

# 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

**Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat)** [905038] What steps his Department is taking to tackle antisemitism.

**James Brokenshire:** Anti-semitism must be understood for what it is – racism against Jewish people. There can be no excuses for anti-semitism. My Department has led the way across government in tackling anti-semitism, as my Rt Hon Friend, Sajid Javid, highlighted in this House on 17 April. This requires actions, not just words, as this government is doing.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/905038/>

*The comments referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-04-17/debates/9D70B2B4-39D7-4241-ACF8-13F7DFD8AEB2/Anti-Semitism>

#### Social Media: Radicalism

**Angela Eagle (Labour)** [137474] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent meetings he has had with social media companies to discuss the (a) prevalence, (b) removal and (c) prevention of hate speech and other extreme content on social media platforms.

**Victoria Atkins:** On 19 December 2017 the Minister responsible for Hate Crime Baroness Williams attended a seminar on online hate that was arranged by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The seminar included representatives from Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Twitter. Officials will continue to engage with social media companies about what more they can do to tackle online hate crime. The Home Office is also engaging social media companies in relation to wider harmful content.

Officials meet regularly with companies involved in the establishment of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, to seek continued improvements in their response to preventing terrorist use of the internet. In addition, officials are also reaching out to smaller companies to assist them in their efforts of stopping terrorist exploitation of their platforms.

Officials are also working with the internet industry to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse online. This includes the removal of illegal images and combating grooming.

## House of Lords Oral Answers

### Muslims: Population Growth and Sharia Law

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP):** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of figures from the Office for National Statistics showing that the Muslim population of England grew 10 times faster than the general population between 2001 and 2016; what is their estimate of future growth; and what is their assessment of the impact of that trend on the relationship between Sharia and domestic law.

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford):** My Lords, the ONS is charged with the collection and publication of statistics related to the economy, population and society of the UK. It is independent from government. The Government have made no assessment of the current or future growth of the Muslim population, or that of any other faith, in England and its impact. The Government recently confirmed in their response to the independent review of sharia law that sharia law has no jurisdiction in England and Wales.

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch:** My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for that reply, but I am afraid it is not really adequate. Good Muslims must follow Muhammad's example and impose sharia law on their hosts when they are strong enough to do so. ...

Well, let's talk about it. Several of our local authorities will soon be Muslim-majority and anger is already rising among our kufr working class at the Islamification of their communities.

First, I again ask the Government whether they will require all teaching in our mosques and madrassas to be in English.

Secondly, I yet again ask them to foster an open national debate about Islam to include our Muslim friends so that we can all understand with what we may be dealing in a few years' time.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, I think your Lordships' House would agree that points about good Muslims and bad Muslims are not for this House. I was just wondering whether I, in that context, was a good Catholic or a bad Catholic, but I do not think that sort of thing has any place in your Lordships' House or in society. We do not prescribe English being taught in madrassas, but we absolutely acknowledge that English language skills are fundamental to taking advantage of all the opportunities of living in modern Britain—getting a job, mixing with people and playing a full part in community life. The Government have no plans to hold a national debate on Islam.

**Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Labour Co-op):** My Lords, does the noble Baroness agree that this great country of ours has always accepted immigrants of different faiths, traditions and cultures, and that tolerance, respecting of difference and accepting the rule of law as determined by Parliament must always be the way we go forward, along with standing up to Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and any other form of hate that seeks to divide us?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I could not agree more wholeheartedly with the noble Lord. He and I are of Irish descent and first-generation Irish respectively. In fact, when we look around your Lordships' House and this country, there would not be many of us if we did not have immigration.

**Lord Paddick (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, is the Minister aware that domestic law in most Muslim-majority countries is based on modern western legal systems and that sharia is actually a moral code that requires Muslims, among other things, to be just and fair in their dealings with everyone and always to promote what is good and to prevent what is wrong? Will she join me and the overwhelming majority of this House in

celebrating the appointment today of the first British-Pakistani, born of Muslim parents, to hold one of the great offices of state?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I certainly agree with the first part of the noble Lord's question and am very pleased to be able to join him in welcoming Sajid Javid as our new Home Secretary. While I have an opportunity, I also pay tribute to my right honourable friend Amber Rudd.

**The Lord Bishop of Leeds:** My Lords, does the Minister agree that a prerequisite to any intelligent discussion of Islam or any other religion should pay attention to the ninth commandment, which is that you will not bear false witness against your neighbour?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The right reverend Prelate is right. I was just trying to think of my 10 commandments and might have forgotten some of them. ...

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated):** My Lords, will the Minister launch an investigation into the growth in the number of people named Pearson in this country and assess what effect it is having on racial harmony?

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I get the noble Baroness's point.

