

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Antisemitism: Prosecutions

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [195490] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have been prosecuted for anti-semitic hate crime in each of the last three years.

Lucy Frazer: Prosecutions data held by the department record information against offences defined in law. The law does not define an offence specifically of anti-Semitic hate crime, so the requested information is not held. Figures for whether Anti-Semitism was a motivation of other offences that have been prosecuted is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-26/195490/>

UK Parliament House of Commons Library

Letter dated 22/12/2014 from Desmond Swayne MP to Prime Minister Hamdallah, Palestinian National Authority, regarding amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Palestinian National Authority and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-1181/MoU_MC_DFID_PA_2014.pdf

The above letter was referred to in written question 194657 which was included in Political Affairs Digest of 29 November 2018. The question and answer can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-22/194657/>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Islamophobia and Antisemitism

Anas Sarwar (Labour): At a time when hate is on the rise, we got some hope. This week

saw the Muslim and Jewish communities come together to sign a landmark joint communiqué to call out and challenge Islamophobia and antisemitism in Scotland. Together, Muslim and Jewish women born in Scotland are telling about how they have been called traitors, spat at and told to go home, and how they are scared of travelling on Scotland's public transport system. In the same week, we saw the horrific video of the young Syrian boy being racially abused and insulted at his school in Huddersfield. Silence is no longer an option in the face of such hate. Does the First Minister agree that we cannot leave the fight against Islamophobia to the Muslim community, that we cannot leave the fight against antisemitism to the Jewish community, that we cannot leave the fight against all forms of prejudice and hate to any individual community and that it must be a fight for all of us? *[Applause.]*

Reply from the First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): Yes, I absolutely agree. I congratulate the Muslim and Jewish communities on the actions that they have taken this week. Their actions in doing what they have done this week are a better representation of Scotland than the actions of those who indulge in hate crime.

I absolutely agree that there is no place for silence. None of us should be bystanders when it comes to tackling and calling out hate crime; there is an obligation on all of us. I say very clearly but very strongly that an attack on any Muslim, any Jew or any member of any minority community should be seen as an attack on all of us, and that we should have solidarity and stand shoulder to shoulder at all times. I say that as First Minister and I hope that I am joined in that sentiment by every single member in the chamber. *[Applause.]*

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11811&i=106875#ScotParlOR>

The joint communiqué referred to above can be read at

https://www.scojec.org/news/2018/18xi_cpg/cpg.html

Welsh Government

Third anniversary of life changing organ donation policy

In 2015 Wales became the first country in the UK to take the decision to move to a soft opt-out system of consent to organ donation. ...

Data released last month showed for the first time, a significant increase in the donation after brain stem death (DBD) consent rates in Wales (88.2%) when compared to England (73.3%). The donation after circulatory death (DCD) consent rate in Wales has also improved and is now 68% compared to England 59.8%.

Organ donation consent rates in Wales are now the highest in the UK. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://gov.wales/newsroom/health-and-social-services/2018/third/?lang=en>

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Holocaust

Foreign Office

80 years ago, the Kindertransport helped thousands of children escape Nazi Europe and seek refuge in Britain. Ruth Schwiening made the journey to Britain aged just 3 years old.

Watch her story in full: <http://bit.ly/2AIJBZO>

<https://twitter.com/foreignoffice/status/1069146652496162817>

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Persecution of Christians

6. **Fiona Bruce (Conservative):** What steps the Church of England is taking to raise awareness in the Government of the persecution of Christians throughout the world. [907930]

The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Caroline Spelman): The Church of England remains concerned about the increase in violence and intimidation against Christians and all religious minorities across the globe. In fact, my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest West (Sir Desmond Swayne) reminded colleagues at this week's Prime Minister's questions of the visit of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Theophilos III, who will be in Parliament next Wednesday. He is regarded as a senior cleric from the Christian communion in Jerusalem, and he is to give a talk about the future of Christians in the Holy Land. ...

Desmond Swayne (Conservative): I attempted to restrict the scope of a question to the holy lands and was summoned to the Table Office to change the offending words. It is not persecution, but does my right hon. Friend resent that secular agenda as much as I do?

