

# 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 Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Religion: Education**

**Lyn Brown (Labour)** [197423] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to prevent state-funded schools making inadequate provision for Religious Education.

**Lyn Brown (Labour)** [197424] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what consequential provisions are in place for the leaderships of state-funded schools which do not make statutory Religious Education available to all their pupils.

**Lyn Brown (Labour)** [197425] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of current methods for securing the provision of Religious Education in state-funded schools.

**Nick Gibb:** Religious education remains compulsory for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, at all key stages, and it is part of schools' activity to meet their legal duty to promote young people's spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Where the Department is made aware that schools are not fulfilling their legal duties, it will investigate. If an individual is concerned that a school is not meeting its duty to provide religious education, they should follow that school's complaint procedure in the first instance. If the complaint is not resolved, then the issue can be escalated to the Department's School Complaints Unit for maintained schools, or the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academies, free schools, university technical colleges or studio schools. Information about complaint procedures for schools can be found at [www.gov.uk/complain-about-school](http://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school).

The Secretary of State for Education has a range of powers to ensure schools comply with their statutory obligations. The exact powers used will depend on the nature of the statutory duty in question and the potential impact of any failure to comply. The powers used could include a direction under 497 of the Education Act 1996, a performance and standards warning notice under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and a referral to Ofsted for an inspection. Where academies are subject to the same statutory duties as maintained schools, the Secretary of State for Education has powers to enforce compliance via the terms of the funding agreement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-29/197423/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-29/197424/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-29/197425/>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Hate Crime

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP)** [HL11724] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 19 November (HL11282), whether the police and Crown Prosecution Service definition of hate crime includes hate speech; and if so, what is the basis in statute for that offence.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The term 'hate speech' does not have any legal meaning. For any example of hate speech to be treated as a hate crime it would need to meet the police and Crown Prosecution Service definition of a hate crime.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-22/HL11724/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-05/HL11282/>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Jeremy Hunt:** Light must triumph over darkness and hope must triumph over despair. Yesterday I lit the Hanukkah candles with Jewish staff members at the FCO. Hanukkah sameach!

[https://twitter.com/Jeremy\\_Hunt/status/1070975505518743554](https://twitter.com/Jeremy_Hunt/status/1070975505518743554)

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Jerusalem: Churches

**David Drew (Labour Co-op)** [198167] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the (a) Israeli Government and (b) US Administration on the protection of Christian sites of worship in Jerusalem.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK recognises that Jerusalem holds particular significance for many groups, especially the three Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate General in Jerusalem raise issues of religious freedom with the Israeli and Palestinian governments and are in contact with representatives of churches on a range of issues. We continue to encourage Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan as custodian of the holy sites in Jerusalem to do all they can to work together to uphold the status quo at all the holy sites in Jerusalem. We have not discussed this issue with the US Administration.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-03/198167/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel: Gaza

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11813] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the rights of Palestinian shepherds and farmers to graze sheep on and farm land in Gaza adjacent to the border.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-26/HL11813/>

### Israel: Politics and Government

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11814] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter sent to the government of Israel by four UN Special Rapporteurs which stated that those Rapporteurs held "deep concerns" about the nature of Nation State Law.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made an assessment of the letter. Israel's vibrant civil society and long standing commitment to equality for all its citizens are some of its great strengths as a fellow democracy. But as a friend of Israel, we are concerned about any development which would undermine this commitment, including the Nation State Bill which removes Arabic as an official language.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-26/HL11814/>

### Hebron: Ambulance Services

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL11818] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about allegations of an attack by Jewish settlers in the Old City of Hebron on Red Crescent ambulances trying to transfer Palestinian patients to hospital.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made representations on this specific issue, officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised the issue of settler violence and the importance of accountability with the Israeli Ministry of Justice on 29 October. The British Government condemns any violence by settlers against Palestinians. We are clear that medical staff should have the protection that allows them to do their jobs in safety.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-11-26/HL11818/>

## United Nations

### General Assembly Adopts Text Reiterating Call for Comprehensive Middle East Peace, after Failing to Pass Resolution Condemning Actions by Hamas in Gaza

... Nikki Haley (United States), introducing a draft resolution titled "Activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza" (A/73/L.42) said today presents the General Assembly an opportunity to speak out against one of the "ugliest cases of terrorism in the world". She said last week the Assembly adopted six resolutions condemning Israel, noting that the Organization's hostility against that country is unquestionable. "The issue before us now is if the United Nations considers terrorism acceptable when it is targeted at Israel," she said. The draft does not comment on specific peace agreements and stands for the rejection of terrorism, she said, stressing: "There can be no peace without agreement that terrorism is unacceptable."

The charter of Hamas calls for the destruction of Israel and the organization has used suicide bombers to target Israeli targets, she said. It has launched thousands of rockets over the Israeli border, such actions are classic cases of terrorism. "Still, not a single resolution has been adopted condemning Hamas," she stressed, adding that today the General Assembly could change that record.

