

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

Contents

Home Affairs

Relevant Legislation

Other Relevant Information

Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answers

Prime Minister's Questions

The Prime Minister (Theresa May): I know that the whole House would like to join me in sending our deepest condolences to the families of those who were killed in the horrific attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on Saturday. The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish friends across the world. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-31/debates/0B498358-C3D7-4D6A-A2F9-901FB73F64F7/Engagements#contribution-C44006CA-00E3-4D34-B6FA-F5BD434130FD>

Jeremy Corbyn (Labour): I join the Prime Minister in sending our sympathies and solidarity to the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. The attack was disgusting, depraved and appalling, and I am sure that every single Member of this House would completely and unreservedly condemn it for what it is. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-31/debates/0B498358-C3D7-4D6A-A2F9-901FB73F64F7/Engagements#contribution-C589039C-651C-4186-A976-F6691E261DBB>

Ian Blackford (SNP): May I associate myself with the Prime Minister's remarks regarding the Tree of Life massacre ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-31/debates/0B498358-C3D7-4D6A-A2F9-901FB73F64F7/Engagements#contribution-F3F06615-4906-4CE9-A706-79A5BD530D46>

House of Lords Written Answers

Hate Crime

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL10790] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Home Office statistics demonstrating that the number of hate crimes committed in England and Wales has more than doubled in the past five years and that hate crimes recorded by the police increased by 17 per cent in the year to March 2018.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The latest data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales shows hate crime has fallen by 40% over the last decade.

In contrast, the trend in police recorded hate crime has been upward since 2012/13 which, like other categories of police recorded crime, is thought to be largely driven by improvements in police recording practices but also better

identification of hate crimes, willingness of victims to come forward but there has also been genuine increase in these offences around certain events such as the EU Referendum and the terrorist attacks in 2017.

The increase in police recorded hate crime is consistent with Government policy to encourage better recording as it is vital to victim care, the criminal justice system and our understanding of the nature of this abhorrent crime.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-17/HL10790/>

Animals: Exports

Baroness Hodgson of Abinger (Conservative) [HL10771] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many animals have been exported abroad for slaughter in each of the past five years; and how many of those animals they estimate were slaughtered without being pre-stunned.

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: According to the EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) database, the total volume of trade in live exports for slaughter to the EU from the UK from 2014 to 2016 was:

	2014	2015	2016
Cattle	3,982	7,673	10,464
Sheep	361,769	321,343	385,099
Pigs	10,396	12,772	8,916
Total	378,161	343,803	406,495

The majority of these animals are exported from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland across the land border. The number of animals that were not stunned before slaughter is unknown.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-17/HL10771/>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

United Nations

Horrified by Deadly Anti-Semitic Attack in United States, Secretary-General Urges Leaders at Interfaith Gathering to Condemn Hate Crimes, Foster Social Cohesion

... I am here to express horror and solidarity. Horror in relation to the most abject act of anti-Semitism that has happened in the history of the United [States]. Something that makes us feel totally horrified, but solidarity - solidarity with the victims, solidarity with the family, solidarity with the Jewish community in Pittsburgh and worldwide, and solidarity also with the people of Pittsburgh and the people of the United States of America who overwhelmingly reject this horrendous act.

Since I became Secretary-General, I have been raising my voice against what I believe is the rise of anti-Semitism in many of our societies and namely my part in the world in Europe but also unfortunately, here also in North America. It is not only anti-Semitism that we are witnessing rising. We see other forms of anti-religious hatred be it against Muslims. We have seen Christians and Yazidis being persecuted in the Middle East. We have seen so many situations where migrants and refugees become the scapegoat of the problems of societies. We see xenophobia and racism developing in many parts of the world. But it is true that anti-Semitism is the oldest and [most] permanent form of hatred against a people in the history of humankind. Jews are discriminated and persecuted for the simple reason that they are Jews.

With the climate of persecution and discrimination in the Roman Empire, with everything that happened in the Middle Ages, I will never forget the history of my country, the discrimination and persecution of Jews in the Middle Ages and then culminating with the most stupid crime of Portuguese history, the expulsion of the Jews in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Criminal because of the suffering endured by the Jewish people, stupid because it had a very negative perspective in the prosperity of my own country. Then, as centuries went on with different manifestations in different parts of the world with more violence and more subtlety, culminating in the horror of the Nazi Holocaust.

I must say, that probably with some naïve approach, that I always felt the Holocaust had been so horrible that rejection of what happened would be so universal that it would really make us feel so angry – with that total abjection, that anti-Semitism would tend to disappear in modern societies. It was with a certain amount of surprise that I have seen that progressively anti-Semitism is again on the rise. It's on the rise especially in the developed world in ways that I find particularly intolerable.

Jews being again persecuted or discriminated or attacked for the simple reason that they are who they are. We see it in the Internet, in hate speech, we see it in the way cemeteries are desecrated. We now see it in this horrendous attack on a synagogue.

I believe it is important not only to denounce, not only to condemn these acts as any other act of xenophobia or racism, but it's necessary to try to understand why this is happening. ...

I believe that it is important to recognize that diversity is a richness, not a threat. Diversity will not necessarily be spontaneously harmonious. To make diversity harmonious we need to have a strong investment in the social cohesion of societies. In making sure that not only people tolerate each other ...

We need to make sure that there is a massive investment in education. We need to make sure there are safety nets allowing those that are the ones left behind by technical progress or globalization not to feel desperate in relation to the future. ...

Let's be clear. We also need to be very firm in speaking up and combatting these new forms that are not only anti-Semitism. I even see the roots of neo-Nazism growing. I was amazed a few months ago when, when in a demonstration, there were people shouting, "blood and soil". Now for many common citizens, some of these expressions that are used have no special meaning. They look like not so adequate forms of expression of patriotism. But now more and more words, more and more concepts, more and more ideas that we see on the Internet, in many demonstrations in the expression of people, are deeply rooted in Nazi thinking. They have a special meaning in the Nazi ideology.

This is something we need to be very attentive in our societies because one of the logics of extremist organizations is to, in a subtle way, try to penetrate the mainstream and make some of their idiot ideas being accepted as a new normal in our societies.

We have to condemn. We have to speak up. We have to be very firm in denouncing horrendous acts like the one in Pittsburgh, but we need to assume our responsibilities as leaders to prevent these things from happening and to address the root causes that help them to develop.

Allow me a personal note. In what I read about the criminal that has done these horrendous acts, there is a reference that he was particularly shocked by the action of a humanitarian organization – HIAS – the Hebrew [Immigrant] Aid [Society].

I want to give you a testimony. As High Commissioner for Refugees, I worked with HIAS for many years. It is the most fantastic humanitarian organization I have ever met. They are the true expression of humanitarianism, but also humanism and solidarity. What they have done, what apparently this man was accusing them to do was to bring to the United States people in search of protection and to allow them to have a better life. I was particularly shocked that this organization that is the symbol of everything I considered good in the world being used as a pretext to justify this horrendous act. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19328.doc.htm>

TOP

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>

TOP

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>

TOP

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