

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 Written Answers

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006: Prosecutions

Mark Hendrick (Labour Co-op) [145548] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many successful prosecutions have been made under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 in each year since that Act was introduced.

Lucy Frazer: Hate crime of any form is unacceptable and this Government is determined to stamp it out. Sentencing guidelines are clear that hostility towards minority groups should be treated as an aggravating factor – which means offenders face higher maximum penalties.

The Home Office published a Hate Crime Action plan in July 2016, setting out plans for further reducing hate crime, increasing reporting and improving support for victims.

We have some of the toughest laws in the world in this area, but sentencing is a matter for independent judges based on the facts of each case.

The number of offenders found guilty of offences under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 from 2007-2017 can be viewed in the table. Data for 2018 will be published in May 2019.

[Table](#) (Excel SpreadSheet)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-18/145548/>

The Hate Crime Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/543679/Action_Against_Hate_-_UK_Government_s_Plan_to_Tackle_Hate_Crime_2016.pdf

Hate Crime: Convictions

Philip Davies (Conservative) [145562] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were convicted of offences involving racial or religious hatred by offence in each of the last three years.

Lucy Frazer: Hate crime of any form is unacceptable and this Government is determined to stamp it out. Sentencing guidelines are clear that hostility towards minority groups should be treated as an aggravating factor – which means offenders face higher maximum penalties.

The Home Office published a Hate Crime Action plan in July 2016, setting out plans for further reducing hate crime, increasing reporting and improving support for victims.

We have some of the toughest laws in the world in this area, but sentencing is a matter for independent judges based on the facts of each case.

Centrally held information only records offences which are defined in statute as involving racial or religious hatred and this can be accessed via the below link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-justice-system-statistics-quarterly-december-2017>.

Please note some other offences can involve a racial or religiously motivated element. This detailed information may be held on the court records but not reported centrally to the MoJ. To identify all offences with a racial or religiously motivated element would incur disproportionate costs.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-18/145562/>

The Hate Crime Action Plan referred to above can be read at

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Council Tax: Ministers of Religion

Peter Dowd (Labour) [146887] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many dwellings were exempt from council tax in 2016-17 under the class H exemption for unoccupied dwelling held for a minister of religion.

Rishi Sunak: Data on the number of dwellings exempt from council tax by each class of exemption is published at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/659435/Table_5.xlsx

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-22/146887/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Universities: Freedom of Expression

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL7820] To ask Her Majesty's Government how they propose to include representatives of student victims of (1) inhibition of freedom of speech, and (2) disruption of meetings, in the preparation of new guidance to promote freedom of speech at universities.

Viscount Younger of Leckie: At the free speech summit on 3 May 2018 held by my hon. Friend, the Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, it was agreed that the report from the Freedom of Speech in Universities inquiry by the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) would be used as the foundation for a shared approach to free speech.

The JCHR inquiry included evidence from a number of groups including those who had experienced disruption of events and student representatives with a range of experiences related to free speech.

The new guidance will be drafted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, who will work with a number of groups including the National Union of Students.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-05-14/HL7820/>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answers

Prisons

The following two questions both received the same answer

David Hanson (Labour) [145276] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisons have held events to observe (a) Holocaust Memorial Day, (b) National Black History Month and (c) Interfaith Awareness Week in each of the last five years; and what his policy is on prisons observing those events.

Prisons: Holocaust Memorial Day

David Hanson (Labour) [145277] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) effectiveness and (b) potential merits of expansion to other prisons under his jurisdiction of the Empty Spaces project developed by prisoners at Magilligan Prison in Northern Ireland.

Lucy Frazer: Prisons are free to decide locally how they participate in Holocaust Memorial Day and Black History Month. Although chaplaincy teams locally may have marked the event in some way, there has been no national engagement regarding Interfaith Awareness Week. National Prison Radio promotes national support for local initiatives, and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service also provides information to prisons via its staff networks to support prison staff in their participation in local events. We do not collect information centrally on the number of prisons which have held such events.

We have not evaluated the Empty Spaces project which, as it is being conducted in a prison in Northern Ireland, does not fall under our jurisdiction as we are responsible for Prisons in England and Wales.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-17/145276/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-17/145277/>

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House of Commons Written Answer

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Jim Cunningham (Labour) [146099] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how much financial assistance her Department has given to projects in Palestine in each of the last ten years.

