

# 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 Written Answer

#### Religion: Education

**Stephen Timms (Labour)** [161070] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the number of suitably qualified people recruited to teach religious education.

**Nick Gibb:** There are 14,700 religious education (RE) teachers in state-funded secondary schools in England, and the proportion of hours spent teaching RE has remained broadly stable since 2010. The percentage of RE teachers with a specialist post A level qualification in RE is 46.4% - an increase from 45.1% from 2016.

To support recruitment of RE trainee teachers for 2018/19 the Department is continuing to offer a generous bursary of up to £9,000 and has removed restrictions on teacher training places to allow good courses to expand. The Department is also, for the first time, providing support to RE applicants from our specialist recruitment advisors.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-05/161070/>

### Commission for Countering Extremism

#### Commission for Countering Extremism launches evidence drive

The independent Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) is ... launching an intensive period of evidence gathering with the aim of publishing a first-of-its-kind study into all forms of extremism. ...

Neither the issue of terrorism nor the government's counter terrorism strategy (which includes Prevent) are in the CCE's remit.

Lead Commissioner Sara Khan says she wants to show people the deep, chronic harm extremism causes in communities.

In the coming months, the CCE will review existing academic evidence on extremism, commission bespoke research and issue a public call for evidence. Sara wants to hear from victims, their families and all those that counter extremism. ...

The CCE will also ask regulators, local councils and police forces, universities and other

public and private bodies to share information on extremism. ...

Lead Commissioner Sara Khan said: "This is an important moment for the commission as we move from our introductory phase to a period of intensive evidence gathering, with the aim of publishing a first-of-its-kind study. ...

Extremism is sowing division and hate, spreading fear and undermining democratic values and human rights.

But it's also complex and changing – in 2018 the old stereotypes of Far-Right thugs and Islamist hate preachers don't always apply.

Whether it's Far Right, Islamist or other forms of extremism, we need to investigate their changing tactics such as a new-found professionalism; the intellectualising of hate and abusing the power of social media. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/commission-for-counteracting-extremism-launches-evidence-drive>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Point of Order

**Richard Burden (Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I should be grateful if I could correct the record.

Last Wednesday, when I rose to ask the urgent question on Khan al-Ahmar that you had kindly granted me, I had just heard that bulldozers had arrived at the village, and that demolition had started. I reflected that in what I said.

Although demolition had indeed started at the nearby village of Abu Nuwar that morning, what I did not know was that the bulldozers had paused before commencing the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar. Whether that was because of the number of people who were there to protest—a number of whom were injured that day—or the presence of foreign diplomats, including those from the United Kingdom, I do not know. What I do know is that a court injunction has since been secured prohibiting the demolition until at least tomorrow. That makes the form of words that I used last week inaccurate, and I want to take this opportunity to correct the record.

In doing so, I thank Members in all parts of the House for raising their voices in opposition to the breach of international law at Khan al-Ahmar, which I am sure has helped to change the course of events in the past week. As the injunction is only temporary, however, pressure is still needed to keep the villagers of Khan al-Ahmar safe in the long term. ...

**Mr Speaker:** I am moved to observe that the hon. Gentleman, who is a very dextrous and dedicated parliamentarian, stretched the elastic almost, but perhaps not quite, to snapping point in getting across a particular line of argument or set of observations that he wished to be recorded in the *Official Report*. ... I know both the extent of his knowledge of the matters he has just raised and the absolutely undeniable sincerity with which he pursues what are not merely his concerns, but the concerns of a great many people. So I thank him.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-07-10/debates/18071038000003/PointsOfOrder#contribution-9F340C86-193C-4B08-83D8-3B71F0E908F0>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Israel: Palestinians

**Hugh Gaffney (Labour)** [159701] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on future prospects for the peace process in Israel and Palestine.

**Alistair Burt:** We frequently discuss the urgent need for a resolution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict with a range of international partners most recently on 26 June. I discussed prospects for peace with Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister, Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah. The Government also has regular exchanges with European ministers on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the monthly EU Foreign Affairs Council meetings in Brussels.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-02/159701/>

### Disaster Relief

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

**Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op)** [160362] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, on how many occasions and to which countries the UK Emergency Medical Team has been deployed in the last five years.

#### Gaza: Disaster Relief

**Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op)** [160363] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, for what the reasons the UK Emergency Medical Team was not deployed to Gaza following the deaths and gunshot injuries to civilian demonstrators in April and May 2018.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK Emergency Medical Team recently deployed to Bangladesh following the diphtheria outbreak in December 2017. DFID also has the option to deploy Team personnel only to work in existing national health facilities and did so to Nepal in 2015, Gaza in 2014 and the Philippines in 2013.