Caroline Spelman: ... I am concerned about religious literacy and understanding better the Holy Land. I was fortunate to be able to make a visit with five Members of Parliament, led by the Speaker's Chaplain, Rose, to the Holy Land for the first time, to see for myself the plight of Christians there and the complexity of the issues in the Holy Land. I do not think we should baulk at calling it the Holy Land, for many of the world's faith regard it as such. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-29/debates/B0E7A090-576D-4AF6-9923-D456A1ACCAB0/PersecutionOfChristians>

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Human Rights

Wes Streeting (Labour) [195632] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the Human Rights Watch's report entitled Two Authorities, One Way, what support his Department provides to civic society groups in the West Bank whose abuse by the Palestinian Authority has been detailed in that report.

Alistair Burt: The UK continues to support civil society groups who are non-violently resisting the occupation. The UK funded a project in the 2017/2018 financial year which supported civil society to advocate changes to the Press and Publication Law. This amended law is currently at its third reading in the Palestinian Authority (PA) Cabinet and we continue to push for its adoption. The Human Rights Watch report has made some serious and concerning allegations about human rights violations by the PA and we have raised our concerns with the Palestinian Ministry of Interior. Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem continue to urge the PA to respect human rights, and have stressed the need to ensure freedom of speech, association and assembly.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-26/195632/>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/10/23/two-authorities-one-way-zero-dissent/arbitrary-arrest-and-torture-under>

Palestinians: Freedom of Expression

Wes Streeting (Labour) [195634] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect freedom of speech in the Palestinian Territories.

Alistair Burt: Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right, and the UK is strongly committed to protecting and promoting the right to lawful freedom of speech. We have concerns about increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, and the narrowing of the space for civil society to operate, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem continue to raise these concerns with the Palestinian Authority.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-26/195634/>

United Nations

Calling for Final Peace Settlement to Israeli Palestinian Conflict, General Assembly Adopts Six Resolutions on Middle East

M. Shahrul Ikram Yaakob (Malaysia) said that his delegation co-sponsored draft resolutions “L.31”, “L.32”, “L.33” and “L.34”, noting Israel continues to violate international law. The adoption of the Jewish nation-State law in July 2018, the aggressive expansion of settlements and the relentless and disproportionate use of force against unarmed Palestinian civilians during the Great March of Return are recent examples of a long-standing pattern of systematic abuse of the oppressed people of Palestine. ...

Abdallah Y. Al-Mouallimi (Saudi Arabia) said that for 70 years Palestinians have lived under occupation that defies all moral norms. ... Israel, through its violations, demonstrates that it believes itself to be above the law. The blockade imposed on Gaza flouts all humanitarian values. Israeli legislation promotes discrimination ... “We are stunned by Israeli attempts to undermine resolutions on the matter,” he said. ...

Tarek Fathi Mohamed Mohamed Tayel (Egypt), introducing the draft resolutions titled “Jerusalem” (document A/73/L.29) and “The Syrian Golan” (document A/73/L.30), said the Middle East has been shaken by instability because of Israeli occupation. “Some States attempt to exploit conflict in the region to whitewash Israeli violations of human rights,” he said ...

The representative of Austria, speaking on behalf of the European Union, put on record regarding all texts adopted by the Assembly that European Union member States see reference to a “Palestinian Government” to refer to the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, the European Union has not expressed a legal qualification for the term of “forced displacement” used in certain drafts. He said the bloc remains concerned about acts of violence at holy sites and calls for respect of the historic status quo of religious sites in Jerusalem.

The representative of Israel said that on 29 November 1947, the United Nations adopted a text creating independent Jewish and Arab States, living side-by-side. ... Year-after-year the date becomes an Israel-bashing session. ...

The representative of the United States said that his delegation continues to oppose the unfair number of resolutions presented against Israel. These resolutions are quick to condemn Israeli actions but say nothing about the other side. For the first time, the United States is introducing a stand-alone text to condemn Hamas. ... Palestinians are the only ones to have a dedicated centre in the United Nations Secretariat, which means they never have to come to the negotiating table. The cause of peace will be served when the bias against Israel ends, he stressed. ...

The Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine expressed gratitude to all the countries that voted in favour of the resolutions ... “This will give us strength to seek a peaceful and lasting solution,” he said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12096.doc.htm>

Jerusalem (A/73/L.29)

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.29>

The Syrian Golan (A/73/L.30)

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.30>

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/73/L.31)

<http://undocs.org/A/73/L.31>

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (A/73/L.32)

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.32>

Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (A/73/L.33)

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.33>

Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (A/73/L.34)

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.34>

As General Assembly Debates Question of Palestine, Members Call for Swift Action to Jump-Start Israeli-Palestinian Talks, Realize Two-State Solution

... Cheikh Niang (Senegal), Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, introduced the following draft resolutions: “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People” (document A/73/L.31); “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine” (document A/73/L.32); “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat” (document A/73/L.33); and “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat” (document A/73/L.34).

Carmelo Inguanez (Malta), Committee Rapporteur, introduced the “Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People” (document A/73/35) ... Through the report’s conclusions, the Committee urges the international community to redouble efforts towards achieving a two-State solution and deems as null and void decisions by Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

The report also reiterates a need to reframe the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from a territorial dispute between two equal parties to that of “one State occupying, colonizing and annexing the territory of another State” ...

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, expressed commitment to diplomatic, political, legal and non-violent means to realize the rights of the Palestinian people. ... he expressed concern over recent regional developments including the decision of the United States on moving its embassy to Jerusalem, the termination of funding to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the attempts to strip Palestinian refugees of their legitimate status and rights. “Only a deep conviction in the law and the inevitability of justice could have kept us on this path,” he said, adding that such faith should seem remarkable considering Israel’s violations and war crimes, which continue to be rewarded, rather than sanctioned, by the international community. ...

Israel is in grave breach of virtually all international and legal obligations, acting in blatant contempt of the Security Council, he said. Israel also ignores demands to cease its illegal policies and practices in occupied Palestinian territory and continues to systematically destroy the two-State solution, which is based on the pre-1967 borders. ...

It has persisted in its provocations against holy sites, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem, including violating the historic status quo at the Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

Israel has also continued its collective punishment of the Palestinian people, he said. The most heinous of such restrictions remains Israel's 11-year blockade of Gaza, where 2 million Palestinians are being deliberately isolated. ...

Danny Ben Yosef Danon (Israel) said every year the United Nations adopts resolutions to condemn his country, none of which has ever mentioned Hamas. ... Hamas steals aid from the Palestinian people to fund tunnels and uses civilians as human shields. If the international community does not condemn Hamas, it is enabling a terrorist organization.

The historic land of the Jewish people remained a barren desert for centuries as it was passed on between countless empires, he continued. "Our people were exiled from our land," he said, recalling that on this day, 71 years ago, 33 Member States adopted a plan to designate a small portion of the land to the Jewish people. Since then, Israel has faced wars, isolation, double standards and anti-Semitism. This did not stop Israel from building "something miraculous, an oasis in the desert and the one and only democracy for hundreds of miles." The vote on 29 November 1947 did not give Israel all that it wanted, but Israel took that and turned it into something extraordinary.

As soon as the partition plan passed, the Palestinian people began teaching their children to hate Israel, he said. It is time the Palestinian people recalculate their route, so that partnership, prosperity and peace are possible. ...

Palestinians have shown no interest in improving lives, instead wasting decades sponsoring terrorism, he continued. Instead of ventures, they chose violence. Instead of progress, they choose the past. The United Nations voted to recognize a Jewish State and an Arab State. "Every time we reach out with an open hand, we are not only faced with a clenched fist, but an armed one," he said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12095.doc.htm>

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/73/35)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/73/35>

Links to documents A/73/L.30 to A/73/L.34, referred to above, are listed below the first UN press release in this section.

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Other Relevant Information

CST

Antisemitic Discourse Report 2017

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/4/f/Antisemitic%20Discourse%20Report%202017.pdf>

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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>

Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/palestinianstatehoodrecognition.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 in 8 days**

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>

Extremism in England and Wales (closing date 31 January 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/extremism-in-england-and-wales-call-for-evidence>

Draft guidance to challenge bullying in schools [Wales only] (closing date 15 February 2019)

<https://beta.gov.wales/draft-guidance-challenge-bullying-schools>

One Scotland: Hate Has No Home Here (closing date 24 February 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/hate-crime/consultation-on-scottish-hate-crime-legislation/>

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