

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 Answer

Hate Crime: Internet

Rushanara Ali (Labour) [179215] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps he is taking to tackle online hate crime.

Victoria Atkins: The newly published Hate Crime Action Plan refresh sets out the Government's plan to tackle hate crime, including how we will address online hate crime. These include the publication – by the Home Office and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) – of a White Paper that sets out proposals for future legislation around online harms, including hate crime. We will be supporting the upcoming review of hate crime legislation by the Law Commission, along with their current review of online abusive communications.

We are also working directly with social media companies to support their efforts; engaging internationally to strengthen our approach; and funding the National Police Chiefs' Council for the National Online Hate Crime Hub, which uses specially trained staff to investigate and action reports.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-15/179215/>

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

House of Lords Oral Answers

See *Baroness Northover's oral question and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon's response in the "Foreign Affairs" section below.*

UK Parliament House of Commons Library

Briefing: Race Relations Act 1968: 50th Anniversary

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2018-0109/LLN-2018-0109.pdf>

Briefing: The future of civil partnership

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7856/CBP-7856.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

One Scotland Campaign

S5W-19228 Jeremy Balfour (Conservative): To ask the Scottish Government what its position is on whether the language used in the One Scotland campaign posters regarding religious hate crime risks undermining the campaign and alienating all faiths and could lead to people of any faith feeling hated.

Aileen Campbell: Any form of hate crime or prejudice is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The campaign aims to encourage witnesses to report hate crime using a series of letters addressed to perpetrators describing the experience of victims, stating that 'your hate has no home here'. It is not targeting those of faith. The campaign has been developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including faith organisations.

Hate crime has hugely damaging effects on victims, their families and communities and we all must play our part to challenge it.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-19228>

The poster referred to above can be read at

<http://staging.onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Dear-bigots.pdf>

The full set of One Scotland Campaign posters can be read at

<https://onescotland.org/campaigns/hate-crime-campaign/>

Crown Prosecution Service

Unregistered school prosecuted in legal first

The Crown Prosecution Service has successfully brought its first prosecution against an unregistered independent school in England and Wales.

Head teacher Beatrix Bernhardt, 38, and director Nacerdine Talbi, 47, were convicted of running the Al-Istiqamah Learning Centre in Southall, west London ...

The court heard how Ofsted inspectors ... found more than 50 children between five and 11 years old being taught at the centre.

Photographs of lesson plans and homework diaries taken by Ofsted inspectors showed that the centre was being run as a school. It is contrary to the Education and Skills Act 2008 to run a full-time educational establishment that has not been registered as a school with the Department for Education.

Lynette Woodrow, from the CPS, said: "This is the first prosecution of its kind against an unregistered school in England and Wales. The centre claimed it simply provided tuition to home-schooled children but using witness statements and photographic evidence collected by Ofsted inspectors, the CPS was able to prove this was not the case.

"It is a criminal offence to run an unregistered school and we will take steps to prosecute those responsible where there is the evidence to do so." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/london-south/news/unregistered-school-prosecuted-legal-first>

TOP

House of Commons Oral Answer

Prime Minister's Questions

Q5. Patrick Grady (SNP): How does denying, delaying or disrupting visas for Moldovan and African trade commissioners, Palestinian academics, artists at WOMAD and Celtic Connections, or Malawian priests and pupils enhance the Prime Minister's vision of a global Britain? Does the Prime Minister understand that the visa crisis and perceived travel ban serve only to prove that the "hostile environment" lives on, and that Brexit is a small, isolationist retreat from the world stage?[907247]

The Prime Minister: The reality is far different from the situation the hon. Gentleman has suggested. There is no travel ban. We remain open to business and to people from around the world, and we will continue to be so under the new immigration system—a skills-based immigration system—that we will be introducing when we leave the EU.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-24/debates/33C297D5-BF19-4837-B54B-213D5E089243/Engagements#contribution-3C13FDD2-C539-4F83-A09E-A0C3AA2E69C5>

House of Commons Written Answers

USA: Palestinians

Richard Burden (Labour) [179089] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the US Administration on the decision to close the Palestinian diplomatic mission in Washington.

Alistair Burt: The US' decision to close the Palestinian diplomatic mission in Washington is a matter for the US authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-15/179089/>

Occupied Territories

Richard Burden (Labour) [179091] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support the work of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in examining recent events in the West Bank and Gaza.

Alistair Burt: The International Criminal Court Prosecutor has been conducting a Preliminary Examination into the situation in Palestine since 2015. We respect her independence in this matter.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-15/179091/>

Middle East: Refugees

Richard Burden (Labour) [179092] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the (a) definition and (b) status of refugees in the Middle East.

