

# Political Affairs Digest

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

## Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Business of the House

*col 1069* **Valerie Vaz (Labour):** ... Members should note an email from the Jewish Leadership Council, which is collecting messages of support for the community in Pittsburgh following the heartbreaking murder of worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue. I encourage all Members to send those messages, and we send our condolences to them. People go to a synagogue to pray. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-01/debates/0C0379C7-972A-421D-9290-0048126D0C4D/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-C89440C5-217D-4AD7-84B7-958FA2DB258F>

*col 1078* **Jim Shannon (DUP)** Members should note an email from the Jewish Leadership Council, which is collecting messages of support for the community in Pittsburgh following the heartbreaking murder of worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue. I encourage all Members to send those messages, and we send our condolences to them. People go to a synagogue to pray.

**Andrea Leadsom:** The hon. Gentleman raises an issue that has already been discussed here today. We all send our condolences to the families and friends of those who were attacked in such a barbaric way. There can be absolutely no excuse for any form of religious or racially motivated attack of this nature.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-01/debates/0C0379C7-972A-421D-9290-0048126D0C4D/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-BA1CF684-7ECD-48C2-A50F-F4A8A0966FDA>

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### Schools: Construction

**Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat)** [HL10963] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many new faith schools were built in each of the years 2010 to 2017; and how many non faith schools were built in the same period.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The table below lists the numbers and proportions of

designated faith schools and non-faith schools opened each year from 2010 to 2017.

Year Opened	Faith	No Faith	Total	% Faith	% No Faith
2010	2	34	36	5.60%	94.40%
2011	8	32	40	20.00%	80.00%
2012	15	83	98	15.30%	84.70%
2013	22	117	139	15.80%	84.20%
2014	15	125	140	10.70%	89.30%
2015	10	108	118	8.50%	91.50%
2016	10	76	86	11.60%	88.40%
2017	8	56	64	12.50%	87.50%
<b>Total</b>	90	631	721		

Source: 'Get Information About Schools'

Regarding the definition of 'built', we have defined a 'built' school as one which has no predecessor, as recorded in the 'Get Information About Schools' links data, but which includes those that have resulted from local re-organisation of school provision.

The table also reflects schools that have subsequently closed.

For 'type of establishment', we have included all academies and maintained schools, including special schools, pupil referral units, alternative provision and 16 to 19 provision.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-23/HL10963/>

## Cabinet Office

**Letter from Baroness Manzoor to Baroness Barker regarding engaging with faith organisations concerning identifying instances of coercive control**

[http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-1077/Letter to Baroness Barker on faith organisations.pdf](http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-1077/Letter_to_Baroness_Barker_on_faith_organisations.pdf)

*The Guidance on "Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationship", referred to in the above letter, can be read at*

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-intimate-or-family-relationship>

*The Guidance on "Working Together to Safeguard Children", referred to in the above letter, can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/729914/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf)

*The Integrated Communities Strategy, referred to in the above letter, can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/696993/Integrated\\_Communities\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf)

## Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

### First Minister's Questions: Antisemitism

**4. John Mason (SNP):** To ask the First Minister what action the Scottish Government is taking in response to the reported rise in antisemitism. (S5F-02717)

**The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):** There is absolutely no place in Scotland or

anywhere else for any form of antisemitism or religious hatred. Last week, we learned of the tragic attack on the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, and my thoughts—and I am sure the thoughts of all members—are with all those who have been affected. We stand in solidarity with the Jewish community across the world.

I was reminded of the importance of tolerance, compassion and respect during my visit to Auschwitz earlier this week with schoolchildren from across Scotland. I certainly will never forget what I saw there and none of us should ever forget the horrors of genocides around the world. They are a stark reminder of the inhumanity and violence that bigotry and intolerance can cause.

We are committed to tackling hate crime and prejudice. We recently launched the letters from Scotland campaign, which aims to encourage witnesses and victims to report hate crime and help to create a society where hate crime and prejudice of any form are not tolerated.

**John Mason:** I certainly share the First Minister's sympathies with those who have been affected by the attack in Pittsburgh. I, too, found my visit to Auschwitz incredibly moving, especially when I saw the railway there.

Does the First Minister agree that the words and tone that politicians use are extremely important and can have a big impact on the people who hear them? Does she agree that we all need to be wary and careful of the tone that we use, and that that includes President Trump when he talks about Mexico, and other people when they talk about Israel and the Jewish communities?

**The First Minister:** Yes, I absolutely agree with that. It is incumbent on us all to consider carefully the words, language and tone that we use. Words matter, and all of us are aware of the damaging impact that can be inflicted on individuals and communities through the irresponsible use of language. Everybody in public life has a duty to be aware of that and to understand the importance of the messages, tone and language that we use. It is important that we acknowledge and take time to consider the impact that our words can have on people and their families, and of course that includes personalised attacks and violent language. Those debase all of us, and each and every one of us has a part to play in confronting and challenging them.

