

# Political Affairs Digest

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

## Contents

Home Affairs  
 Israel

Relevant Legislation  
 Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answers

**Topical Questions: Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government**  
**The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (James Brokenshire):** ... As we mourn the tragic events in Pittsburgh, especially in the context of this week's 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht, we are clear that racism and xenophobia in whatever form have no place in our society and will be confronted in the strongest terms. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-05/debates/857487BC-3234-4943-8C0B-2999B9BE53EF/TopicalQuestions#contribution-11C6679E-12AD-4AED-B6DC-535D84C42AD4>

**Topical Questions: Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government**  
**T9. Ian Austin (Labour):** Does the Secretary of State agree that the establishment of the new all-party group on the national holocaust memorial, which is chaired by the hon. Member for Harrow East (Bob Blackman) and me, is very much to be welcomed? Is it not fantastic that so many Members from both sides of the House came together, at a time when antisemitism is on the increase, to establish this group and that we want to commemorate here in Parliament history's greatest crime and support the establishment of this memorial, right here in Westminster, at the centre of not just our political life but our national life? [907465]

**James Brokenshire:** I absolutely recognise and commend what the hon. Gentleman said on how collectively we challenge antisemitism and stand up for the values of this country. I pay tribute to him for the personal contribution that he has made on this issue, and equally, I reflect on the statue of Frank Foley, which the hon. Gentleman was instrumental in bringing into effect. It recognises Frank Foley's contribution in saving the lives of thousands of Jews fleeing from persecution in Germany, and we must never forget the contribution that he and others have made.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-05/debates/857487BC-3234-4943-8C0B-2999B9BE53EF/TopicalQuestions#contribution-25F92347-C4CA-428C-B86B-E08D6351F661>

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Universities: Freedom of Expression

**Jo Stevens (Labour) [186352]** To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with

reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, of 17 May 2018, Official Report, column 241WH, what information his Department holds on the (a) number of speaking events blocked by a university or students' union, (b) books removed from university libraries and (c) changes to courses due to changes in equalities guidance.

**Sam Gyimah:** The information requested is not held centrally.

The department does not collect data on the number of speaking events blocked by a University or Students' Union, books removed from university libraries and changes to courses due to changes in equalities guidance

As set out in a statement on 17 May, we do not believe that measuring free speech on campus by events that happen is sufficient, as this does not evidence self-censorship or those events that do not happen in the first place. We are committed to defending free speech on campus to avoid a culture of censorship which risks leading to those outcomes to which the question refers. Comprehensive guidance on Freedom of Speech for the higher education sector is due to be published by the end of the year.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-31/186352/>

*The oral contribution and statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-17/debates/973CF837-FFDF-47AF-89AB-D044A17826F9/FreedomOfSpeechUniversities#contribution-730C1D67-B8EA-4197-A9D9-BA1D29B5AB3F>

TOP

## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Israel: Bedouin

**Jim Cunningham (Labour)** [185494] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has held with the Palestinian Authority on the planned demolition of the Palestinian village of Khan al-Ahmar.

**Alistair Burt:** We regularly discuss this issue with Palestinian Authority representatives. I visited Khan al-Ahmar on 30 May, and on 12 June issued a video message emphasising the UK's concern at the village's imminent demolition. Our Consul General in Jerusalem most recently visited on 11 September to assess the situation on the ground and demonstrate UK support for the community. Officials from the Consulate-General in Jerusalem visited the community again on 1 October.

Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly raised our concerns about demolitions with Israeli Ministers and senior officials, and urged them to cease the counter-productive policy of demolitions, and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-30/185494/>

*The video message referred to above can be seen at*

<https://twitter.com/UKinJerusalem/status/1006455316245082112>

#### Palestinians: Politics and Government

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [186158] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on

the assertion reported on 19 October 2018 on official PA TV, that Jews didn't learn from what Hitler did to them.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK strongly condemns any language or actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. Our sustained support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding which requires the PA to commit to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle. President Abbas restated his commitment to the two-state solution on September 27 at the UN General Assembly, and through our financial assistance, the UK will continue to support a stable PA which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-31/186158/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel: West Bank

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL10917] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they intend to take regarding the demolition of Palestinian structures in the West Bank by Israeli forces.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government has repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. In all but the most exceptional circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. We call on the Israeli authorities to cease the policy of demolitions and provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-22/HL10917/>

### Israel: Christianity

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL10918] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about vandalism of Christian property in both Israel and the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not had any recent discussions with the Israeli authorities on this issue, we condemn all extremist violence, including attacks against religious buildings. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv are in regular contact with representatives of churches on a range of issues, including concerns about attacks on places of worship.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-22/HL10918/>

### Palestinians: Recognition of States

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL10919] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for recognising the state of Palestine following the UN General Assembly's agreement to allow the Palestinian Authority to participate in meetings as a legitimate state.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK voted in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution that gives the Palestinian observer mission to the UN time-bound additional rights to perform the function of the G77 chair.

The UK is clear that we want to see the creation of a sovereign, independent, contiguous, and viable Palestinian state - living in peace and security, side by side with Israel.

The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-22/HL10919/>

### **Hebron: Israeli Settlements**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL10922] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding their plan to approve the construction of further settlement housing units in the West Bank city of Hebron.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** On 23 August 2018 the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa issued a statement on Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank. The previous Foreign Secretary issued a statement expressing concern about the construction permits issued for 31 settlement units in Hebron, for the first time in 15 years. We will continue to raise our concerns about Israel's plans for further settlements with the Israeli authorities. The Government's position is clear: settlements are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-22/HL10922/>

*The statements referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-middle-east-statement-on-israeli-settlement-construction>

*and*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-settlement-units-in-the-west-bank--2>

**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