

# 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 Answers

#### Inter-faith Dialogue

9. **John Grogan (Labour):** To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what recent steps the Church of England has taken to promote inter-faith dialogue. [906405]

**Caroline Spelman:** The Church of England continues to take active steps at local and international level to promote inter-faith dialogue. The Church works through organisations like the Council of Christians and Jews and the Christian Muslim Forum alongside close working with the Office of the Chief Rabbi and senior Muslim clerics.

**John Grogan:** Does the right hon. Lady agree that many Church schools, both C of E and Catholic, with multi-faith intakes ... including many Muslim pupils, bind our communities together from a young age and teach respect for others?

**Caroline Spelman:** I could not agree more. Church of England schools are open to the whole community and reflect the demographic profile of the community they serve. Thus in some parts of the country 80% or 90% of pupils in a Church of England school may be Muslim. If you will forgive me, Mr Speaker, I would like to commend what the new Home Secretary had to say about his own education as a Muslim in a Church of England school, and how important a part of his own upbringing was an awareness of religious literacy in our world today. ...

We need to understand, in the world today more than ever, the different faiths of the world and their tenets, and be respectful of the fact that 84% of the world's population adhere to one of the great religions of the world. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-07-12/debates/9026D446-E348-456A-9CE6-76F81330AC3B/Inter-FaithDialogue>

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Police: Ethnic Groups

**Kate Green (Labour)** [161151] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance his Department issues to police forces on their engagement with BAME communities.

**Nick Hurd:** Equality and diversity are important. People across all communities want the police to fight crime while having confidence that their needs will be understood and respected.

The Government's landmark Race Disparity Audit makes it clear that whilst we have made significant progress across a range of measures relating to crime and policing, for many people from black and other minority ethnic backgrounds their experiences and expectations fall well short of what is acceptable. We are committed to reducing and eliminating these disparities through our continued reforms to policing.

Decisions about frontline policing, how resources are best deployed, and the effective management of the workforce are for Chief Constables and democratically accountable Police and Crime Commissioners. They are best placed to make decisions with their communities based on their local knowledge and experience.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and National Police Chiefs' Council make it clear in the Policing Vision 2025 that that the link between communities and the police will continue to form the bedrock of British policing. The vision also highlights the increasing diversity and complexity of the communities police serve, and the need for more sophisticated responses to policing challenges.

The National Police Chief's Council has agreed a new Diversity, Equality and Inclusion strategy which is expected to be published in July. The strategy will be accompanied by three toolkits; on workforce representation; working with partner agencies; and working with diverse communities, which will provide operational advice to forces.

The College of Policing, as the professional body, has published the Code of Ethics which includes a clear statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion for all those working in policing. It also published guidelines on modernising neighbourhood policing in March 2018. This year's HMICFRS effectiveness report recommended that forces review their approach by October 2018 against these standards.

The Government takes the issue of police wellbeing very seriously and has invested in programmes which offer help directly to officers. In July 2017, the Home Secretary awarded £7.5 million from the Police Transformation Fund over 3 years to pilot and, if it is successful, fund a dedicated national service to help provide enhanced welfare support.

We await the publication of the final version of the Traveller Movement report which is expected to follow the summary report published in June and will work with policing partners to consider its findings.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-05/161151/>

## UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights

### Freedom of Speech in Universities: Responses

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201719/jtselect/jtrights/1279/1279.pdf>

## Welsh Assembly Oral Answers

### Non-stun slaughter

**Neil Hamilton (UKIP):** I've had a great deal of contact recently with animal welfare campaigners who are concerned about pre-stunning of animals and ritual slaughter, in

particular. And they've pointed out to me that non-stun slaughter has now been banned in Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and New Zealand, that the British Veterinary Association have said that pre-stunning is superior from a welfare point of view, and that recent methodological developments in electroencephalograms allow the experience of pain to be assessed more directly than ever before, and, in relation to calves that are slaughtered by ventral neck incision, it's apparently now quite clear that this could be perceived as painful in the period between the incision and the loss of consciousness. So, in these circumstances, will the Cabinet Secretary look again—in line with the BVA's viewpoint and the RSPCA's, and many other organisations involved in animal welfare, that the only way to adhere to the highest standards of animal welfare in Welsh slaughterhouses is to ensure that all animals are stunned before slaughter for whatever reason?

