

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answers

Religious Hatred: Islam

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench) [HL12853] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth on 14 January (HL Deb, col 7), what evidence there is that there are more attacks on the Muslim community than any other.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government treats all forms of hate crime equally seriously. Two separate statistical sources used by Government show the scale of hate crimes targeted at Muslims in relation to hate crimes against other faith groups.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), published by the Office for National Statistics in October 2018, portrays the experience of hate crime. It is estimated that 0.1 per cent of adults (105,459) were victims of a religiously motivated hate crime in the 12 months prior to interview. The 2015/16 to 2017/18 CSEW showed that 0.8% of Muslim adults were the victim of religiously motivated hate crime, which was the highest percentage for a faith group where data is available.

The full breakdown from the CSEW is as follows:

Christian - (61,804) 0.0%

Buddhist - (489) 0.0%

Hindu 0.5 - (1,326) 0.5%

Muslim - (3,480) 0.8%

Other - (1,553) 0.2%

No religion - (36,518) 0.0%

Statistics for police recorded crime, also published in October 2018, show that hate crimes motivated by religion have increased by 40% from 2016/17 to 2017/18, representing the largest percentage increase of all hate crime strands (comprising race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender). The 2017/18 police statistics were the first to reflect the mandatory break down of hate crime reporting by perceived religion, and provided a breakdown based on the targeted religion of victims of religiously motivated hate crimes. They show that 52% of religiously-

motivated hate crimes recorded by the police comprised anti-Muslim hostility.

The full breakdown of police recorded hate crime is as follows:

Buddhist - (19) 0%

Christian - (264) 5%

Hindu - (58) 1%

Jewish - (672) 12%

Muslim - (2,965) 52%

Sikh - (117) 2%

Other - (311) 5%

No religion - (237) 4%

Unknown - (1,174) 21%

Total number of targeted religions 5,817

Total number of offences 5,680

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-15/HL12853/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-01-14/debates/5AAEA536-F95C-434E-9331-529C93639C53/Islamophobia>

Religion: Educational Institutions

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench) [HL12874] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for a specific educational institute in the UK to promote religious inclusiveness and the awareness of all faiths.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: In the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, published last year, the Government set out its commitment to building strong, integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, learn, work and socialise together based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. All schools are required to promote Fundamental British Values, which include mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and there are a range of existing sources of advice and guidance for schools on religious awareness.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-15/HL12874/>

The Green Paper referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf

Prisons: Islam

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP) [HL12901] To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of (1) prisoners, and (2) managing chaplains in prisons in England and Wales are Muslims; and which prisons in England and Wales have managing chaplains who are Muslims.

Lord Keen of Elie: Data on the prisoners' religion is published and can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/offender-management-statistics-quarterly-april-to-june-2018> (table 1.5 of the prison population tables for 30 September 2018). Latest data shows that 16% of prisoners in England and Wales identify themselves as Muslims.

There are 33 prisons in which there are Muslim Managing Chaplains. These are HMPs Aylesbury, Bedford, Brinsford, Bristol, Brixton, Buckley Hall, Bullingdon, Channings Wood, Cookham Wood, Deerbolt, Doncaster, Featherstone, Forest Bank, Garth, Gartree, Grendon/Springhill, Highpoint, Humber, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Long Lartin, Nottingham, Oakwood, Pentonville, Preston, Stoke Heath,

Sudbury, Swinfen Hall, Thameside, Werrington, Whitemoor, and Wormwood Scrubs.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-16/HL12901/>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answers

Prime Minister's Questions

The Prime Minister (Theresa May): I am sure that Members across the House will wish to join me in marking Holocaust Memorial Day this Sunday. It is an opportunity for us to remember all those who suffered in the holocaust and in subsequent genocides around the world. It is a reminder that we must all challenge and condemn prejudice and hatred wherever it is found. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-23/debates/ED7C92A8-896E-4BF1-A023-21F5AF64B1BD/Engagements#contribution-AAFC2434-4D42-463A-890C-9E9456AA962C>

Prime Minister's Questions

Jeremy Corbyn (Labour): Sunday is Holocaust Memorial Day, a time for us all to reflect on the horrors of genocide and to recommit to never again allowing the poison of antisemitism and racism to disfigure our society in any way. The Prime Minister was also right to acknowledge the other genocides that have happened since the second world war. It is up to us to try to prevent such horrors from ever happening again anywhere in the world. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-23/debates/ED7C92A8-896E-4BF1-A023-21F5AF64B1BD/Engagements#contribution-0F4465CF-4BF4-4846-B6C5-C30D91BBF1A7>

Prime Minister's Questions

Ian Blackford (SNP): I join the Prime Minister in marking Holocaust Memorial Day. It is important that we reflect on man's inhumanity to man at that time and subsequently, most recently towards the Rohingya people. More must be done to eradicate the risk of genocide that is suffered by peoples throughout the world. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-23/debates/ED7C92A8-896E-4BF1-A023-21F5AF64B1BD/Engagements#contribution-FCE3DAB0-257A-40C3-B87B-C539358CBB9A>

Prime Minister's Questions

Q7. Gillian Keegan (Conservative): To mark Holocaust Memorial Day a Chichester choir will be coming to Parliament to perform "Push", a moving opera about the life of Simon Gronowski, who was pushed off a train by his mother to spare him from certain death at Auschwitz. His mother and sister died but Simon will be here to share his story, which shows us the best and worst of humanity. At a time when antisemitism is rising across Europe and here in our communities, does the Prime Minister agree that it is vital that we learn the lessons of history to eradicate antisemitism, and will she, if possible, join us at the performance in Speaker's House next Monday? [908735]

