

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

Hate Crime

The following two questions both received the same answer

Sarah Champion (Labour) [152184] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will commission a review of hate crime legislation and its operation as recommended by the Law Commission in 2014.

Sarah Champion (Labour) [152185] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will extend the definition of aggravated offences to include crimes motivated by hostility based on disability, sexual orientation and transgender identity as recommended by the 2014 Law Commission review of hate crime legislation.

Lucy Frazer: Hate crime is despicable and has no place in British society. The Government has repeatedly taken action to reduce hate crime, increase reporting and improve support for victims including through the 2016 Hate Crime Action Plan.

The Criminal Justice Act 2003 already offers enhanced sentences powers for any offence which is racially or religiously aggravated, or where the offender demonstrated hostility or was motivated by hostility towards the victim because of their sexual orientation or disability or because they were transgender. Such offences merit an increased sentence within the maximum available for the offence.

The Ministry of Justice keeps the current law, and the Law Commission's recommendations, under review.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-11/152184/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-11/152185/>

The 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_-_](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)

[UK Government s Plan to Tackle Hate Crime 2016.pdf](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: Sentencing

Sarah Champion (Labour) [152186] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the average length in months of custodial sentences for racially

or religiously (a) aggravated offences and (b) non-aggravated offences in (i) 2013, (ii) 2014, (iii) 2015, (iv) 2016 and (v) 2017.

Lucy Frazer: Sections 29 to 32 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 create specific racially or religiously aggravated offences based on offences of wounding, assault, damage, harassment and threatening/abusive behaviour.

The average custodial sentence length in months for a) these specific racially or religiously aggravated offences, and b) their non-aggravated counterparts in (i) 2013, (ii) 2014, (iii) 2015, (iv) 2016 and (v) 2017, can be viewed in the table.

[Table](#) (Excel SpreadSheet)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-11/152186/>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Courts Martial

Chris Elmore (Labour) [151237] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government is providing funding for lawyers at Israeli military courts in the West Bank.

Alistair Burt: The Government has provided funding for legal assistance to Palestinian children who are subjected to Israeli military courts in the West Bank.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-07/151237/>

Middle East

Patrick Grady (SNP) [152211] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will respond to Early Day Motion 1258, on the 70th anniversary of the Nakba.

Alistair Burt: The British Government remains clear that there needs to be a just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the Palestinian refugee question, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1515. We are committed to supporting the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and Palestinian refugees across Middle East. I announced on 15 March 2018 that the UK would deliver its next round of financial support £28 million earlier than planned, to help meet the growing needs of Palestinian refugees across the region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-11/152211/>

The Early Day Motion referred to above can be read at

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

Gaza and West Bank: Elections

Dan Carden (Labour) [153435] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in (a) Israel and (b) the Palestinian Authority on the possibility for holding elections in the West Bank and Gaza; and what assessment he has made of the potential for such elections to take place.

Alistair Burt: We continue to believe that strong, inclusive and democratic institutions, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights, are crucial elements in establishing a viable and sovereign Palestinian State. Genuine and democratic elections across the Occupied Palestinian Territories are a positive goal.

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Gaza

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL8422] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the killing of Palestinian volunteer paramedic Razan al-Najjar by Israeli forces on 1 June; and what assessment they have made of the case for referring the government of Israel to the International Criminal Court for the breach of Rule 25 of the Geneva Convention.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The circumstances of Razan al Najjar's death require urgent clarification. Any targeting of medical personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties would be unacceptable. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raised this with the relevant Israeli authorities on 1 June. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary expressed concern about the loss of Palestinian lives during the Gaza protests when they met Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in London on 6 June. The International Criminal Court Prosecutor has been conducting a Preliminary Examination into the situation in Palestine since 2015 and on 8 April released a statement saying, "any new alleged crime committed in the context of the situation in Palestine may be subjected to my Office's scrutiny". The government respects her independence in this matter.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-06/HL8422/>

Israel: Military Aid

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL8534] To ask Her Majesty's Government what training programmes are delivered by the British army and Joint Forces Command to (1) the Israeli Defence Force in Israel and (2) security forces in the Occupied Territories.