Alistair Burt: The Foreign Secretary maintains a regular dialogue with his US counterpart on Middle East issues, and discussed the US plan to withdraw funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) with the Special Advisor to the US President, Jared Kushner, on 22 August. I also discussed these concerns with the US President's Middle East Envoy, Jason Greenblatt, on 28 September. Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials routinely discuss with their US counterparts the status of refugees in the Middle East. The UK is clear that there needs to be a just, fair, agreed and realistic

settlement for Palestinian refugees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-15/179092/>

Israel: Palestinians

Rushanara Ali (Labour) [179221] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on opening an independent investigation into the deaths of Palestinians at the border between Israel and Gaza in the last year.

Alistair Burt: I discussed Gaza with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Hotovely and Israeli Minister for Regional Cooperation Hanegbi during my visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in May. I stressed the need for an independent investigation into recent events, and encouraged urgent action to improve the situation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-15/179221/>

Palestinians: Demonstrations

Rushanara Ali (Labour) [179222] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with counterparts on the UN Security Council on establishing an independent investigation into the deaths of Palestinian protesters in the last year.

Alistair Burt: Officials from our Mission to the United Nations in New York have discussed the need for an independent investigation with their counterparts at the UN. The UK has also called directly on Israel to carry out a transparent investigation into the Israeli Defence Forces' conduct at the border fence and to demonstrate how this will achieve a sufficient level of independence. We also encourage the parties to engage constructively with the Human Rights Council Commission of Enquiry, and urge that it be as independent, transparent and balanced as possible in its approach.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-15/179222/>

UNRWA: Finance

Jim Cunningham (Labour) [181167] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency for its operations in (a) Palestine and (b) neighbouring countries from (a) the UK, (b) the US and (c) other countries.

Alistair Burt: The UK has consistently been one of the top five donors to UNRWA. We have increased our total funding to £57.5 million so far this year. We have also lobbied other donors to do likewise and are pleased that this effort has been successful; following a Ministerial meeting in New York, UNRWA's deficit has been reduced to \$64 million. However, if further funding is not secured, we assess that this could impact the delivery of essential services across UNRWA's fields of operation; in Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, Syria and the West Bank. DFID will continue to work with UNRWA and other donors to help ensure essential services are maintained across the region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-18/181167/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Israel: Bedouin

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL10592] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will take action to protect the village of Khan al-Ahmar in the Occupied West Bank against the reported attempt by settlers to drive the villagers out using waste water.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is monitoring the situation in Khan al-Ahmar closely. The Minister for the Middle East urged the Israeli Ambassador to reconsider plans to demolish the village on 11 October and our Ambassador to Israel raised the proposed demolition with the Israeli authorities on 3 October. We have also stressed to the Israeli authorities the importance of Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population from settler violence and intimidation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-10/HL10592/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Alistair Burt: A warm welcome to Dr Husam Zomlot as new Head of the Palestinian Mission to the UK. We'll be working together to further the relationship between the British and Palestinian people, strengthen cooperation, and continue efforts towards a two-state solution and a lasting peace.

<https://twitter.com/AlistairBurtUK/status/1055399949414907904>

United Nations

Dramatic funding shortages a 'severe catastrophe' for people of Gaza: UN Coordinator

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, Jamie McGoldrick, has been describing how ordinary Gazans are scraping by on just four hours of electricity per day due to fuel shortages, putting many in "a terrible situation" as the winter months approach.

In an interview with UN News, he recounted that on a visit to a local children's hospital, he witnessed power shut down during an emergency operation, leaving patients and doctors in the dark for nearly a full minute before a generator powered on.

"In that time the doctors had to hand pump the oxygen into the lungs of children on life support machines," he recalled. "And that's not one day. That's everyday like that." ...

"We're not able to save the lives of people we should... while the money stays the same or goes down, the needs go up," he stressed. ...

Mr. McGoldrick implored politicians from different Palestinian factions and parties, as well as Israel, to come up with answers, as it is "the only option" for the people of Gaza to regain independence, otherwise, there is "no hope," he said.

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/10/1023952>

Gaza 'Unliveable', Expert Tells Third Committee, as Mandate Holders Present Findings on Human Rights Situations in Iran, Eritrea, Somalia, Burundi

... Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied Since 1967, drew attention to Israel's persistent non-cooperation with the Special Rapporteur's mandate. As with his two predecessors, Israel has not granted him entry to visit the country, nor the Occupied Palestinian territory. He recalled that cooperation is a fundamental obligation of the Charter of the United Nations. The

World Bank described Gaza's economy in free fall... In fact, the United Nations has stated that Gaza may well be unliveable by 2020: safe drinking water has almost disappeared, the economy is cratering and "the state of unlive-ability is upon us", he said, urging the international community to insist that all parties bring an immediate end to this disaster.

