

# 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

#### Religious Hatred: Islam

**Sarah Jones (Labour)** [133093] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether resources are being allocated to protect mosques and Muslim communities on and around 3 April as a result of letters inciting hate against Muslims and designating that date as punish a Muslim day.

**Victoria Atkins:** The Home Office has already committed £2.4m over three years (2016/2019) to provide protective security measures to places of worship, including mosques, in England and Wales that have been subject or vulnerable to a hate crime.

In addition the Home Office committed £1m, following the Finsbury Park attack last year, to protect faith institutions which are vulnerable to attack on racial, religious or ideological grounds.

I am writing to the policing lead to reiterate Government support.

More broadly, operational decisions about the allocation of police resources are a matter for Chief Constables.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-16/133093/>

#### Legal Systems: Islam

**Philip Davies (Conservative)** [139436] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department gave any funding to sharia councils in the UK in each in the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Lucy Frazer:** The Ministry of Justice has not funded the operation of sharia councils in the last three years, as these organisations are not part of the justice system. Community organisations may apply to various Government Departments for a range of grants for particular purposes. A list of grant schemes run by government departments can be found at gov.uk. Information on whether sharia councils may have received such grants over this period could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139436/>

## Ministry of Justice

### Coroners Statistics Annual 2017 England and Wales

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/706052/coroners-statistics-bulletin-2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706052/coroners-statistics-bulletin-2017.pdf)

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## Holocaust

### United Nations

#### **Secretary-General's remarks at Second World War's exhibit**

... We see a world in which conflict is proliferating, we see a world in which so many wars are taking place, and so I believe it is absolutely essential to remind us all of the lessons of the Second World War ...

We absolutely need to make sure that in the world, this kind of events do not take place anymore.

... in recent times we see the Neo-Nazi message coming again afloat. We see political movements that either confess their neo-Nazi affiliation, or at least use the symbology, the images, the words, for instance, "blood and soil" – we see it repeated in demonstrations in different parts of the world. This is a cancer that is starting to spread again, and I think it is our duty to do everything possible to make sure that this horrible disease is cured, and the memory of all those that managed to defeat Nazism in 1945, that memory allows us to defeat any form of neo-Nazism in today's time.

We cannot forget the worst crime of the Nazis, which was of course the Holocaust; it was possible for the Soviet troops still to release a few; unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of the Jews and others has been killed. And again, it is interesting to see how hatred, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred, even anti-Muslims hatred etc, are still again proliferating in the world. ...

It is our duty to do it, because we cannot accept for these ideologies to come back.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-05-09/secretary-general%E2%80%99s-remarks-second-world-war%E2%80%99s-exhibit>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [140561] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2018 to Question 135976, by what criteria he has assessed that Israel's investigation into the killings of protesters in Gaza will be independent and transparent.

**Alistair Burt:** There is an urgent need to entrust the facts of what happened during the recent protests in Gaza. The UK is supportive of an investigation which establishes the facts about the recent violence in Gaza. Given the importance of accountability, we urge that any investigation is independent and transparent, its findings are made public, and if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-02/140561/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-16/135976/>

### **Israeli Settlements: UN Resolutions**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [140563] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to UN Security Council Resolution 2334 adopted in December 2016, what steps his Department has taken to distinguish in the UK's relevant dealings between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK's Policy is to support a two-state solution: a secure Israel living side by side a viable and contiguous Palestinian state which is why we voted for UN Security Council Resolution 2334. The UK's dealings with the state of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories reflect this policy.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-02/140563/>

*The Security Council Resolution referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

### **Israeli Settlements: UN Resolutions**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [140564] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the full adherence to and implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2334.

