Our new international development strategy, which was published in 2016, focuses our work—as Ivan McKee said—on four partner countries with which we have strong historical and contemporary links to ensure that our £10 million international development fund has the greatest impact. Scottish organisations working in any country whose human development scores medium or low on the current United Nations human development index are eligible to apply to our small grants programme for feasibility or capacity-building grants of up to £10,000.

Ivan McKee: I agree with the strategy of focusing on four countries to ensure maximum impact. However, retaining flexibility to fund projects in other countries enables us to respond to specific needs as they arise and provide support. As the minister will be aware, I recently visited Palestine—a country that is badly in need of development support. Will the minister meet me to discuss specific projects in the occupied west bank that would benefit from some limited Scottish Government funding support?

Dr Allan: I am more than happy to meet Ivan McKee to hear the concerns that he wishes to raise around that issue. I will mention in passing that in the past we have provided one-off humanitarian funding for Gaza. The Scottish Government also sought to be helpful to firefighters in Scotland who were seeking to make sure that a fire engine made its way to Palestine to assist people in that part of the world.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11482&i=104248#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-11869 John Finnie (Green): Scottish Parliament – That the Parliament notes with growing concern the reputational damage that it considers is caused to it by the continual hosting of visits by representatives of what it sees as the apartheid regime of the state of Israel, such as the visit on 24 April 2018 of the Ambassador to the UK, Mark Regev. <http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11869>

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Other Relevant Information

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN human rights expert to visit UK to assess racism post Brexit vote

The UN Special Rapporteur on racism, Tsendayi Achiume, will conduct an official visit to the UK from 30 April to 11 May 2018, indicating her mission will pay particular attention to the impact of Brexit on racial equality in the country.

“My mission across the country, including stops in London and Belfast, will focus on explicit incidents of racism and related intolerance, as well as attention to structural forms of discrimination and exclusion that may have been exacerbated by Brexit,” she said.

“Xenophobic discrimination and intolerance aimed at refugees, migrants and even British racial, religious and ethnic minorities will also be an important focus.”

The Special Rapporteur said she would look at discrimination in the administration of justice and policing, counter-terrorism, and obstacles to full enjoyment of economic, social and political rights. She said she would also examine the status of extreme right-wing political parties, and the impact of racist and xenophobic hate speech - including such expressions by political leaders - on racial equality in the country. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22991&LangID=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

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

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

Report Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-04-25/debates/A9F4CE42-D434-4DC4-8DAE-799A1265BB8A/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-04-25/debates/A9F4CE42-D434-4DC4-8DAE-799A1265BB8A/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

Ministerial StatementL European Union (Withdrawal) Bill: Clause 11

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-04-25/debates/18042575000008/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)BillClause11](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-04-25/debates/18042575000008/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)BillClause11)

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>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

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

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

Home Education (closing date 2 July 2018)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/home-education-call-for-evidence-and-revised-dfe-a/>

Ecclesiastical exemption and guidance on scheduled monuments (closing date 13 July 2018)

<https://beta.gov.wales/ecclesiastical-exemption-and-guidance-scheduled-monuments>

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