

# 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

### House of Commons Oral Answer

#### Prime Minister's Questions

**Q6. Afzal Khan (Labour):** Three weeks have passed since the Muslim Council of Britain wrote to the chair of the Conservative party to raise concerns about Islamophobia in the party and it has yet to receive a reply. He has also failed to respond to my letter of 16 June following reports of what looked like an attempt by Tory headquarters to cover up allegations against one of the Conservative party's vice-chairs, the hon. Member for Mansfield (Ben Bradley). Does the Prime Minister agree with Baroness Warsi and the Conservative Muslim Forum that the Conservative party is in denial about Islamophobia in its ranks? [906075]

**The Prime Minister:** Anti-Muslim discrimination is wrong. There is no place for it in our society. That is why, when I was Home Secretary, I required the police specifically to record anti-Muslim hate crime so that we could understand better what was happening and better tackle the issue. We have introduced a new code of conduct in the party. I understand that my right hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth (Brandon Lewis), the chairman of the party, has met Tell MAMA. We investigate any allegations of Islamophobia that are made relating to members of the party. Action is taken and, in some cases, members have been suspended or expelled from the party as a result.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-06-27/debates/159B11F7-2F5A-4004-AD72-5AA5DBC0F732/Engagements#contribution-B0BD59DD-4FA4-49A6-A3B1-45D4029E54B4>

### House of Lords Oral Answers

#### Anti-terrorism: Hate Speech

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP):** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in pursuit of their anti-terrorism strategy, they will require preaching in mosques and teaching in madrassas in England and Wales to be monitored for hate speech against non-Muslims.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth):** My Lords, it is just a year since the Finsbury Park terror attack on

the mosque, and I am reminded how the Muslim community acted then—with dignity, determination and compassion—as no doubt the noble Lord is also so reminded. Our Government are clear on our strong objective to tackle hate crime. Free speech and freedom of belief are fundamental principles of our society. The Government have no plans to require monitoring of preaching in mosques or in any other faith institution.

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch:** My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord for that reply, but I fear that it underestimates the problem because the Government must know that hatred of us kuffar is central to radical Islam, that it is being taught in our mosques and madrassas, and that their own Behavioural Insights Team has said that their present policies are failing. Should not the Government get real by requiring all such teaching to be in English, as soon as possible, and by insisting on far greater collaboration from our peaceful Muslim friends in the meantime? After all, they know what is going on. And will the Government please stop using the word “Islamophobia”, because it is surely reasonable and not at all phobic to fear the world’s most violent ideology, from which indeed most hate speech now comes?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, first, the Government are committed to tackling Islamophobia. Secondly, perhaps I could tell the noble Lord of two recent visits I have made in relation to faith institutions. One was to a mosque in Manchester: an excellent mosque in Gorton, where Jews and Christians were welcomed for a great iftar. It was a true expression of British Muslim activity. Similarly, the previous day I visited the Manchester Islamic High School for Girls, where the opening words from the headmistress were on how proud she was to be British—but she was also proud to be Muslim.

**Baroness Warsi (Conservative):** My Lords, I do not like to read, but I shall be really careful how I phrase this with reference to the original Question. Could I ask Her Majesty’s Government whether, in pursuit of their antiterrorism strategy, they will require preaching in the form of Oral Questions and debate in your Lordships’ House to be monitored for hate speech and Islamophobia against Muslims? Does the Minister agree that Tommy Robinson, who has, to much disgust, been hosted in your Lordships’ House for tea and lunch but is now serving time in, I believe, Her Majesty’s Prison Hull, is now in a more appropriate place for someone who thinks, speaks, preaches and conducts himself as he does?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, my noble friend makes some powerful points, and I pay tribute to what she does in this regard. First, I agree with her about the importance of people in this House exercising discretion—of course, within the bounds of free speech—about what they say. Secondly, I am aware that Tommy Robinson is in Her Majesty’s Prison Hull, and I was aware that he was hosted here recently. I was recently in Hull myself, not on prison visits but on faith visits.