In response to this inflicted misery, Gazans organized the "Great March of Return", he recalled. To date, in the context of these demonstrations, more than 200 Palestinians have been killed, including 40 children. Almost 23,000 Palestinians have been injured, with half of them requiring hospitalization. In addition, the West Bank village of Khan al-Ahmar is being threatened with complete demolition by Israel, which plans to build new settlements and annex the area. The settlements are a grave breach of international law. Israel's Knesset has adopted a number of laws that are a flashing green light for more formal annexation steps. For the past 50 years, "the international community has been playing checkers while Israel plays chess," he said, stressing that a deep-rooted problem at the heart of this conflict is the lack of clarity of international law.

Mr. Mansour, observer from the State of Palestine, said the humanitarian crisis outlined in the report is the bleakest yet. Describing Israel's violations, such as the transfer of more settlers to the occupied territories, he said Israel creates a coercive environment to forcibly displace people. The annexation of the territories must end. The deterioration of all aspects of the living situation is the result of 10 years of immoral blockade, he said, rejecting Israel's practice of using deadly force against peaceful demonstrators and calling "wilful killing" a grave violation of the Geneva Conventions. ...

he representative of the European Union noted that unilateral actions undermine efforts to reach peace. The two-state solution, based on 1967-borders, is the only reliable way to end the conflict, he said, asking about the Special Rapporteur's priorities. ...

Mr. Lynk, to questions about the volume of legislation by the Knesset regarding annexation, replied that the Basic Law amendments have made it more difficult for Israel to achieve parliamentary consent. In addition, membership in the Knesset has increased from 60 to 80 members, essentially making it impossible to give East Jerusalem back to the Palestinian Authority. ...

Regarding demolition orders in West Bank Area C, he said it is almost impossible for the 180,000 to 300,000 people living there to receive a legal permit to renovate or build, noting more broadly that 40 children died during the Great March of Return. While characterizing the report as "overwhelmingly gloomy", he pointed to one piece of good news: a Palestinian Bedouin village still stands despite orders to demolish it. Israel's high court has let it stand, thanks to the activism of human rights defenders and determined European "missions" that have repeatedly stated their opposition to the demolition. ...

His recommendations are endless, he said. On Gaza, the international community must insist on an end to the 11-year old blockade, as Palestinians cannot trade with the outside world. Other issues concern the prohibition of settlement goods. He called for an end to activities that would deepen the occupation, such as relationships with banks that finance them, as well as for United Nations support for a study into whether Israel is still the legal occupant of the Occupied Territories after 50 years. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gashc4242.doc.htm>

Taking Up Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syrian Golan, Delegates in Second Committee Say Persistent Policies by Israel Violate International Law

Mounir Tabet, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), introduced the note by the Secretary-General on the "economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan" (document A/73/87-E/2018/69). He noted the Palestinian people continue to suffer under Israeli policies, including the

application of two legal systems, and discriminatory planning and zoning policies that prevent Palestinian construction in Area C and East Jerusalem.

He stated serious concerns remain over the Israeli army's continued use of excessive force, with unlawful killings of 80 Palestinians including 17 children. Attacks and harassment conducted by Israeli settlers saw a sharp increase in 2017, with Israel failing to stop them or hold the parties accountable; on the contrary, the army often accompanies them. There were 5,980 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons as of Feb 2017, including over 300 children.

In housing, he said Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes have created a coercive environment in the West Bank with thousands displaced and building permits nearly impossible to obtain. Seizures of property and punitive measures may amount to collective punishment. Some 7,500 in Bedouin and herder communities also face displacement ...

Abdullah Abu Shawesh, observer for the State of Palestine ... noted that Israel has occupied Palestinian and Syrian territories for the past 51 years. They have issued hundreds of military orders and discriminatory laws that have allowed it to control Palestinian resources and economic assets, making it impossible for his people to achieve sustainable development.

Continuing, he said Israel has demolished 5,413 buildings in Palestinian territory, 2,000 of which are residential, on the pretext that building permits were lacking. Adding that such permits are impossible to obtain, he said that by the end of 2017, there were 13,000 orders of demolition of Palestinian structures pending implementation. He called attention to the most recent Security Council resolution on Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, which called for the drawing up of a list of Israeli companies operating in those areas, which are a major source of the exploiting of Palestinian natural resources.