She said certain Member States abandoned all sense of truth. Today that could be changed as States can come together for peace. "Hamas has been the de facto Government in Gaza for years," she noted, adding that the unemployment rate in the territory is among the highest in the world. Hamas has turned Gaza into a police State while using United Nations resources to build rockets. "The people that have suffered most under Hamas are Palestinians," she stressed, noting that the draft would right a historic wrong. "The General Assembly must be on record condemning Hamas' terrorism," she asserted, asking Arab States if their hatred towards Israel was so strong that they would defend a terrorist organization. "For the sake of peace and of this institution, I respectfully urge my colleagues to support the United States' resolution," she said. ...

The representative of Kuwait, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group ... condemned Israeli policies that violate international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations and requested a vote to apply the two-thirds majority rule for the adoption of draft "L.42".

The representative of the United States said a simple majority is required for adoption of the resolution. She called for fairness in the United Nations and said action on the draft was about "doing what is right". "The General Assembly has never uttered a word in any resolution about Hamas," she said. The decision to adopt the text by a two-thirds majority is based on a desire to have the resolution fail. She urged all States to vote against the motion.

The Assembly then decided to apply the two-thirds majority requirement for the adoption of draft "L.42" by a vote of 75 in favour to 72 against, with 26 abstentions.

The representative of Saudi Arabia, speaking in explanation of position before the vote and on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Bahrain, aligned himself with the Arab Group. He stressed the importance of a lasting and comprehensive peace and called for a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital within pre-1967 borders. The end of the conflict can only be achieved through peaceful means, he stressed, requesting Israel to cease its aggression against the Palestinians. Condemning all forms of terrorism, he said rockets sent to Israeli towns and cities must stop. ...

The representative of Iran, also speaking in explanation of position, said that the draft resolution on Hamas is based on deception as it ignores the main root cause of the conflict: the decades-long illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel. ...

The representative of Kuwait, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, called on all States to reject the draft as it "distracts from the deep-seeded causes of the conflict". ...

The Assembly then failed to adopt the draft resolution titled "Activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza" (document A/73/L.42) as it did not meet the two-thirds requirement following a recorded vote of 87 in favour to 57 against, with 33 abstentions. ...

The representative of Israel said that today's resolution presented an opportunity for redemption, offering the United Nations another chance to condemn Hamas. Thanking the United States "for standing up to what is right", he said that the plurality achieved today would have been a majority if the vote had not been hijacked by means of procedure. To delegations that had voted against the resolution, he said: "Your silence in the face of evil reveals your true colours". To the people of Gaza, he said "we think of you" and to Hamas "your time's up." Hamas exploits the people of Gaza, he stressed, adding that the organization is in flagrant violation of international law. There is no difference between Hamas, and Al-Qaida and Boko Haram, he said, adding that as the Jewish people are celebrating Hanukkah, the plurality of Member States of the United

Nations has chosen to condemn Hamas.

The representative of the United Kingdom, associating herself with the European Union, said she voted in favour of the draft as Hamas must be condemned for its indiscriminate use of rocket fire against civilians. She called for a comprehensive peace in accordance with United Nations resolutions and urged all actors to refrain from violence. "Palestinians have the right to peaceful protest and Israel has the right to defend itself," she said, asserting that restraint must be shown when using live fire. "We expect Hamas and Israel to prevent further escalation," she stressed.

The representative of Austria, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said he supported the draft and emphasized the bloc's commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland) introduced a draft titled "Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East" (document A/73/L.49). "Such a peace, unfortunately, is not currently in sight," she said. Stressing the importance of reversing the current negative developments on the ground, she added that a settlement of the conflict must meet Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty and resolve all final status issues. As a country that has endured and overcome conflict, Ireland remains hopeful that long-standing enmities can be set aside, she said, urging delegates to support the resolution.

The Assembly then took up that resolution. The representative of the United States requested a recorded vote on the text, which was adopted by a recorded vote of 156 in favour to 6 against (Australia, Israel, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, United States) and 12 abstentions. ...

The representative of Israel said that the United Nations has passed yet another anti-Israel resolution. It has also missed an opportunity to make a clear statement against Hamas, a terrorist organization that derails the hopes for peace. Recalling the words of a former ambassador of Israel to the United Nations, he said that if Algeria were to submit a resolution claiming that the earth is flat, and Israel flattened it, it would pass in the General Assembly. That was 50 years ago, and nothing had changed, he said.

The Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, reaffirming his gratitude to all Member States that have stood by the rights of the Palestinian people, said the strong support for the resolution was an unequivocal affirmation, especially significant in view of actions aimed at eroding the global consensus for a just solution for the Palestinian people and a two-State solution. Thanking Ireland for presenting the text, he said peace negotiations cannot be credible if detached from the United Nations. The resolutions are not one-sided or anti-Israel; they are pro-peace pieces of legislation, he stressed.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12101.doc.htm>

**Activities of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza (A/73/L.42)**

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.42>

**Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East (A/73/L.49)**

<https://undocs.org/A/73/L.49>

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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 3 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>

**Racial harassment in higher education** (closing date 15 February 2019)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/racial-harassment-higher-education-our-inquiry>

**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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