Earl Howe: The British Army and Joint Forces Command do not provide training to the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in Israel, although representatives do participate in Israeli-hosted conferences and visits to share knowledge and experience. Some education and training activities are provided to IDF personnel in the UK, including at the Royal College of Defence Studies.

In the Occupied Palestine Territories (OPTs), the UK Ministry of Defence provides several training programmes to the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF). In the financial year 2017-18 the British Support Team based in Ramallah oversaw the delivery of the following courses to members of the PASF in the OPTs: Building Integrity for Senior Leaders; Strategic leadership; Conflict resolution; Training Needs Analysis; English language; Quality assurance and continual improvement of training delivery; Lessons identification; Media skills. The UK has also provided education and training to PASF personnel in the UK.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-11/HL8534/>

United Nations

Briefing by UN Special Coordinator Nickolay Mladenov to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East

... As detailed in the [the sixth report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016)], no steps were taken during the reporting period to "cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem" as demanded by

the resolution.

Some 3,500 housing units in settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank were advanced, approved or tendered. One-third of those units are in settlements in outlying locations deep in the West Bank. ...

The reporting period has also witnessed an overall increase in demolitions across Area C compared to the previous period ...

I also reiterate the call of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the plans to demolish Khan al-Ahmar – Abu al-Helu to be canceled. ...

The reporting period was characterized by high levels of violence, including rocket attacks from Gaza ...

Since March 30th, during a series of protests in Gaza 135 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) have acknowledged that a number of their members were among those killed. Two Israeli soldiers were also injured during the protests, with at least five other people lightly injured as a result of rockets and mortars launched from Gaza.

Under the cover of the protests Hamas, PIJ and other militants have engaged in violent and provocative acts. Hundreds have approached and attempted to breach the fence, burned tires, threw rocks and fire bombs at Israeli forces, launched incendiary kites and laid improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at the fence. Palestinian protesters also damaged and looted equipment and installations on the Gaza side of the border at the Kerem Shalom crossing. ...

Israel has a duty to protect its citizens but must do so while exercising maximum restraint in the use of live fire, and to not use lethal force, except as a last resort against imminent threat of death or serious injury. The actions of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other groups in Gaza put at risk not only the lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike, but also efforts to ensure a livable future for people of Gaza. They must prevent the launching of rockets and breaching of the fence.

The prevailing lack of decisive steps towards the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza, despite Egypt's best efforts to revive the process, is detrimental to Palestinian aspirations to statehood, contributes to the worsening of the humanitarian crisis and risks escalation.

Further, the recommendation by the Palestinian National Council to suspend key elements of the Oslo Accords, if implemented, would add to the negative trends making a return to meaningful negotiations even more difficult. ...

The reporting period also included several notable prosecutions by Israeli authorities of Palestinians and Israelis for membership in terrorist cells. On 29 March, an Israeli court convicted an Israeli national of membership in a terrorist organization for participating in a price-tag attack against Palestinians. On May 1st, three Palestinians were indicted for planning shooting attacks in the West Bank under the guidance and sponsorship of Hamas. On 27 May, indictments were filed against Palestinians suspected of being members of a cell planning attacks against high-level targets; and on 17 June suspected Palestinian members of another cell, reportedly operated by Hamas as well, were indicted for preparing large bombing and suicide attacks in Israeli cities. ...

On April 30th, during his opening speech at the Palestinian National Council, Palestinian President Abbas made a series of anti-Semitic statements that were widely condemned by the international community. At the height of the Gaza protests, a senior Hamas official called on protestors to "take down the border and tear out their [Israelis] hearts," one of several public calls by Hamas leaders inciting protestors to violence, including on social media. Meanwhile, Fatah's official social media pages continued to glorify the perpetrators of past terror attacks.

Israeli officials also made provocative statements. These included calls for the annexation of the settlements, denying that the Palestinian territories were occupied and to openly rejecting the Palestinian right to statehood. ...

I urge key regional and international partners to re-engage and remain steadfast in pursuit of ending the occupation and realizing a two-state solution, in line with relevant

United Nations resolutions and previous agreements.

To read the full transcript see

<https://unsco.unmissions.org/briefing-security-council-situation-middle-east-reporting-unscr-2334-2016>

The report referred to above is not yet available online.

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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>

Scottish Parliament

Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

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

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** Closes in 5 days**

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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