Alistair Burt: DFID's Official Development Assistance directly to West Bank and Gaza Strip 2007 to 2016

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
£11.2m	£55.4m	£56.1m	£58.0m	£120.5m	£58.3m	£95.9m	£109.4m	£41.4m	£43.9m

This includes DFID's bilateral ODA to the West Bank and Gaza Strip including DFID's contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for basic services and protection for Palestine refugees in the region. In the National Statistics "Statistics on International Development" the UNRWA contribution is included in DFID's multilateral ODA total. This is due to the OECD DAC international code rules.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-21/146099/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Gaza

Lord Ahmed (Non-affiliated) [HL7812] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the civilian killings in Gaza following the recent protests over the move of the United States embassy to Jerusalem.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are extremely concerned by the scale of the violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, in particular Gaza. Whilst Israel has the right to defend its borders, the use of live fire is deeply troubling, and has led to significant loss of life. The Foreign Secretary discussed the use of live ammunition against protestors in Gaza with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on 16 May. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa also raised this issue with his Israeli counterpart on 13 May and with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 17 May. As the Minister said in his statement of 14 May, we continue to implore Israel to show greater restraint in its use of live fire.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-05-14/HL7812/>

Israel: Bedouin

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL7869] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take to protect the remaining Bedouin communities in the Jordan Valley from the threat of displacement.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is gravely concerned by Israeli proposals to evict Bedouin communities in the Jordan Valley. We have been clear about this with the Israeli authorities and we regularly raise the matter through our Embassy in Tel Aviv. I visited the Bedouin community in Abu Nuwar on 10 April, and subsequently raised concerns about their treatment in meetings with Israeli Ministers and senior officials on 11 April.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-05-14/HL7869/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development

UK aid to provide vital medicine and surgical equipment to struggling hospitals in Gaza

The UK is providing a new package of life-saving support to help treat patients in 11 hospitals under pressure in Gaza, by restocking vital medical supplies including surgical equipment, bandages and medicines following the recent surge in violence.

The funding, announced by Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt ... on a visit to Gaza, will support work by the International Committee of the Red Cross to keep hospitals open and functioning at a time when the healthcare system is under huge strain.

Today's commitment of £1.5 million will also help provide physical rehabilitation services for around 4,000 people.

Speaking from Gaza, Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt said: I am deeply concerned about the worsening situation in the Gaza strip, and today's UK aid package gives a message to the world, and to the people of Gaza, that we have not forgotten them or their plight.

Today's support will help to ensure that hospitals which are under immense pressure are able to cope with the increased number of casualties who need medical and surgical care. It is absolutely vital that the UK steps up to help those suffering and ensure that vulnerable Gazans are able to access treatment to keep them alive.

We have been clear that a political settlement is the only way to ensure lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis alike. All parties must redouble their political efforts and return to the negotiating table, not only to address the deteriorating conditions in Gaza, but to ensure tragedies of the past months are not repeated. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-aid-to-provide-vital-medicine-and-surgical-equipment-to-struggling-hospitals-in-gaza>

Alistair Burt: I'm in Ramallah meeting the Palestinian Authority Ministers of Finance and Education. We discussed the UK's continued support to the Palestinian Authority and the good progress on critical reforms. @UKinJerusalem @DFID_UK

<https://twitter.com/AlistairBurtUK/status/1001802351932518400>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-12448 Sandra White (SNP): Freedom to Run – That the Parliament congratulates the participants of Freedom to Run, a running and cultural exchange between runners from Scotland and Palestine in partnership with the Palestinian organisation, Right to Movement; understands that the project centres on the Palestine and Edinburgh marathons with the whole training process, as well as the cultural exchange, being filmed for a documentary due to be completed in June 2018 with a screening of progress to date on 29 May 2018 at the CCA in Glasgow; notes that in March 2018 runners from Scotland travelled to Palestine to complete the Palestine Marathon and this was reciprocated with runners from the Palestinian group, Right to Movement, travelling to Scotland to complete the Edinburgh Marathon on 27 May, and commends all the participants on this innovative project, which it considers highlights life in Palestine and the realities of living with restrictions on freedom of movement, particularly in the West Bank.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-12448>

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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>

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

**** closes in 6 days**

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/>

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