

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

Contents

Home Affairs
Israel

Relevant Legislation
Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Discrimination

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [132763] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if he will make an assessment of the adequacy of the list of protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 and in Article 14 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Victoria Atkins: The protected characteristics provided for in Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 reflect the progressive development over time of the UK's world leading approach to equalities legislation, covering all those required by EU law, together with "marriage and civil partnership". Protections available across the range of protected characteristics exceed EU requirements, as they include proscription of unlawful discrimination by providers of goods and services because of age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

Article 14 (non-discrimination) of the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights works differently from the Equality Act 2010 by providing for a right not to be discriminated against, on various grounds, in respect of the other rights set out in the Convention. Section 1 of, and Schedule 1 to, the Human Rights Act 1998 give Article 14 further effect in UK domestic law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-15/132763/>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Newspaper Press

Joan Ryan (Labour) [141668] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on Al-Hayat Al-Jadida's description on 5 April 2018 of Israel as a colonialist satanic plant.

Alistair Burt: The UK strongly condemns any language or actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. Our sustained support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding which requires the PA to

commit to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle, as is demonstrated by my statement regarding President Abbas' recent remarks at the Palestinian National Congress, which were deeply concerning. On the whole President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority have shown a commitment to non-violence and a two-state solution. President Abbas restated his commitment to the two-state solution on Friday 4 May, and through our financial assistance, the UK will continue to support a stable PA which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141668/>

Palestinians: Antisemitism

Joan Ryan (Labour) [141669] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on an advisor to the PA President, Mahmoud Al-Habbash, saying that European Jews had a monopoly over the economy.

Alistair Burt: The UK strongly condemns any language or actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. Our sustained support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding which requires the PA to commit to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle, as is demonstrated by my statement regarding President Abbas' recent remarks at the Palestinian National Congress, which were deeply concerning. I do not believe that these remarks were consistent with the commitment to non-violence and a two-state solution which President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority have shown. President Abbas restated his commitment to the two-state solution on Friday 4 May, and through our financial assistance, the UK will continue to support a stable PA which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141669/>

Palestinians: Schools

Joan Ryan (Labour) [141670] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the decision of its Ministry of Education to devote broadcasts on school radio stations to the life of terrorist Khalili Al-Wazir.

Alistair Burt: The UK strongly condemns any language or actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. Our sustained support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding which requires the PA to commit to the principle of non-violence and address allegations of incitement in the education curriculum. We raise issues of incitement in the education sector in our conversations with the PA Ministry for Education and Higher Education.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141670/>

Palestinians: Terrorism

Joan Ryan (Labour) [141671] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 18 April 2018 to Question 135640, on Palestinians: terrorism, whether the British Consul-General in Jerusalem has met with senior Palestinian representatives to discuss the decision by the Palestinian Authority to pay directly the salaries of convicted terrorists; and if she will make a statement.

Alistair Burt: The Palestinian Authority (PA) has not yet confirmed or announced that it will provide payments to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails directly. The British Consul General in Jerusalem met with Saeb Erekat, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), on April 27th and directly raised the issue. The Secretary of State also raised her concerns about payments to prisoners when she last met with the Palestinian Foreign Minister and I will be raising them with the Finance Minister later this month, calling for the payments to be transparent, needs based and affordable.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141671/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-13/135640/>

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Joan Ryan (Labour) [141672] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister for the Middle East of 18 April 2018, Official Report, column 309, how and by whom spending is audited to ensure that there is no diversion to fund terrorist tunnels or other terrorist activity.

Alistair Burt: DFID has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and has robust controls against the diversion of aid including towards terrorist activity. These include extensive due diligence of partners, mapping the flow of our funds and where required, tight earmarking of funds. DFID's project spending in the OPTs is subject to annual, independent financial audit. The overall programme is also subject to the regular audit cycle of DFID's Internal Audit Department and the National Audit Office. DFID complies with UK and international counter terrorism legislation and our funding agreements commit partners to understand and comply with international counter terrorism legislation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141672/>

House of Lords Select Committee on International Relations

Middle East: Time for New Realism – follow-up

Q1 ... Alistair Burt Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) (Joint with the Department for International Development): ... Israel, the Middle East peace process and the United States ... are certainly areas of real concern, but our engagement with Israel and, we hope, with the Middle East peace process will be significant. ... The position between Israel and the Palestinians is not a stable one in which the status quo will hold. It is changing, and changing for the worse. Accordingly, the United Kingdom has to be actively involved in efforts to resolve that issue, and we wait to hear what the envoys have to say. ...

Q2 ... Alistair Burt: ... The United Kingdom has extraordinary reach in the region. As I suspect we all know from visits, it is very humbling to be told in the first instance by those we meet, "You understand us better than anyone else", before they tell us, "And it's all your fault". So we are somewhere in between this. But we have a reach. Each and every one of those states believes that they have a particular relationship with the United Kingdom because of what we have been in the region. ...

Q5 Lord Grocott (Labour): ... As far as Israel-Palestine is concerned ... numbers of Palestinians have been shot by Israeli forces, perhaps not all but a number of them almost certainly unarmed. One of our unanimous recommendations then was that the Government should consider recognition of the Palestinian state. The Government were pretty lukewarm to that suggestion, to put it mildly ... Is that something that the

Government are committed to, and, in the absence of that, what else might they consider doing?

