

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answer

Crime

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP) [HL12519] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proportion of government time spent addressing (1) Islamophobia and (2) grooming gangs in the last 12 months.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government is committed to tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and hate crime. It is not possible to disaggregate the time spent on Islamophobia and child sexual exploitation as perpetrated by groups from wider work on hate crime and tackling child sexual abuse respectively.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-12-20/HL12519/>

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Israel

House of Commons First Reading

International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill

Louise Ellman (Labour Co-op): I beg to move that: That leave be given to bring in a Bill to prohibit international development assistance to schools operated by the Palestinian National Authority that do not promote values endorsed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; to require the Secretary of State to publish an annual report on the extent to which such development assistance for schools operated by the Palestinian National Authority supported the promotion of those values; and for connected purposes.

I know from the many speeches that I have delivered in this House on this topic that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians provokes strong passions. Tragically, the past five years have seen the total absence of a political process that brings both sides together to make painful but necessary compromises to resolve this conflict. ... We must recognise

the threat posed to these peace-building efforts by those who incite hatred, glorify violence and promote terror. The reality is that the Palestinian Authority is at the heart of this threat. We can no longer turn a blind eye to what British aid is helping to foster: not the infrastructure of a democratic, independent and peaceful Palestinian state, but a body promoting values that are inimical to the establishment of that state.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Enfield North (Joan Ryan) suggested in her debate last July that “it is vital that old hatreds and prejudices are not passed on to new generations of children and young people.”—[[Official Report, 4 July 2018; Vol. 644, c. 165WH.](#)]

The Palestinian Authority is acting as a transmission belt for those very hatreds and prejudices.

The focus of my Bill is education, which is crucial in shaping young minds and it is the focus of the Department for International Development’s aid to the Palestinian Authority. The memorandum of understanding that governs this British aid is explicit: as a condition of funding, the PA must adhere to the principles of non-violence and respect for human rights. Ministers tell us repeatedly that their unpublished reviews suggest that the PA upholds those principles. The facts show otherwise.

For example, take the naming by the Palestinian Authority of schools, summer camps and sports tournaments after terrorist murderers and Nazi collaborators. At least 20 PA schools in the west bank and Gaza are named after terrorists, and three after Nazi collaborators. ... These are not choices made by obscure local officials. They are deliberate decisions taken by the Palestinian Authority at the highest levels.

Ministers in this country do not appear concerned. Last year, the Department for International Development claimed ignorance on whether any of the thousands of teachers and public servants whose salaries it pays work in schools named after these purveyors of hate ... Outside the classroom, too, children are subjected to a barrage of vicious antisemitic propaganda. Children’s programmes on official PA TV feature children reciting poems calling Jews “barbaric monkeys”, “the sons of pigs” and the “most evil among creations”.

According to the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education, or IMPACT-se, the reformed school curriculum for primary and secondary schoolchildren introduced last September is “more radical than ever, purposefully and strategically encouraging Palestinian children to sacrifice themselves to martyrdom”. ...

These lessons in hate are all-pervasive, infesting every aspect of the curriculum, and this curriculum drips with vile antisemitic tropes ... There is no suggestion that peace with Israel is desirable or possible. ...

Young Palestinian minds are being poisoned. The opportunity for Britain to help promote the values of peace, reconciliation and coexistence is being squandered. ...

DFID Ministers were warned 18 months ago about the content of the new curriculum. They dismissed those concerns. Promised reviews have never materialised. ...

My Bill calls for two actions: first, that teaching programmes in Palestinian Authority schools financed by the UK should promote common values such as peace, freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination; and secondly, that Ministers should conduct and publish an annual review to ensure that UK funds are spent in line with UNESCO-derived standards of peace and tolerance in education. ...

Hugo Swire (Conservative): I rise to oppose this Bill ...

The British Government have already agreed to a proper review of the Palestinian curriculum that is due to report by September this year. Surely, it makes sense to wait for that investigation to run its course and only then to consider—when we have seen all the evidence—whether there is any need to legislate on this difficult matter.

It is worth reminding the House that, according to DFID, “no UK taxpayers’ money to the Palestinian Authority goes to schools or to fund education materials that incite violence.” ... In 2013, a team of American, Israeli, Palestinian and international education experts

carried out a study funded by the US State Department, finding that dehumanising or demonising is rare in both Palestinian and Israeli textbooks.

With the United Nations Relief and Works Agency facing its greatest financial crisis ever and the PA nearing a financial breakdown, surely this is not the time to add pressure by making further cuts. ...