Mahmoud El-Ashmawy (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, pointed to persistent Israeli policies in violation of international human rights law including the adoption of two separate legal systems in the same territory, bringing more restrictions for Palestinians and effectively establishing one State and two societies. ...

Ahmed Al-Kuwari (Qatar), speaking on behalf of OIC, said that Israel has continued during the first half of 2018 to intensify its colonial settlement enterprise in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. ...

Polina Kempinsky (Israel), a youth delegate, noted that she grew up in Haifa, a multicultural city featuring different cultures working together to contribute to its society, where general well-being is the most important shared quality. She also recalled terrorist attacks and wondering if classmates would make it to school, and living in fear of Hamas attacks. Citing a nearby joint industrial park shared by Israelis and Palestinians, she stated a young mother was recently killed by a former co-worker. "Life doesn't have to be like this" she said, lamenting Palestinian youth committing acts of violence in Israel. She also pointed to the positive use of social media for communication between peoples and cultures. Noting that her address as a youth delegate was not the response from Israel that many might have expected, she said many States use United Nations institutions for political attacks rather than as a place to have a conversation. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gaef3506.doc.htm>

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

<https://undocs.org/en/A/73/87-E/2018/69>

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House of Lords Oral Answers

Freedom of Religion or Belief

Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Conservative): To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to (1) promote freedom of religion or belief, and (2) mark International Freedom of Religion or Belief Day on 27 October.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): My Lords, as the Prime Minister's special envoy on freedom of religion or belief, I am leading the work with our diplomatic network to achieve an increased focus in our efforts on this agenda across government. We are seeking to effect change in key countries and to promote respect in education, supported by £1 million of funding. In this respect, I am also working across Whitehall to bring together ministerial colleagues from DfID, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education, and defence. We are marking the international day with an event, which I am delighted to be co-hosting with my noble friend Lord Bates, on 7 November.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: I thank the Minister for his Answer. He holds an important position as the Prime Minister's special envoy. Can he explain what progress has been made in, for example, providing religious literacy training to departments such as the Department for International Development, so that it can cope better with some of the challenges it faces in countries such as China, Pakistan and Nigeria, where there are repeated assaults on the idea of freedom of religion or belief?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My noble friend raises a significant point about literacy in the important area of freedom of religion or belief. You need only cast your eye around the world to see how freedom of religion or belief is being usurped in many countries, including some of those named by my noble friend. With regard to increasing our focus on this, the noble Baroness will be aware of the work done through the diplomatic network, and I am already speaking to colleagues across DfID, and in the Ministry of Defence, to ensure that those deployed to our international posts are well versed in the local challenges on this important priority.

Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, has the Minister noted the 40% increase in religious hate crimes in the United Kingdom between 2017 and 2018? In that context, does he feel it appropriate that Tommy Robinson was entertained in the Lords by a Member of this House?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On the second point, I do not think that it is right. We need to take a long hard look at ourselves as a House, and I am sure that the House authorities have been alerted to the presence of the said individual. The views he expresses are not just appalling for the community he targets—we are all, rightly, appalled. It is important that we review our procedures to ensure that individuals such as Tommy Robinson do not enter the heart of democracy. I am minded, however, to defer that to the House authorities.

On the important issue of rising religious hatred and hate crime, I think we all stand united against it. We have seen an increase in anti-Semitism. I have spoken out very strongly on that, and I think that I represent many in this House in speaking out, whether it is against anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Muslim hatred or any form of religious hate crime. Regrettably and tragically, there are people in our society who target us—those who have spoken out—for that very reason. It is important that we unite against this and that a clear and unequivocal statement comes from this House, from the Houses of Parliament and from the country as a whole, to those who seek to divide us: "We are united against you, and we will defeat you".

Baroness Bryan of Partick (Labour): Does the Minister agree that each and every one of us in this House shares the responsibility to ensure good racial and interfaith relationships, and that this House has a specific responsibility to ensure that its own estates are not used in that way?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I am sure, as I said earlier to the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, that the House authorities have taken note. I also agree, however, with the premise of the noble Baroness that each of us has a responsibility. We need to raise the bar: no longer should it be about tolerance; it is about respect and understanding, and that is what we should be promoting.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): My Lords, does the Minister agree that freedom of religion and belief is an absolute right, and that it would become more of a reality if we, and other leading countries, put aside considerations of trade and so-called strategic interests in its pursuit?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The strategic relationships that we have around the world are important—indeed, the Statement I made yesterday reflected that—but I assure the noble Lord, and your Lordships' House, that human rights in the broad sense are an important consideration and priority in the relationships we build across the world.

