

# 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

### Scottish Government

#### **Hate crime reporting must continue**

The Scottish Government and Crown Office have published a series of statistics covering hate crime and religiously aggravated offences reported in 2017/18. They show:

- racial crime remains the most commonly reported hate crime, with the number of charges reported - 3,249 - at its lowest level since 2003/4
- sexual orientation aggravated crime is the second most common type of hate crime, with a 3% rise in reporting on last year
- the number of reported incidents relating to disability has risen by 51%, from 188 to 284 charges, since 2016/17
- 642 religiously aggravated charges were reported in 2017/18. Catholicism is the religion that was most often the subject of abuse, accounting for 50% of the charges, and down 17% from 2016/17.
- 43% of victims in religiously aggravated charges were police officers

Community Safety Minister Annabelle Ewing said: "It's reassuring to see more people are coming forward to report hate crime, and in particular disability hate crime. ...

"But I still believe this isn't the full picture and remain concerned that crime motivated by prejudice is underreported and would urge anyone who experiences it to ensure it's reported properly. ...

"Hate crime has no place in Scotland, and we will continue to work with communities to build trust and understanding and, wherever possible, prevent hate crime from happening in the first place."

Chief Superintendent John McKenzie said: "Hate crime is a key priority for Police Scotland. We recognise the deep personal impact it has on individuals, their families and wider communities.

"We are aware that hate crime is often under reported however Police Scotland is fully committed to reviewing and investigating all reports of hate. It is only through reporting offences that we can form a more complete picture of the issue and address it in the most robust manner possible. ...

"We would encourage anyone who has been a victim or witness to a hate incident, to contact the police and report the matter, by calling 101 or 999 if it is an emergency or via one of our third party reporting organisations, details of which can be found on the Police Scotland website."

**To read the full press release see**

<https://news.gov.scot/news/hate-crime-reporting-must-continue>

**Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland 2017-18**

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00536774.pdf>

## Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

### Lord Advocate Welcomes Publication Of Hate Crime Figures

The Lord Advocate, James Wolffe QC, today welcomed the publication of figures on Hate Crime in Scotland. ...

Speaking of the figures the Lord Advocate said: “The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scotland’s independent public prosecution service, is committed to tackling hate crime.

“Crime motivated by hatred is not only a wrong against the individual, but is an affront to our collective values as a community, creating division and fear. That is why we treat it so seriously and why we will continue to do so.

“It is encouraging that many victims of hate crime have the confidence to report this type of offending and we would encourage more to do so.

“People who live in Scotland, regardless of their personal or social circumstances, can be assured that they live in a just society and that they will be protected from crime – and in particular from hate crime.”

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.copfs.gov.uk/media-site/media-releases/1766-lord-advocate-welcomes-publication-of-hate-crime-figures-2>

### Hate Crime in Scotland 2017-18

<http://www.copfs.gov.uk/images/Documents/Statistics/Hate%20Crime%202017-18/Hate%20Crime%20in%20Scotland%202017-18.pdf>

### Hate Crime in Scotland 2010-11 to 2017-18 breakdown by Procurator Fiscal Office

<http://www.copfs.gov.uk/images/Documents/Statistics/Hate%20Crime%202017-18/Hate%20Crime%20in%20Scotland%202010-11%20to%202017-18%20breakdown%20by%20Procurator%20Fiscal%20Office.pdf>

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## Holocaust

### Scottish Parliament Motion

**S5M-12788 Alex Rowley (Labour): Gena Turgel MBE, 1923-2018** – That the Parliament is saddened by the passing of the Holocaust survivor, Gena Turgel, on 7 June 2018, aged 95; recognises that Gena, who was known as the Bride of Belsen, survived the Kraków ghetto, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen, and went on to marry her British liberator, Norman Turgel; understands that she comforted Anne Frank at the Bergen-Belsen camp before the young diarist’s death; commends Gena on dedicating her life to sharing her testimony with hundreds of thousands of young people in schools across the country over many years, and applauds the Holocaust Educational Trust on committing to continue working tirelessly to share Gena’s story to help ensure that her legacy lives on and continues to educate future generations about the Holocaust.

## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Israel: Bedouin

**Lord Judd (Labour)** [HL8283] To ask Her Majesty's Government what bilateral and multilateral steps they are taking to uphold both international law and the principles of the Balfour Declaration to call for Israel to halt plans for the demolition of Khan Al Ahmar, the home of a Palestinian Bedouin community.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 1 June stating that the UK is deeply concerned by the proposed demolition of the village of Khan al-Ahmar, noting the UN has said that the proposed demolitions could amount to “forcible transfer”, in violation of International Humanitarian Law and urging Israel not to proceed. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa visited the community on 30 May to stress UK concerns about the impact of the court case and in his meetings with the Israeli government he urged them to reconsider options so the community did not have to move, and pressed for more Palestinian planning applications to be approved.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-04/HL8283/>

#### Israel: Bedouin

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8327] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they will take following the Israeli High Court ruling to demolish Khan al-Ahmar, a Bedouin village in the West Bank, despite campaigns by European governments to save it.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 1 June stating that the UK is deeply concerned by the proposed demolition of the village of Khan al-Ahmar, noting the UN has said that the proposed demolitions could amount to “forcible transfer”, in violation of International Humanitarian Law and urging Israel not to proceed. The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa visited the community on 30 May to stress UK concerns about the impact of the court case and in his meetings with the Israeli government he urged them to reconsider options so the community did not have to move, and pressed for more Palestinian planning applications to be approved.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-04/HL8327/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-khan-al-ahmar>

#### Israel: Gaza

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8328] To ask Her Majesty's Government why the UK abstained from the vote for an investigation by the UN Human Rights Council into recent killings in Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK's Representative made clear in our statement that the UK fully supports and recognises the need for an independent and transparent investigation, which includes the extent to which Israeli security forces' rules of engagement are in line with international law, and the role Hamas

played in events. The UK abstained on the resolution at the Human Rights Council because it was not impartial, and was unhelpfully unbalanced. We could not support an international investigation that is mandated to look at Israel's actions alone. This would not provide a comprehensive assessment of accountability. It would risk hardening positions on both sides and move us further away from a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The UK has called directly on Israel to carry out a transparent inquiry into the Israeli Defence Forces' conduct at the border fence and to demonstrate how this will achieve a sufficient level of independence. This investigation should include international members and the findings of such an investigation should be made public.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-04/HL8328/>

#### **Israel: Gaza**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8329] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the blocking of a boat from Gaza which contained Palestinians requiring medical assistance and students trying to reach educational facilities away from Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not discussed this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we continue to call on the Government of Israel to ease movement and access restrictions into and out of Gaza. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa raised the importance of urgently improving the situation in Gaza with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister during his visit to the region on 30 May, and the Foreign Secretary raised Gaza with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on 16 May.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-04/HL8329/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8330] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the decision made prior to any court ruling to evict Palestinians from their homes in Silwan to enable Israeli settlers to move in.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly raise our concerns about the situation in East Jerusalem to the Israeli authorities, both bilaterally and in co-operation with EU partners. While we have not raised the specific issue of evictions from Silwan, we are clear that demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (Alistair Burt) visited the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah on 29 May and met a Palestinian family at imminent risk of eviction from their home.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-04/HL8330/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL8331] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding its plans to bar access to the Israeli High Court for Palestinians in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are not aware of plans to bar access to the Israeli High Court for Palestinians in the West Bank. We are aware of a draft law which would seek to insist that petitions to the High Court are only filed by those individuals directly impacted by a law (and not non-governmental organisations or other organisations acting on their behalf). Our Embassy sought clarifications

about this proposed law from the relevant authorities on 15 March.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-04/HL8331/>

## Scottish Parliament Motion

**S5M-12802 Pauline McNeil (Labour): UN Condemns Excessive Israeli Force Against Palestinians** – That the Parliament joins with the UN General Assembly in its reported condemning of Israel for using excessive use force against Palestinian people; understands that over 120 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in Gaza border protests since 30 March 2018, with the highest death toll occurring on 14 May when the United States moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; notes that the resolution asks the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to report back within 60 days on proposals “on ways and means for ensuring the safety, protection and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation, including ... recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism”, and looks forward to examining these recommendations.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-12802>

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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>

European Union (Withdrawal) Bill: Sewel Convention: Commons Statement followed by Q&A  
[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-06-14/debates/EFED14D2-5DB4-498B-BD32-6FEC64815B7E/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)BillSewelConvention](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-06-14/debates/EFED14D2-5DB4-498B-BD32-6FEC64815B7E/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)BillSewelConvention)

Scotland: European Union (Withdrawal) Bill: Lords Statement followed by Q&A  
[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-06-14/debates/8A0EE9B9-5132-4BF5-BB80-ACFD3CFB6407/ScotlandEuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-06-14/debates/8A0EE9B9-5132-4BF5-BB80-ACFD3CFB6407/ScotlandEuropeanUnion(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>

### Scottish Parliament

#### **Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

### **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