**Lesley Griffiths (Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs):**

This is certainly a discussion I had with the British Veterinary Association just a couple of weeks ago, and I've asked officials to look at the information they've brought forward for me in detail.

**Neil Hamilton:** Good. Well, I'm grateful for that reply, which I regard as very positive. In the event that the Cabinet Secretary decides not to change the law in this respect, will she consider an alternative proposition, which also comes from the BVA? They say that they recognise that, whilst pre-stunning is superior from a welfare point of view, should non-stun slaughter continue to be permitted, post-cut stunning offers a valid means of reducing the suffering of animals at slaughter. And post-cut stunning, I think, would meet most of the objections from religious groups.

**Lesley Griffiths:** Well, as I say, I'm waiting for officials to come back with advice for me following the initial discussion I've had with the BVA, so, you know, I'm not going to make policy up on the hoof now, but it's obviously an ongoing process for me.

**Neil Hamilton:** Making policy on the hoof would not be appropriate, even for an agriculture spokesman, I'm sure. As the Cabinet Secretary will know, there has been a huge increase in the growth of the halal meat market in particular. Much of this food is not being consumed by Muslims, and it's gone into mainstream takeaways and fast food outlets as well. A lot of people have objections for whatever reason on animal welfare grounds to eating such food. Would she agree with me that it is important that people should know what they're eating and that those who are concerned about the animal welfare considerations that I've mentioned ought therefore to be able to make an informed choice in such circumstances? Will she commit to prioritising greater consumer awareness on religious slaughter and non-stun slaughter, not just through labelling products in supermarkets but also in restaurants and takeaways?

**Lesley Griffiths:** I absolutely agree—it's very important that people know what they're eating, and I think that, certainly amongst restaurants, that consumer awareness is not out there. I was in a restaurant where I noticed, when I came out, that there was a very small sign at the bottom of the door that said that all meat was halal. Now, I think that should be far more visible, in the way that we've done with food hygiene standards, for instance. So, I absolutely agree that it's very important that people know what they're eating.

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/4999#C110003>

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# Israel

## House of Commons Written Answer

### **Gaza and West Bank: Capital Punishment**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [161508] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the use of the death penalty in (a) the West Bank and (b) Gaza; and what representations he has made to the Palestinian Authority on that subject.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK welcomes the Palestinian signature of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as an important step towards the abolition of the death penalty. We are aware of the use of the death penalty by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The UK continues to oppose the use of the death penalty in all circumstances and works towards global abolition of the death penalty.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-06/161508/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### **West Bank: Planning Permission**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL9064] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to give effect to their concern about the difficulties experienced by Palestinians in getting building permissions for houses and necessary infrastructure in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and granting permission in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes. Additionally the UK has also allocated £1.1 million to support essential infrastructure for vulnerable Palestinians in Area C. We are supporting four communities, comprising of nearly 500 Palestinian families living in Area C, to remain on their land through improved infrastructure and access to community services, including education and health, in areas which have an outline plan in the Israeli approval process.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-28/HL9064/>

### **West Bank: Infrastructure**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL9065] To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the £1.1 million they allocated for essential infrastructure for vulnerable Palestinians in Area C of the West Bank has yet to be spent.

**Lord Bates:** In 2016 DFID fully disbursed £900,000 for its project to support Palestinian development in Area C. An additional £200,000 provided by the FCO has recently been approved for a separate project that also aims to support the infrastructure of vulnerable Palestinians in Area C. This funding will be disbursed in due course. This combined £1.1 million of UK financial assistance supports communities in Area C to remain on their land through improved infrastructure and access to community services, including education and health.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-28/HL9065/>

### **Israel: Gaza**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9143] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 25 June (HL8529), when they were

made aware of the underwater barrier being constructed by Israel at the northern border of Gaza; and what action they intend to take concerning this matter.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office became aware of this issue following media reports in May 2017. Defence Minister Lieberman announced that the barrier would prevent Hamas operatives infiltrating Israel by sea. We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-02/HL9143/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-11/HL8529/>