**Lord Elton (Conservative):** My Lords, the trouble with your Lordships' treatment of the noble Lord, Lord Pearson, is that you will not listen when he actually talks sense. There are a number of points which he raises which your Lordships should have the courage to examine, rather than simply denigrate his approach to them. One such point is the implication for democratic trends in this society, which is equally a subject of interest, but in a totally different context, in Northern Ireland. It is not a subject that should be entirely brushed under the carpet until things change.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** My Lords, I certainly was not denigrating the noble Lord's points, save to say that they were not helpful in the context of anything other than singling out one particular faith in society. I think that my noble friend meant demographic rather than democratic. There is certainly demographic change in this country, but it is all to the good because, if we had purely the indigenous population, we would be looking at population decline and therefore some major problems in meeting employment need.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-04-30/debates/3CD7BEEC-E4BF-41CC-8880-D5A43D4D3459/MuslimsPopulationGrowthAndShariaLaw>

## Charity Commission

**Guidance: Charity trustee welcome pack**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-trustee-welcome-pack/charity-trustee-welcome-pack>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Middle East: Peace Negotiations

**Frank Field (Labour)** [136898] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his (a) Israeli and (b) Palestinian counterparts on the Middle East peace process.

**Alistair Burt:** We regularly press both the Israelis and Palestinians to engage in direct negotiations that will lead to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. Most recently Lord Ahmad visited Israel and the

Occupied Palestinian Territories (8-12 April) and stressed the need for an end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution with the Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Hamdallah, Israeli Minister of Regional Cooperation Tzachi Hanegbi and Israeli Minister of Justice Ayelet Shaked.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-20/136898/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6952] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they will take in regard to reports of the possible use of chemical weapons by Israeli forces against protestors.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are not aware of any such reports.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-16/HL6952/>

### Ameer As'ad

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6954] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the prison conditions experienced by wheelchair user Ameer As'ad who is on hunger strike in order to be provided with an accessible toilet in Israeli prison.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not raised this specific issue, we urge the Israeli authorities to ensure that prisoners are provided with the necessary health care and other provisions that they require in line with international obligations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-16/HL6954/>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

### Foreign Secretary statement on Prime Minister Netanyahu's Iran speech

Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, said:

The Israeli Prime Minister's presentation on Iran's past research into nuclear weapons technology underlines the importance of keeping the Iran nuclear deal's constraints on Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

The Iran nuclear deal is not based on trust about Iran's intentions; rather it is based on tough verification, including measures that allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency unprecedented access to Iran's nuclear programme.

The fact that Iran conducted sensitive research in secret until 2003 shows why we need the intrusive inspections allowed by the Iran nuclear deal today. The verification provisions in the Iran nuclear deal would make it harder for Iran to restart any such research. That is another good reason for keeping the deal while building on it in order to take account of the legitimate concerns of the US and our other allies.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-prime-minister-netanyahus-iran-speech>

## Scottish Parliament Motions

**S5M-11869.1 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative): Scottish Parliament** – As an amendment to motion S5M-11869 in the name of John Finnie ( Scottish Parliament), leave out from

"hosting" to end and insert "lodging of one-sided parliamentary motions on democratic Israel; considers the labelling of Israel as an 'apartheid regime' inflammatory and far removed from its multi-ethnic and religious basis, which it considers stands out in a region blighted by religious persecution; thanks Ambassador Regev for his ongoing engagement with Scotland in which he continues to promote Scotland-Israel trade, tourism and cultural links, and looks forward again to welcoming the Ambassador and other Israeli diplomats to the Parliament."

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11869.1>

*The Motion to which the above is an amendment was included in Political Affairs Digest of 26 April:*

**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>

**S5M-11963 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative): Israil Direct Flights from Tel Aviv to Edinburgh** – That the Parliament welcomes the announcement that Israil will commence direct flights from Edinburgh to Israel from 13 June 2018; notes that the airline will operate weekly flights from Ben Gurion Airport to Edinburgh; considers that this is an important step in strengthening Scotland-Israel cultural, trade and tourism links, which it believes has been called for by the Building Bridges with Israel Cross Party Group; further considers that VisitScotland must now work to capitalise on this new route to further encourage Israeli tourism to Scotland, which it understands currently often starts in London rather than direct into Scotland, and wishes the airline well ahead of the route's official launch date.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11963>

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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/2018-04-30/debates/8EB87728-0FFE-47BB-A2CA-26C1498F1548/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-04-30/debates/8EB87728-0FFE-47BB-A2CA-26C1498F1548/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

#### **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>

**\*\* Measures to further improve the effectiveness of the fight against illegal content online**  
(closing date 25 June 2018)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-measures-further-improve-effectiveness-fight-against-illegal-content-online\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-measures-further-improve-effectiveness-fight-against-illegal-content-online_en)

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