**Adam Tomkins (Conservative):** The First Minister referred to her visit to Auschwitz this week. In reflecting on her visit—as I have reflected on my visits to Holocaust memorials, such as Yad Vashem in Jerusalem—does she agree that, above all else, the principal lesson of the Holocaust is that none of us can ever afford to look the other way in the face of antisemitism? Even in a country as otherwise welcoming and civilised as Scotland, as Ephraim Borowski of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities recently said, “Jewish people remain 30 times more likely than others to be targeted for their religion”. Is that a call not merely for words but for action?

**The First Minister:** Yes. All of us have to look carefully at not just what we say but how we apply those words in the actions that we take. As the First Minister and the leader of my party, I take that responsibility very seriously, and I hope that that goes for members across the chamber.

I thoroughly recommend to any member who has not yet visited Auschwitz that they take the opportunity to do so if they get it. It is a profoundly unsettling experience, but an incredibly important one. As I said when I was there on Tuesday, it is important to remember all those who suffered and were murdered there and to pay tribute to that suffering, but it is also really important that we do not see what happened there just in a historical context. It is not just a history lesson. The Holocaust did not start in Auschwitz, Birkenau or any of the concentration camps; it started in everyday antisemitism and discrimination and the othering and dehumanising of Jews. That is the lesson that we must learn and apply in our modern lives.

That is why I was so pleased to be at Auschwitz with 200 Scottish school students

and why I am so pleased that the Scottish Government supports—as I know many members do—the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust to ensure that as many young people as possible get that experience. It had a profound impact on me, but I know from watching the reactions of the young people whom I was with that it had a profound impact on them as well. That can only be to the good as we do everything that we can to ensure that those horrors cannot be allowed to happen again.

**Neil Findlay (Labour):** I fully support the First Minister's words. However, this week, the acting leader of West Lothian Council's Scottish National Party councillors and one of his colleagues shared and then defended sharing an article that attacked a young female Jewish trade union leader for her work in representing low-paid workers. The article cited Adolf Hitler and "Mein Kampf". The author of the article was rightly suspended by the First Minister's party. Will the First Minister take further action and suspend both elected councillors and others who spread such offensive and hateful material and attack and abuse people for simply doing their job?

**The First Minister:** I will respond seriously and in a heartfelt way to that legitimate question. To follow up on Adam Tomkins's question, it is important that all of us reflect on not just what we say but what we do. The author of that blog was suspended from SNP membership earlier this week. Obviously, due process will now have to be gone through, so I will not say any more about that at this stage, but I will say that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definitions of antisemitism will be used in the consideration of that disciplinary complaint. The SNP councillor in question has written to the young woman who has been mentioned today with an unreserved apology, fully recognising that he made a significant error of judgment and that that error of judgment arose out of a lack of understanding and knowledge.

There are two things that I want to say about that. First, I discussed those matters in general terms with members of the Jewish community whom I was with on Tuesday. When people get things wrong because of a lack of understanding or knowledge, it is sometimes important that we give them a chance to learn, because education and learning are an important part of combating antisemitism, intolerance and racism of all forms. The SNP is responsible for the decisions that we take on those matters and is answerable for those decisions, but in all such matters, we have consulted the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities, and we have done so this week in relation to the appropriate response to the situation. The final point that I want to make on this is equally important. I could stand here right now and run through a whole list of alleged failures by Labour or other parties to take these things seriously and, indeed, to act as seriously as we have done this week. However, I am not going to do that because, although in a democracy it is really important that we hold each other to account, check each other's behaviour and call out unacceptable behaviour—that is a vital part of our democratic process—it is equally important that we do not rush to weaponise these things against each other for petty party-political reasons. We are all guilty of that sometimes. Fundamentally, it is really important that we stand united in saying that antisemitism, racism, bigotry and intolerance in any form are completely unacceptable.

The SNP will continue to treat the matter in that way and we will continue to be answerable for the decisions that we make. However, ultimately, on these issues there is a lot more that unites all of us than divides us. We would probably do a greater service to the memory of those whom we have been discussing and to future generations if we took the time to stand in solidarity on these issues as much as we choose to divide.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11746&i=106333#ScotParlOR>

TOP

## Holocaust

See the exchange headed “*First Minister’s Questions: Antisemitism*” under “*Scottish Parliament Oral Questions*” in the Home Affairs section above.

TOP

## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Palestinians: Females**

**Jim Cunningham (Labour)** [184874] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the protection of women's rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; and what steps her Department is taking to promote the protection of women's rights in those Territories.