### **Hamas**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9144] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 25 June (HL8533), when they last discussed with the leaders of Hamas the position of that organisation on Israel.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK retains a policy of no contact with Hamas in its entirety.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-02/HL9144/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-11/HL8533/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9147] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 26 June (HL8587), whether they will now answer the question asked, namely whether they support the right of Palestinians to security and self-defence.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Every Israeli and Palestinian has the right to live in peace and security. We therefore continue to call on Israel, as the Occupying Power, to uphold its obligations under international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

As a demonstration of our commitment to both sides' right to security, the UK continues to provide the Palestinian Authority with professional support in helping to develop its security institutions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-02/HL9147/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-12/HL8587/>

### **William, Duke of Cambridge: Visits Abroad**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9146] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the contribution of the visit by the Duke of Cambridge to the Middle East to achieving peace between Palestine and Israel.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** All official Royal Visits are undertaken at the request of Her Majesty's Government and in support of UK objectives. The British Government remains committed to a just and lasting settlement which delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-02/HL9146/>

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### House of Lords Debate

#### **Overseas Aid: Charities and Faith-based Organisations**

*col 1026* **Baroness Stroud (Conservative):** That this House takes note of the steps being taken by Her Majesty's Government to engage with small charities and faith-based organisations in delivering United Kingdom aid overseas. ...

We know that to maximise impact we need to deliver aid that focuses on twin objectives—humanitarian need and the building of nations. In 2017, conflicts and disasters around the world left an estimated 201 million people in need of the last resort of international humanitarian assistance. These are the people that need our assistance purely out of the greatest need to survive and should be one of the primary focuses of aid.

We also know that long-term nation building is the foundation that underpins the ability of a country to develop. Countries need safety and security, a strong economy, effective governance, education and health systems and a stable environment. ...

Small charities are an important part of a thriving aid landscape and have an enormous contribution to make. In the UK, 90% of voluntary sector organisations are small or medium-sized charities, delivering many valuable services in the community. Small international charities play a similar role and their impact is equally profound. ...

*col 1028* As part of the diverse landscape of UK aid, the impact of faith-based charities is also an important consideration. It should be remembered that worldwide, more than eight in 10 people identify with a religious group. Faith for a huge number of people is a key marker of identity and belonging. Faith-based charities are not a niche sector, given that almost half of all UK overseas charities are in fact faith-based. They also make up a significant number of the organisations working in human rights and in poverty reduction. ...

Organisations such as churches and mosques can play key roles in their community and are often trusted. ...

*col 1029* DfID has a number of long-term relationships with large faith-based charities, such as Christian Aid, Islamic Relief and World Vision, which have been successful. However, the launch of the UK Aid Connect scheme is one of the ways the Government are ensuring that they harness the potential of many other faith groups. ...

*col 1035* **Lord Sheikh (Conservative):** ... Muslims all over the world believe in helping people who are less fortunate than ourselves. Muslims also believe that we have a moral duty to support charitable organisations through giving our time and resources wherever possible. ...

UK Muslims gave over £100 million to charity during the month of Ramadan last year. That is £38 a second. ...

*col 1036* They support people of all races, colours and religions all over the world. This fact needs to be appreciated, as it sets out the philosophy of the Muslim charities. ...

*col 1045* **The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Lord Bates):** ... Small charities are a vital part of the civil society ecosystem and do remarkable work, as all noble Lords have recognised. They are able to innovate and specialise, and often can better engage with the British public than their larger counterparts. ...

*col 1046* DfID clearly and publically recognises that religion is crucial to development. Most people in developing countries believe that faith is important to them ...

Faith is also a huge motivator for giving, with statistics showing that, on average, those with faith give nearly twice as much to charity. ... Faith-based organisations make a significant and distinctive contribution to poverty reduction. They can inspire confidence and trust and are often seen as more embedded in, and committed to, the local communities they serve. ...

To read the full transcript (which does not refer to the Jewish community) see <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-07-12/debates/8EA91F6D-EE34-4A31-90BB-34FA238662D5/OverseasAidCharitiesAndFaith-BasedOrganisations>

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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 today**

**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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