**Lord Beecham (Labour):** My Lords, the Labour Party has been criticised—rightly, as it has now acknowledged—for failing to respond promptly to claims of anti-Semitism in its ranks. Recently, we have learned of a number of cases of Islamophobia in the Conservative Party, and today it has emerged that, four weeks ago, the Muslim Council of Britain wrote to Brandon Lewis, the party chairman, requesting an inquiry, to which it received no reply, prompting it to write again yesterday, saying: “We cannot have an approach where you are hoping that the issue would magically go away so that (you) could avoid a bruising inquiry into anti-Muslim prejudice”.

Will the Minister—held, as he is, in the highest regard in this House—use his best endeavours to ensure that his party and the Government respond constructively to the concern expressed on behalf of our Muslim fellow citizens?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I first thank the noble Lord for his kind words and what he said about anti-Semitism, which needs tackling in all political parties, as does Islamophobia. I fully accept that. He will probably be aware that the Prime Minister answered a question on this in PMQs today and made clear

our determination to deal with the issue. I cannot give him an update on a letter that was sent yesterday—that will probably take a bit longer—but there have been suspensions and expulsions and, wherever there is evidence of Islamophobia in our party, it will be dealt with severely, often with expulsion. I hope that we can look to other political parties to do the same with respect to all religions—this is something that affects all of us. I share the noble Lord's aspiration that this be properly dealt with.

**Baroness Pinnock (Liberal Democrat):** Does the Minister agree that an attempt to stigmatise Muslims, as the original Question does, is unworthy of any Member of your Lordships' House, and that such language aids those who oppose cohesive communities and encourages hate crimes and attacks on both mosques and individual Muslims?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I very much agree with the noble Baroness on that issue. She will know, as I do, that the great mass of people in this country want the cohesive communities that, for the most part, we have. As I go around the country, I see that. That is the norm, but we need to ensure that it is universally the case, which, sadly, it is not yet, across all our communities.

**Baroness Afshar (Crossbench):** My Lords, as a teacher of Islamic law, I should like to make a correction. Islam accepts all religions that preceded it—all religions of the book are accepted and respected. This is a Koranic teaching; therefore, there is no time or respect for anyone who demonises any religion, and that should include Islam as well.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I am most grateful to the noble Baroness, who speaks with great authority on the issue. I am sure that the whole House will take note. As I said, as I go around the country and visit mosques and other religious institutions, evidence of what is happening up and down Britain is that it is exactly as she said. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-06-27/debates/25A169DE-AF92-4F39-8643-DFD5900E5E41/Anti-TerrorismHateSpeech>

## Department for Education

**Guidance: Gender separation in mixed schools**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/719398/Gender-separation-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719398/Gender-separation-guidance.pdf)

## Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

### Hate Crime

**Annie Wells (Conservative):** To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to tackle hate crime. (S5O-02277)

**The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning (Kevin Stewart):** Last year, Angela Constance published an ambitious programme of work to tackle hate crime and build community cohesion. She also established an action group to take that forward. The action group is tackling a range of issues, including how to increase reporting, raise awareness and prevent hate crime from occurring. Last October, the Government ran the successful hate has no home in Scotland campaign to raise awareness of hate crime and how to report it. The Government is carefully considering Lord Bracadale's important recommendations on hate crime legislation, which were published on 31 May.

**Annie Wells:** Figures that have been released by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service this month show a massive spike in some forms of hate crime. Since 2010-11, sexual orientation hate crime has increased by 146 per cent, transgender identity hate crime has increased by 250 per cent and disability hate crime has increased by a

shocking 1,100 per cent. Of course I acknowledge that the figures are in part due to increased reporting, but what action is the minister taking to ensure that those crimes are being tackled at their root and that real progress will be made?