**Alistair Burt:** According to UN Women, while there has been progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), for example a closing gender gap on literacy rates and amendments to laws discriminatory to women’s rights, the volatile context means this progress is fragile. The occupation and political situation can increase women’s vulnerability to social and economic insecurity and violence; this is heightened in Gaza where the situation remains dire. Female unemployment across the OPTs stood at around 40% in 2017, whereas for males it was 24%. The last available survey from 2010/11 shows that 37% (around 30% in the West Bank and over 51% in Gaza) of ever-married women suffered from a form of violence within the household. UN Women and other UN agencies support the Palestinian Authority in the implementation of gender-sensitive plans and policy-level initiatives to ensure the protection of women’s rights.

The UK is a long-term supporter of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) which works to ensure gender equality and the protection of Palestine refugees’ rights in all its programming. UNRWA supports around 1 million Palestinian refugee women across the OPTs and protects their rights to health, water and sanitation, shelter and food security. UNRWA ensures an inclusive approach to protecting children’s right to an education (covering 160,000 girls in the West Bank and Gaza), provides antenatal and postnatal care for more than 50,000 women, and works to protect women and children from violence through access to services and community engagement.

The UK is also working to protect women’s economic rights across the OPTs. Our Palestinian Market Development Programme supported a total of 219 female-owned managed enterprises from 2013 to 2018 and helped to create over 800 jobs for women. A new £38 million economic development programme will address barriers faced by women to employment and economic opportunities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-29/184874/>

#### **Gaza: Overseas Aid**

**Gregory Campbell (DUP)** [184898] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether irregularities in UK official development assistance spending were discovered during programme audits and field visits to Gaza in each of the last two years; and if she will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK is part of the international effort to provide critical humanitarian and development support to the civilian population in Gaza. DFID is

aware of a small number of minor irregularities in UK official development assistance spending on bilateral programmes in Gaza in the last two years. There are inherent risks to delivering aid in Gaza, which is why the UK has stringent controls in place to prevent the diversion of aid and only works with organisations that have a strong track record of delivering humanitarian aid in difficult places. We take immediate and strong action when any irregularities are reported and work closely with partners to prevent future cases. We do not disclose individual case details to protect the integrity of investigations, anonymity of informants and help ensure that we can get the best deal for the UK taxpayer through recovery of funds.

In Gaza, our rigorous controls include: monitoring spending closely; mapping the flow of funds through each organisation involved in delivery; regular audits of programme spending; and field visits. These all enable us to deliver critical assistance to people in need whilst protecting UK taxpayers' money. Additionally, DFID aid complies with UK and international counter terrorism legislation and our funding agreements commit partners to understand and comply with international counter terrorism legislation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-29/184898/>

TOP

## Foreign Affairs

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Alistair Burt retweeted: Rabbi Lutz:** The doctor who operated on #TreeofLife shooter is a Jew. The shooter shouted anti-Semitic slurs at him even as he tended his wounds. The doctor said that he was proud to offer medical care to a human who was wounded. You want to know what it means to be a Jew? Here's your answer.

<https://twitter.com/RavMABAY/status/1057073839467831296>

TOP

## Other Relevant Information

### UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Neo-Nazism and nationalist populism fuel hatred and intolerance, says UN expert**

Social media and other digital platforms are being used to disseminate hate speech and incite violence, as well as to recruit, network and fundraise for Neo-Nazi and other extremist groups, a UN expert on racism said.

In a report to the General Assembly, UN Special Rapporteur Tendayi Achiume cited the dramatic rise of racist websites to more than 14,000 in 2011 – from only three in 1995 – and a 600 percent increase of white nationalist movements espousing their views on Twitter since 2012.

“At the core of neo-Nazism ideologies lies a hatred of Jews, as well as many other racial, ethnic, and religious groups. These ideologies also vilify lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people, and persons with disabilities, and in some cases women,” Achiume said.

“This growing climate of intolerance has tangible, horrific impacts on human lives as witnessed during the anti-Semitic attack in Pittsburgh on 27 October 2018,” she added.

The expert said the largely unregulated, decentralised, cheap and anonymous nature of the Internet had allowed extremist groups to form networks across borders and amplify their hate-filled messages. Technology companies such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook needed to ensure their platforms did not continue to provide a safe haven for extremist mobilisations.

Condemning the spread of extremist, sensationalist, conspiratorial “news” on all forms of social media against targeted groups, the Special Rapporteur urged the implementation of the principles of international and regional human rights frameworks to tackle racist hate speech, racist organisations and the promotion of racist ideologies and propaganda. Achiume also observed that populist political parties and their elected officials had mainstreamed incitement to discrimination and hatred. “Nationalist populism operates on an exclusionary and racialised vision of who qualifies as a nation’s rightful people, and stokes societal fury against all those who do not meet this narrow definition,” she said.

“Nationalist populism marginalises and discriminates against individuals and communities on the basis of their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, descent, national origin, social origin, and even their disability or migration status.” ...

“Action is required by more States to implement anti-hate speech laws and ensure equality and non-discrimination including online, in accordance with international human rights law,” Achiume said. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23814&LangID=E>

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