If the Department for International Development—I would be very interested to hear the Minister's answer to this point—were to withdraw funding for education, as is suggested, this would inevitably create a vacuum. Given the law of unintended consequences, I think that people need to be very aware of who might fill that vacuum. For example, countries such as Qatar could well exploit the vacuum created if DFID were to withdraw its funding, and we all know what the inevitable results of that could be.

No one in this House would doubt that education is a major tool for international development. Most Israelis I know pride education above almost everything else, not least because of its ability to transform lives, and many of the moderate Israelis I know would be appalled by the suggestion that this funding should be cut. ...

For those of us who are genuinely committed to a two-state solution and genuinely concerned for the plight of the Palestinians, not least in Gaza ... this Bill would be a regressive step. ...

Question put (Standing Order No. 23) and agreed to.

Ordered,

That Dame Louise Ellman, Joan Ryan, Ian Austin, Theresa Villiers, Stephen Crabb, Jim Shannon, Rachel Reeves, John Howell, John Spellar, Andrew Percy, Guto Bebb and Bob Blackman present the Bill.

Dame Louise Ellman accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time on Friday 8 March and to be printed ...

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-08/debates/B5B5517B-8158-4B90-95D1-F446C16B1E38/InternationalDevelopmentAssistance\(PalestinianNationalAuthoritySchools\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-08/debates/B5B5517B-8158-4B90-95D1-F446C16B1E38/InternationalDevelopmentAssistance(PalestinianNationalAuthoritySchools))

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Anne Main (Conservative) [203855] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the effects of Israel's settlement expansion on the welfare Palestinian refugees in the West Bank.

Alistair Burt: I issued a statement on 27 December expressing our disappointment in the latest announcement by the Government of Israel to advance over 2,800 housing units in settlements in the West Bank. Such actions are illegal under international law and call into question Israel's commitment to any future peace agreement with the Palestinians. We strongly urge Israel to cease such actions. We regularly raise our grave concerns on this issue with the Government of Israel and urge it to reverse its policy of settlement expansion.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-19/203855/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

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

Israel: Bedouin

Anne Main (Conservative) [203856] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to raise concerns with the Israeli Government on the imminent demolition of Khan al-Ahmar.

Alistair Burt: We have raised concerns with the Israeli authorities at senior levels, including with the Israeli Prime Minister and Israeli Attorney General, urging them not to go ahead with their plan to demolish the village. Officials from our Consulate General in Jerusalem continue to visit Khan al-Ahmar, most recently on 18 December. The same day, our Permanent Representative to the UN made clear during a UN Security Council debate on the situation in the Middle East that "we welcome the temporary postponement of plans to demolish the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar but we remain gravely concerned about the fate of this community. The United Nations has said this demolition could amount to forcible transfer in violation of International Humanitarian Law. As I've said before in this Chamber, the Israel Government is not obligated to demolish Khan al-Ahmar. It has the power to change its mind and we urge it to do so".

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-19/203856/>

Gaza: Israel

Richard Burden (Labour) [203788] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2018 to Question 201109, whether he plans to make representations to his Israeli counterpart on allegations that Israeli security forces impersonated humanitarian workers while conducting a military operation inside the Gaza Strip in November 2018.

Alistair Burt: Whilst we do not have plans to raise these allegations, we routinely make clear to the Israeli authorities our concerns about their conduct of the occupation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-19/203788/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-12-11/201109/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Israel economic factsheet

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/769252/Israel_1018.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>

**** International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/internationaldevelopmentassistancepalestiniannationalauthoritieschools.html>

First Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-08/debates/B5B5517B-8158-4B90-95D1-F446C16B1E38/InternationalDevelopmentAssistance\(PalestinianNationalAuthoritySchools\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-08/debates/B5B5517B-8158-4B90-95D1-F446C16B1E38/InternationalDevelopmentAssistance(PalestinianNationalAuthoritySchools))

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 today**

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>

**** closes in 2 days**

Islamophobia (closing date 11 January 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2017/islamophobia-call-for-further-evidence-17-19/>

**** closes in 6 days**

Connected communities – Tackling loneliness and social isolation (Wales)

(closing date 15 January 2019)

<https://beta.gov.wales/connected-communities-tackling-loneliness-and-social-isolation>

**** closes in 7 days**

The Macpherson Report: Twenty Years On (closing date 16 January 2019)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2017/macpherson-report-twenty-years-on-inquiry-17-19/>

Extremism in England and Wales (closing date 31 January 2019)

<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/>

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission – Draft Strategic Plan 2019-22

(closing date 15 March 2019)

<http://www.nihrc.org/news/detail/ni-human-rights-commission-draft-strategic-plan-2019-2022-consultation>

Scottish charity law (closing date 1 April 2019)

<https://tinyurl.com/y9ln88df>

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