Alsitair Burt: ... The phrase used in the response—that the UK will recognise a Palestinian state when it is in the best interests of peace—remains the position. That position, as you can all see, is very fluid. It means that such a decision could be taken at any time, but that remains the situation. ...

... we do not agree with the movement of the embassy to Jerusalem, although I have to say that the response to it has been interesting. I remain very concerned that the response on the streets in relation to the Middle East peace process is sometimes at odds with what we hear from Governments. In recent years Governments have been working with the reality, particularly in terms of relationships with Israel. ...

When we had the incident last year at Temple Mount, or Haram al-Sharif, and people came out on to the streets very quickly, they came out not because the politicians had asked them to do so but because they knew how important things were. It was a spontaneous response. It put a flicker of recognition in people's minds that what had previously been largely a nationalistic and secular issue between the Palestinians and Israel in relation to land and a recognition of statehood also had a religious dimension in the region that could be kindled and could grow at any time ...

... Gaza remains a desperate situation. There is more hopelessness on the West Bank, as years of preparation for statehood appear to be getting nowhere. Both those situations can only give rise to something worse in those areas. By contrast, if there is an agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis, states that want a different relationship with Israel in the region will be able to get it. You plug the Israeli economy into the rest of the economy, where the demographics urgently require many more jobs; you take away the animus of both Hezbollah and Hamas in relation to their view of Israel and therefore of some of its partners; and you ease the tensions with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. ...

Q6 ... **Alistair Burt:** ... the United Kingdom believes that the final status of Jerusalem has not yet been settled. ... We are quite clear that Jerusalem is to be a shared capital, and if, at any stage in the future, the United Kingdom embassy is to move to west Jerusalem, there will also be one in east Jerusalem for a Palestinian state, I would imagine. That is our view. The final status of Jerusalem will be settled in the discussions that we hope will take place. ...

Q9 ... **Alistair Burt:** ... Israel's determination as regards its security is a significant priority for the United Kingdom as well. What Prime Minister Netanyahu demonstrated the other day was Israel's anxiety about the situation. We think that he made a case for why there should be a JCPOA, but his fundamental concern about Israel's security is shared by us all. That can be guaranteed only by constant work among all those in the region, including Iran, which needs to recognise that what it sees as its defensive position is not always seen in the same way by others. ...

Q11 **Lord Jopling (Conservative):** Minister, the one thing that unites the United States, Israel and Saudi Arabia is their mutual loathing of Iran. I was surprised recently to become aware—I am sure that you are aware of it—of a report in the Jerusalem press of a recent secret visit by a senior member of the Saudi royal family to Israel. There was speculation that it might have been the Crown Prince himself. Do you see any danger of those three states ganging up and taking measures against Iran which are much more belligerent than scrapping the JCPOA?

Alistair Burt: ... There are deep issues between the states that you have mentioned—Saudi, Israel, Iran and the United States—but, while the rhetoric might be significant, there are also elements in each of these states that recognise the danger of communications being closed and an inability to talk. In each and every one of these cases, there are people who talk to each other in a way that is familiar to a number of colleagues around the table here—away from the public gaze in order to try to find out what will reduce the risk of more cities ending up like the old city of Mosul ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/International-Relations-Committee/Middle-East-Follow-up/TRANSCRIPT%20IR%20Ev%201%2002-05-18%20Burt.pdf>

UK Parliament Early Day Motions

Jonathan Edwards (Plaid Cymru) (1257) Israeli and Iranian reaction to President Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal – That this House expresses grave concern and condemnation over the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel in reaction to President Trump's decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; condemns the decision by the President of the US to defy and undermine the agreement and re-impose economic sanctions on Iran; regrets the intensification of tensions in that region, which is already in turmoil; further condemns the Iranian and Israeli forces for launching attacks on each other in and over Syria; highlights the devastation caused to Syrian civilians and infrastructure which has been enduring its own civil war since 2011, along with playing host to Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran's proxy war; and urges the Government to condemn in the strongest terms those attacks and to work with allies to continue the Iranian nuclear agreement and to extinguish tensions and find a peaceful solution in that region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1257>

Richard Burden (Labour) (1258) 70th anniversary of the Nakba – That this House notes that 15 May 2018 marks 70 years since the Nakba catastrophe in which more than 750,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes; further notes that Palestinian refugees' right of return as recognised by UN Resolution 194 has been blocked by successive Israeli governments; notes that there are now over five million Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and overseas, as well as internally displaced Palestinians living in Israel; notes the restrictions on civil and political rights for refugees in some of those countries and the extreme vulnerability of Palestinian refugees to the conflict in Syria; calls on the UK Government to work to improve the wellbeing of Palestinian refugees in host countries, without prejudice to their rights under international law, and therefore to respond positively to the UN's appeal to offset the funding crisis now facing the vital work of UNRWA, which has been dramatically worsened by the US' decision to withhold \$65 million from the Agency; believes that a just solution for Palestinian refugees based on human rights and international law will be an essential ingredient of durable peace in the Middle East; and further calls on the UK Government to pursue that objective in its international diplomacy.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1258>

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