Taking into account lessons learned from previous deployments, including safety concerns for deploying UK nationals and problems with access and permits, the current Emergency Medical Team is not designed to be deployed into active conflict zones. The UK government has provided £1.5 million to the ICRC to help treat patients in 11 hospitals in Gaza by restocking vital medical supplies and providing physical rehabilitative services.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-03/160362/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-03/160363/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Khalida Jarrar

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9002] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the continued detention without charge of Palestinian parliament member Khalida Jarrar.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this particular case but we remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-26/HL9002/>

#### **Israel: Bedouin**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL9063] To ask Her Majesty's Government what replies, if any, they have received from the government of Israel at, or after, the EU Joint Démarche on 29 May concerning the demolition of Khan al-Ahmar village in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Israeli authorities noted our objections but highlighted the Israeli Supreme Court's ruling. We will continue to urge Israel to reconsider options so the community does not have to move, and press for more Palestinian planning applications to be approved.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-28/HL9063/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative)** [HL9083] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have been consulted on any aspect of the anticipated United States peace plan for the Middle East.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have regular discussions with the United States on a range of issues including the Middle East Peace Process. We have encouraged the US Administration to bring forward detailed proposals for a viable Israel-Palestinian peace agreement that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties. We continue to believe the best way to achieve this is through substantive peace talks between the parties leading to a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-28/HL9083/>

## **Scottish Parliament Motion**

**S5M-13103 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative): Prince William's Historic Visit to Israel and the Palestinian Territories** – That the Parliament notes that Prince William is the first senior member of the Royal Family to visit democratic Israel on official business since its founding in 1948; welcomes that he divided his time between sites in Jerusalem holy to Judaism, Islam and Christianity and visits to Yad Vashem, a school and clinic in a Palestinian refugee camp, alongside meeting crowds in Tel Aviv; understands that Yad Vashem recognises the Prince's great-grandmother, Princess Alice of Battenberg, as Righteous Among the Nations for her role in rescuing Jews during the Holocaust; further understands that Princess Alice hid three members of the Cohen family in her palace in Athens during the Nazi occupation of Greece; acknowledges that Prince William visited the tomb of his great-grandmother in Jerusalem where he met Evy and Philippe Cohen, descendants of the Cohen family, who thanked Prince William for the courage of Princess Alice in sheltering their relative, Rachel Cohen, and thanks the Prince for his ongoing diplomatic work in building bridges between Israel and Scotland.  
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-13103>

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### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Iraq: Human Rights and Religious Freedom**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [160744] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Iraqi counterpart on freedom of religion and human rights for (a) Jewish people and (b) other ethnic groups in that country.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK is firmly committed to protecting religious and ethnic minority communities in Iraq. We consistently urge the Government of Iraq, at all levels, to uphold fundamental human rights including the right to freedom of religion or belief and the rights of all minorities across Iraq. The Prime Minister underlined this message with Prime Minister Abadi during her visit to Iraq in November 2017, and both the Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN and I reiterated it during our visits in March and April 2018 respectively. Our Embassy in Baghdad and Consulate-General in Erbil continue to raise the issue with Iraqi and Kurdish officials. We will encourage the new Iraqi Government to support the needs of all of their communities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-04/160744/>

#### **Religious Freedom**

**Emily Thornberry (Labour)** [159541] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department plans to appoint a dedicated global ambassador for religious freedom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mark Field:** The protection of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is an important element of the Government's foreign policy. On 4 July 2018, the Prime Minister was pleased to announce the appointment of Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's new Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-02/159541/>

*The announcement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lord-ahmad-appointed-as-pms-special-envoy-to-promote-religious-freedom>

#### **Developing Countries: Religious Freedom**

**George Howarth (Labour)** [160093] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will offer her Department's expertise to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to help it enhance its country-specific strategies to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief.

**Alistair Burt:** Defending the right to freedom of religion or belief remains a top priority for this Government.

Ministers and officials from DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly discuss strategies and approaches to supporting this universal human right.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-03/160093/>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Turkey: Religious Freedom

**Lord Patten (Conservative)** [HL9039] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (HL8304), whether British Christians and Jews may set up new public buildings for their worship in Turkey.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** In order for religious groups to establish new places of worship in Turkey they must apply to the Turkish government for them to be legally recognised as places of worship. If constructing a new building as a place of worship, religious groups must first apply for permission from the municipality to do so. It is against the law to hold religious services at a location not recognized by the government as a place of worship; the government may fine or close the venues of those violating the law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-27/HL9039/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-04/HL8304/>

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## Other Relevant Information

### Charity Commission

#### **Regulator publishes new research into factors the public associate with trustworthy charities**

“Transparency is not enough: Charities need to demonstrate authenticity to rebuild trust”  
Charity Commission tells charities ...

The research ... identifies the key drivers of trust in charities as being:

- transparent about where money goes (8.8 of 10)
- true to their values (8.5)
- efficient in their use of resources (8.4)
- well-governed and well-managed (8.3)
- able to demonstrate making a positive difference (8.3) ...

The research finds that public trust in charities has plateaued since 2016, and remains low at 5.5 out of 10. The public now trust charities less than they trust the average person in the street. ...

The research also reveals that a person's trust is closely associated with his or her donating behaviour; 52% of those whose trust has increased say they donate to charities more as a consequence, while 41% of those whose trust has decreased say they donate to charities less as a consequence. Similarly, individuals who do trust charities are far more likely to have recently made repeat donations to a charity than those who do not (24% vs 11%). ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-publishes-new-research-into-factors-the-public-associate-with-trustworthy-charities>

#### **Trust in Charities, 2018**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/723566/Charity\\_Commission\\_-\\_Trust\\_in\\_Charities\\_2018\\_-\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/723566/Charity_Commission_-_Trust_in_Charities_2018_-_Report.pdf)

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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 2 days**

**Ecclesiastical exemption and guidance on scheduled monuments** (closing date 13 July 2018)

<https://beta.gov.wales/ecclesiastical-exemption-and-guidance-scheduled-monuments>

**Financial Memorandum of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

(closing date 31 August 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/109042.aspx>

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

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

**\*\* 20 years of the Human Rights Act** (closing date 14 September 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/20-years-human-rights-act-launch-17-19/>

**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