

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answers

Hate Crime

5. **Simon Hoare (Conservative):** What steps the CPS is taking to implement the Government's plan to tackle hate crime. [905224]

The Solicitor General (Robert Buckland): The Crown Prosecution Service continues to play its part in delivering the cross-Government hate crime action plan. In the last year, 14,480 hate crime prosecutions were completed and the conviction rate was 83.4%.

Simon Hoare: In thanking my hon. and learned Friend for that answer, may I ask him what steps the CPS is taking to improve prosecution rates for disability hate crimes?

The Solicitor General: Disability hate crime has long been a concern of mine, and it is very much the poor relation when it comes to these offences. They are difficult to deal with, because very often victims feel that the incident is part of their normal life and that they should suffer in silence. The message must go out clearly that that should not be the case. I am glad that we there has been an increase in prosecutions and an increase in the use of sentencing uplifts, through which judges can increase sentences to reflect aggravating factors such as disability hate.

Alex Norris (Labour Co-op): Tonight, Nottingham Citizens, of which I am a patron, will launch its "Still No Place For Hate" report. It will highlight the fact that almost a third of people surveyed had experienced hate crime related to protected characteristics and that much of that had gone unreported. What assurances can the Attorney General give people in Nottingham that if they do report such crime, it will be prosecuted properly?

The Solicitor General: I welcome the publication of the report to which the hon. Gentleman refers. I went to Nottingham only a few months ago to visit the east midlands Crown Prosecution Service, and I know that if he works with it—either through me or directly—he will find out more about the actions that it is taking. I assure him that it has a structured plan and takes all strands of hate crime extremely seriously.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-10/debates/A7BD2774-72ED-49BD-9B70-7AE3C7DFC7CD/HateCrime>

The report referred to above is not currently available online

House of Commons Written Answer

Prisoners' Release

Philip Davies (Conservative) [140033] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in order to attend which religious festivals prisoners were released on temporary licence in the latest year for which information is available.

Rory Stewart: Records for 2017 show that prisoners were released to attend religious services at Eid and Easter as well as to attend Sikh Temple, Quaker meetings and Jehovah's Witness services. There were also releases for unspecified religious services.

Facilities for worship are available in each establishment but, as part of restoring links between the offender and wider community, suitable, risk-assessed offenders may attend worship outside the prison to help them adjust to the climate of non-prison worship and mixing with the community. In addition, temporary release for the purpose of maintaining family ties might be timed so as to coincide with religious occasions and offenders may be released for compelling compassionate reasons to attend services such as funerals of close family members, again subject to thorough risk assessment.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-01/140033/>

Department for Education

Schools that work for everyone: Government consultation response

Includes a section about faith schools

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/706243/Schools_that_work_for_everyone-Government_consultation_response.pdf

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answers

Business of the House

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op): A few weeks ago, I and over 50 colleagues from across the House wrote to the Foreign Secretary about the Polish holocaust law. I have not had a response, but I have since learnt that the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum has had thousands of hate-filled emails and communications and holocaust denials. The law was passed by the Law and Justice party, a sister party of the Conservative party. May we have an urgent debate in this place about the Polish holocaust law?

Andrea Leadsom: I certainly share the hon. Gentleman's concern. If he writes to me with details of his letter, I can ask the Foreign Office to reply to him urgently.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-10/debates/6F133A47-8912-44B9-BA34-5C22F0F1C10C/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-FB01A654-66EF-4199-BA59-24A78B20E6ED>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Palestinians: Reconstruction

Stephen Morgan (Labour) [140218] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the international community to honour the reconstruction pledges made at the 2014 Cairo conference.

Alistair Burt: The UK has disbursed its £20 million pledge of early recovery assistance made at the 2014 Gaza Reconstruction Conference in Cairo. This includes supporting for cash assistance to Palestinian refugees, mine removal and medical treatment. We encourage other donors and the international community to continue work towards reconstruction in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-01/140218/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Gaza: Egypt

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat) [HL7293] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they are having with the government of Egypt in an attempt to find a solution that will ensure a sustainable future for Gaza.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly discuss the situation in Gaza with the Egyptian authorities and welcome Egyptian efforts to facilitate the return of the legitimate Palestinian Authority (PA). Most recently, our Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy in Cairo discussed these issues with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 April. We encourage all those involved to engage in good faith, in order to allow the PA to resume fully its government functions in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-25/HL7293/>

Downing Street

PM call with Prime Minister Netanyahu

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister held a telephone call with the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu earlier today.

The Prime Minister condemned the Iranian rocket attacks against Israeli forces, and said we strongly support Israel's right to defend itself against Iranian aggression.

The Prime Minister noted our statement calling on Iran to refrain from any further attacks, and for calm on all sides.

They agreed it was vital for the international community to continue working together to counter Iran's destabilising regional activity, and for Russia to use its influence in Syria to prevent further Iranian attacks.

The Prime Minister reiterated our position on the Iran nuclear deal, noting that we and our European partners remain firmly committed to ensuring the deal is upheld, as the best way of preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-10-may-2018>

United Nations

Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East

The Secretary-General followed with utmost concern reports overnight of missile launches from Syria targeting Israeli positions and retaliatory strikes by the Israel Defense Forces, that followed earlier strikes in Syria on Tuesday, 8 May. He notes with relief today's partial normalization of the situation.

The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) has maintained contact with the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces, urging both parties to exercise maximum restraint and abide by their obligations under the Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

The Secretary-General urges for an immediate halt to all hostile acts and any provocative actions to avoid a new conflagration in the region already embroiled in terrible conflicts with immense suffering of civilians.

The Secretary-General reiterates the United Nations unwavering support to long term de-escalation efforts, and stability in the Middle East. The United Nations will continue to advance and support all efforts aimed at further de-escalation in the region. In this context, the Secretary-General reiterates that the conflict in Syria should be brought to an end with a political solution through the Geneva intra-Syrian talks, as stipulated in resolution 2254 of the Security Council.

The Secretary-General calls on the Security Council to remain actively seized of the matter and shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter. He stands ready to work closely with all its members in this regard.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-05-10/statement-attributable-spokesman-secretary-general-situation-middle>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

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

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

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

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/>

TOP

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