**Kevin Stewart:** Annie Wells is right to highlight that there might be increased reporting, which is a good thing. However, we cannot be complacent on these issues. From a constituency member perspective, I have been perturbed to see the rise in hate crime against LGBT+ people in my area and have been in touch with the police there to make sure that all that can be done is being done.

Annie Wells can be assured that the Government will look carefully at the important recommendations that have been made by Lord Bracadale ...

... this Government will continue to have a zero-tolerance policy towards all hate crime. We encourage people to report it and we encourage the authorities to take action, as necessary, to deal with those despicable crimes.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11628&i=105380#ScotParlOR>

*The Bracadale Review, referred to above, can be read at*  
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00535892.pdf>

*The Crown Office statistics referred to above can be read at*  
<http://www.copfs.gov.uk/images/Documents/Statistics/Hate%20Crime%202017-18/Hate%20Crime%20in%20Scotland%202017-18.pdf>

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## Israel

### UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

#### UK Support to UNRWA

**The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Alistair Burt):** [HCWS801] The UK remains firmly committed to supporting Palestinian refugees across the near east. The UK recognises the UN Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) important mandate from the UN General Assembly to support and protect Palestinian refugees.

UNRWA is a necessary humanitarian and stabilising force across the near east, providing millions of Palestinian refugees with hope and opportunities every day. Its basic services, including food, education and healthcare, provide a life-line to the 5 million and more Palestinian men, women and child refugees across the region, and enable them to live in dignity until a negotiated peace agreement.

The UK is concerned about the possibility of service suspension as a result of the exceptional funding deficit that UNRWA is facing this year. The Syrian conflict has caused more than 50,000 Palestinian refugees to be on the move again, and increasing numbers of refugees are food insecure and vulnerable to shocks. Recent violence in Gaza has added to the burden on UNRWA's health services. UNRWA's work has never been more critical.

In the face of these pressures, the UK has committed to deliver its next round of financial support earlier than originally planned to help meet the growing needs of Palestinian refugees across the region. We will disburse £38.5 million to the agency in recognition of the severity of the deficit and the importance of service delivery. This includes £28.5 million that I committed at the UNRWA Rome pledging conference earlier this year, and £10 million of funding that the UK is bringing forward from next year's budget in response to the exceptional cash flow challenges UNRWA is facing.

The UK will continue to work closely with UNRWA to reach a secure and sustainable

financial footing. We have welcomed UNRWA's efforts to become ever more efficient and cost-effective, and are committed to working closely with them, host authorities, and fellow donors to maintain a realistic and achievable pace of reform.

We communicated the UK's ongoing support to the UN Secretary-General at an UNRWA pledging conference in New York on 25 June. We were pleased that 20 donors announced contributions, or their intention to contribute, to the 2018 budget of UNRWA. I will continue to urge the international community to come together to ensure that UNRWA can maintain its essential work and find ways to ensure continuity of essential services to Palestinian refugees.

All of us who care about stability in the region and about the rights and needs of this vulnerable group of people need to do our part to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian refugees. The UK has welcomed UNRWA's efforts to broaden its donor base and encouraged partners to step up with more funding and more predictable disbursements. The UK has highlighted our concern about the impact on the activities of UNRWA that any unexpected reductions or delays in predicted donor disbursements might have. While we acknowledge the greater burden shouldered by some, we urge all donors to honour their commitments.

While the support and services provided by UNRWA are essential, ultimately there needs to be a just, fair, agreed, and realistic solution to the Palestinian refugee question as part of a negotiated peace agreement. The UK is firmly committed to a two-state solution to provide the long-term answer for Palestinian refugees.

Peace will come only through fresh negotiations between the parties, supported by the international community. It is critical that both Israelis and Palestinians return to direct negotiations and urgently prioritise steps to resolve the situation in Gaza. The UK remains firmly committed to this process.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-06-27/debates/18062756000011/UKSupportToUNRWA>

## United Nations

### **At Opening of International Conference on Question of Jerusalem, Speakers Say City Should Remain Final-Status Issue, International Law Protecting It Must Be Upheld**

... Convened under the theme "The Question of Jerusalem after 50 years of Occupation and 25 years of the Oslo Accords", the Conference aimed to provide an opportunity for Member States to manifest their positions and share opinions, particularly in view of recent developments. It also aimed to give a voice to youth from East Jerusalem to present their plight to the international community and favour identifying actionable solutions to the challenges confronting them as a vital component of the city's future.

The Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Nacer Bourita, delivered a message on behalf of the King of Morocco, which called on "the influential global powers", particularly the United States, as well as regional ones, "to play their role in a responsible and equitable manner in their respective sphere of influence." ...

King Mohamed VI stressed that the conflict "could be resolved if delusions and nostalgia for the past are abandoned" and if "a sense of realism and confidence" prevailed. He called for a "rational approach to history" and said that "the international community is duty-bound today to pool efforts at a faster pace to reach a negotiated, safe and fair settlement" that should be achieved through "an orderly process based on a realistic vision and a specific timeline." ...

In his statement, Mr. Jenča [United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General for Political Affairs] ... underlined the importance of Jerusalem and recalled that the Secretary-General of the United Nations had stated that "Jerusalem is a final status issue that must be resolved through direct negotiations between the two parties on the basis of relevant

Security Council and General Assembly resolutions”. ...

Speaking on behalf of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Mr. Shatayyeh said that negotiations “need a fair mediator that doesn’t exist today”. He said that successive negotiations since Madrid in 1991 had failed because four United States presidents since that time did not exert pressure on Israel and because the United States Government had failed to be a fair mediator. ... He reiterated the eight-point plan presented by President Abbas to the Security Council and added that the Palestinians “welcome an international conference and a mechanism to end the conflict on the basis of the international law and international legitimacy.” He said that Palestinians had never refused to negotiate. However, right now, there were only “bad ideas” that would not herald peace. He said that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had maintained partnerships with various Palestinian political parties since 1969, and was now open to partner with others, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, provided that they accept the two-State solution, abide by international law, and embrace peaceful popular resistance, a unique legitimate authority and the holding of elections to revive Palestinian democracy. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/pal2225.doc.htm>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Training**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [155288] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will include literacy in the right to freedom of religion or belief in his Department's fast-track induction training.

**Mark Field:** Foundation Level online learning on Religion and Diplomacy is available to all Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff, and is already a mandatory component of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's fast stream induction programme.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-19/155288/>

#### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Training**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [155289] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of establishing bespoke training on freedom of religion or belief for his Department's staff on a country-by-country basis.

**Mark Field:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Religion and Diplomacy course, delivered by the London School of Economics Faith Centre, is available to all staff and is primarily aimed at FCO staff designated for roles where an understanding of religion is key to their work.

FCO Directorates and posts also arrange ad hoc activities such as courses, seminars and roundtables to allow their staff to explore religious themes with academic experts and faith leaders. Examples include a seminar on 19 March 2018 by Dr Anna Rowlands on Catholic Social Teaching, a course on political Islam organised in January 2017, and a seminar on Islamist ideology: history and contemporary developments in January 2018.

The right to Freedom of Religion or Belief is also included in the Diplomatic Academy's training offer to staff on human rights.

Where more detailed learning is required on a specific country or issue, diplomats are encouraged to reach out to FCO research analysts, recognised experts in academia, civil society and elsewhere to supplement their knowledge. Given the existing options, at this stage we do not see a need to establish additional bespoke training on freedom of religion or belief on a country-by-country basis.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-19/155289/>

### Religious Freedom

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [155290] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will discuss with the Secretary of State for International Development the introduction and implementation of strategies to protect the right to freedom of religion or belief in countries which have severe societal or governmental restrictions on that right.

**Mark Field:** Defending the right to freedom of religion or belief remains a top priority for this Government. Ministers and officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID) regularly discuss strategies and approaches to supporting this universal human right.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-19/155290/>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **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**

**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>

**\*\* Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 4 September 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/108999.aspx>

**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