**Alistair Burt:** UN Security Council Resolution 2334 asks the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of its provisions. We will continue to monitor the situation closely. On 26 March Nikolay Mladenov, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, delivered his most recent report on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-02/140564/>

*The Security Council Resolution referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

## **House of Lords Written Answers**

### **Gaza: Hamas**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL7217] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps, if any, they plan to take in response to the actions of Hamas in Gaza, including discrimination against women, public executions and other human rights breaches as reported by the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK proscribes the military wing of Hamas and maintains a no contact policy with Hamas in its entirety and condemns its acts contrary to human rights. The UK's position on Hamas is clear: Hamas must renounce violence, recognise Israel and accept previously signed agreements. Hamas faces a fundamental decision about whether it is prepared to join efforts for peace, or whether it will continue to use terror and anti-Semitic incitement, with all the terrible consequences for the people of Gaza and Israel. The UK is supportive of the Palestinian Authority fully resuming government functions in Gaza, helping to improve the economic and humanitarian situation and ease the suffering of ordinary Gazans.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-24/HL7217/>

#### **Gaza: Hamas**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL7218] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Hamas has diverted construction materials intended for Gaza to rebuild tunnels into Israel for terrorist purposes.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain deeply concerned by Hamas' attempts to rearm and rebuild militant infrastructure, including the tunnel network, in Gaza. Hamas' Rearmament undermines efforts to improve the situation in Gaza and harms the prospects for peace and stability in the Middle East.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-24/HL7218/>

#### **Palestinians: International Assistance**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL7219] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Palestine regarding the payment of salaries from international aid to convicted terrorists and their families.

**Lord Bates:** No UK aid is used for payments to Palestinian prisoners or their families. UK financial assistance to the PA is only used to help to pay the salaries of health and education public servants in the West Bank. Only named public servants - including nurses, doctors and teachers – from a pre-approved EU list are eligible.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-24/HL7219/>

#### **Gaza: Egypt**

**Baroness Deech (Crossbench)** [HL7220] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Egypt concerning its blockade of Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly raise the closure of the Egypt-Gaza border, and its impact on the population of Gaza, with the Egyptian government. Most recently, our Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy in Cairo raised this with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 April. We encourage Egypt to be as flexible as possible with regard to their plans for the Rafah border crossing.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-24/HL7220/>

#### **Gaza: Antibiotics**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL7265] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effect of the reported shortage of antibiotics in Gaza.

**Lord Bates:** The UK Government is deeply concerned by the reported shortage of antibiotics in Gaza. According to the World Health Organisation, in February 2018 42% of the 516 essential drugs were completely depleted. This includes drugs used in emergency departments and critical units. The healthcare system in Gaza has been further strained by the recent casualties suffered during protests in Gaza, as well as the shortage of electricity and fuel, which could be life-threatening for some patients. As a result of this, the lack of antibiotics and constraints in accessing medical care outside of Gaza, patients face delays in accessing treatment, higher risks of infection and death, and the closures of key services.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-24/HL7265/>

## Gaza: Israel

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL7266] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take to protect Palestinian children from the use of live ammunition by Israeli forces in Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Minister for the Middle East raised the issue of the use of force with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 19 April and our Ambassador to Israel discussed this issue with the Israeli authorities on 24 April. It is plain that Hamas and their operatives have been exploiting these protests for their own benefit, and we have been clear that Israel has the right to secure itself against Hamas and other terrorist groups. I also raised this issue during my visit to Israel on 11 April with the Israeli Minister for Regional Co-operation and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We continue to urge Israel to show restraint and the Palestinians to ensure the protests are peaceful. There is a need to establish the facts, including why such a volume of live fire has been used and what role Hamas has played in the violence. We also reiterate the importance in particular of protecting minors. We welcome Israel's commitment to investigate the conduct of operations and urge that its findings be made public, and if any wrongdoing is found, those responsible be held to account.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-24/HL7266/>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

### UK responds to Iranian airstrikes against Israeli forces

The Foreign Secretary said:

The United Kingdom condemns in the strongest terms the Iranian rocket attacks against Israeli forces. We strongly support Israel's right to defend itself.

We urge Iran to refrain from further actions which will only lead to increased instability in the region. It is crucial to avoid any further escalations, which would be in no one's interest. We also continue to call on Russia to use its influence to press those in Syria to cease their destabilising activity and work towards a broader political settlement.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-responds-to-iranian-airstrikes-against-israeli-forces>

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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>

Scottish Parliament Finance and Constitution Committee Report on Supplementary Legislative Consent Memorandum

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/FCC/2018/5/10/Report-on-European-Union--Withdrawal--Bill-Supplementary-LCM/FCCS052018R5.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>

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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>

### **Antisemitism: Survey of European Jews** (closing date not stated)

<http://www.eurojews.eu/>

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