Baroness Eaton (Conservative): Will my noble friend the Minister work with FCO and DfID country heads to produce a country-specific strategy for promoting freedom of religion and belief?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My noble friend makes a very practical and useful suggestion, and I am looking at my new role to see whether we can provide that kind of country detail.

Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour): My Lords, I strongly associate myself and the rest of these Benches with the remarks of the Minister in respect of the person who attended this place last night. We strongly support his attempts to stop that kind of behaviour. We do all have a responsibility. One of the things that happened at CHOGM was a conference at Lambeth Palace, involving religious leaders and politicians. Can the Minister tell us a bit more about what progress has been made since CHOGM? It is not simply a matter of Governments; it is about all community leaders and faith leaders taking the initiative.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The noble Lord raises an important point, and we of course welcomed the progress at CHOGM. I have continued to work closely with Lambeth Palace and other faith leaders as well. I am working closely with the Vatican, through Archbishop Gallagher, and I recently met His Highness the Aga Khan. We are looking across the piece with leaders from different faith communities, and from humanist societies as well, to ensure that we can work together as one on this important priority.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-10-24/debates/295F225D-8176-496C-ACE3-220A02B45423/FreedomOfReligionOrBelief>

House of Lords Written Answer

Religious Freedom

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL10613] To ask Her Majesty's Government in what ways, if any, they plan to mark the International Day for Freedom of Religion or Belief on 27 October; and whether they will issue guidance to all embassies and overseas missions on the UK policy on such freedom.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister demonstrated the British Government's commitment to promoting freedom of religion or belief when in July this year she appointed me as her special envoy. The British Government sees International Religious Freedom Day on 27 October as an opportunity to reflect on

the persecution suffered around the world by people due to their religion or beliefs; and to promote respect between communities. The British Government will mark the day on social media, and through an event jointly hosted by myself and Lord Bates on 7 November to mark the occasion. We will also use the occasion to re-issue the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's toolkit on Freedom of Religion or Belief to all of our overseas embassies and missions across our global network, and encourage them to promote and defend this important human right. Finally we are pleased that almost £1 million of funding has been allocated to pursue our freedom of religion or belief policy objectives through the Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-11/HL10613/>

House of Commons Library

Briefing: International freedom of religion or belief day 2018

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2018-0231/CDP-2018-0231.pdf>

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Other Relevant Information

European Parliament

Parliament demands ban on neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups in the EU

... In a resolution passed with 355 votes to 90 and 39 abstentions, MEPs denounce that the lack of serious action against these groups has enabled the current xenophobic surge in Europe. ...

MEPs argue that the impunity enjoyed by far-right organisations in some member states is one of the reasons behind the rise in violent actions, affecting society as a whole and targeting particular minorities such as black Europeans/people of African descent, Jews, Muslims, Roma, non-EU nationals, LGBTI people, and persons with disabilities.

They propose setting up anti-hate crime units in police forces to ensure these crimes are investigated and prosecuted. They also urge national authorities to “effectively ban neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups and any other foundation or association that exalts and glorifies Nazism and fascism”. ...

Troubled by reports of collusion between political leaders, political parties and law enforcement with neo-fascists and neo-Nazis in some member states, Parliament calls on the member states to “clearly condemn and sanction” hate crime, hate speech and scapegoating by politicians and public officials, as they directly normalise and reinforce hatred and violence.

Measures are also necessary to counteract the spread of racism, fascism and xenophobia through the internet, in cooperation with social media companies. ...

The resolution demands that member states and national sports federations, in particular football clubs, counteract the scourge of racism, fascism and xenophobia in stadiums and in sports culture by condemning and punishing those responsible and by promoting positive educational activities targeting young fans, in cooperation with schools and civil society organisations .

EU countries should also set up “exit programmes” to help individuals to leave violent neo-fascist and neo-Nazi groups. MEPs stress the importance of education, to increase history awareness among the youth and call for a clear rejection of the fascist crimes of the past. They underline that the truth about the Holocaust must not be trivialised.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20181018IPR16527/parliament-demands-ban-on-neo-fascist-and-neo-nazi-groups-in-the-eu>

The text of the resolution as passed is not yet available online.

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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>

Online Forums Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.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

Reform of the legal requirements for divorce (closing date 10 December 2018)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/reform-of-the-legal-requirements-for-divorce/>

The future of civil partnership in Scotland (closing date 21 December 2018)

<https://consult.gov.scot/family-law/the-future-of-civil-partnership-in-scotland/>

2021 Census: Outputs Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland (closing date 9 January 2019)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/dfp/2021-census-outputs-strategy-consultation-for-northern-ireland-document.pdf>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438