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend for raising this important issue and highlighting that case, which shows the horrors that so many people went through during the holocaust. We welcome the Chichester choir to Parliament performing "Push", and I commend it on its work in keeping alive the remarkable story of Simon Gronowski. As I have just indicated, his story reminds us of the millions who were

killed in the concentration camps and the absolute horror of the holocaust. We should all remember that, and remember genocides that have, sadly, occurred since, and condemn hatred and prejudice in all its forms, including antisemitism wherever it is found. There is no place for racial hatred in our society. I apologise because I suspect I may not be able to attend the performance my hon. Friend referred to, but I hope she will pass on my thanks to the choir for coming here and for the work it is doing.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-23/debates/ED7C92A8-896E-4BF1-A023-21F5AF64B1BD/Engagements#contribution-3E72CA3F-7796-4664-8EB8-26B5C68FB7CB>

Welsh Assembly 90 Second Statement

Dawn Bowden (Labour): This week, in the lead-up to the 2019 Holocaust Memorial Day, I was privileged to join members of the community in Merthyr Tydfil who gathered to mark the completion of the Holocaust memorial garden at the rear of Merthyr Tydfil library. It's one small but important example of how a community, starting out with a grant from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, then with the assistance of several local groups of volunteers, can be part of the international effort of remembrance, research and education about Holocaust.

This year, we will reflect on the theme of Holocaust Memorial Day, torn from home, the challenges of being torn from home in the face of war, conflict and persecution and the basic desire for a better, safer life. This year also, I can't help but add a personal note of remembrance, having just returned from a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau. We should never forget the horrors of Holocaust and we should use this time to reflect on the conditions that allowed such barbaric acts to occur—not just Nazi persecution, but genocide in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

My recent visit reinforced to me the value of each of our acts of remembrance, whether it's in Merthyr Tydfil, or whether it's here in the National Assembly, as we did at our vigil on the Senedd steps this lunchtime, or across our nation. In these testing times, let each of us reflect on our words, our thoughts and our actions, and let us remember those torn from home and pledge again that we will play our part in sustaining the conditions that ensure that the horrors of Holocaust are not repeated.

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5420#C158573>

United Nations

Formal Opening Ceremony of Holocaust Exhibition to be Held at United Nations Headquarters, 28 January

The United Nations will mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust with a memorial ceremony, beginning on Monday, 28 January, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the General Assembly Hall.

The ceremony is one among several events organized to mark the 2019 International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust under the theme “Holocaust Remembrance: Demand and Defend Your Human Rights”. The theme encourages youth to learn from the lessons of the Holocaust, act against discrimination and defend democratic values in their communities, at a time when the spread of Neo-Nazism and hate groups fuels rising anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred around the world. ...

The ceremony will also be webcast live at webtv.un.org. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/note6518.doc.htm>

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House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: West Bank

Jim Shannon (DUP) [208799] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Israeli Government on that country's decision to approve the construction of 2,800 units in the occupied West Bank.

Alistair Burt: As I made clear in my statement of 27 December we are disappointed that Israel plans to expropriate additional West Bank territory by pressing forward with plans to construct 2,800 units. We regularly call on Israel to halt such counterproductive activity and instead urgently commit to creating a better environment for a just and lasting peace. Such settlements are illegal under international law and undermine the physical viability of the two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-01-15/208799/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

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

Palestinians: Terrorism

Joan Ryan (Labour) [210004] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 11 May 2018 to Question 141671, what assessment her Department has made of whether the Palestinian Authority has resumed directly paying salaries to those serving sentences in Israeli jails for terrorist offences.

Alistair Burt: Earlier this month a senior DFID official secured confirmation from the Palestinian Authority's (PA) Ministry of Finance that payments are made to the Ministry of Prisoner Affairs, which then directly transfers funds to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and their families. The UK government continues to press the PA to reform the prisoner payments system to become more needs-based, transparent and affordable. I have raised these concerns with the Palestinian Foreign Minister, and my officials regularly do likewise. No UK aid goes to prisoner payments. UK aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA) is used exclusively to pay the salaries of vetted health and education public servants, including teachers, doctors and nurses, in the West Bank. Our money goes into a special, dedicated bank account before being paid to individuals who have been vetted in advance through the European Union Palestinian-European Socio-Economic Management Assistance Mechanism (PEGASE), ensuring UK funding is not diverted.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-01-18/210004/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141671/>

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Double Taxation Convention (United Kingdom and Israel)

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mel Stride): A protocol to the double taxation convention with Israel was signed on 17 January 2019. The text of the protocol is available on HM Revenue and Customs' pages of the gov.uk website and will be deposited in the

Libraries of both Houses. The text will be scheduled to a draft Order in Council and laid before the House of Commons in due course. [HCWS1266]

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-23/debates/19012326000010/DoubleTaxationConvention\(UnitedKingdomAndIsrael\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-01-23/debates/19012326000010/DoubleTaxationConvention(UnitedKingdomAndIsrael))

The Protocol referred to above can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/771620/2019_Israel-](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/771620/2019_Israel-UK_Protocol_to_the_1962_Double_Taxation_Convention_not_in_force.pdf)

[UK Protocol to the 1962 Double Taxation Convention not in force .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/771620/2019_Israel-UK_Protocol_to_the_1962_Double_Taxation_Convention_not_in_force.pdf)

The Convention that is amended by the Protocol can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498370/1962-israel-dtc-con - in force.pdf

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Middle East: Christianity

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [208809] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has received on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East; and if he will make a statement.

Alistair Burt: The Foreign Secretary and Lord Ahmad have had a number of recent engagements with religious leaders, interested organisations and parliamentarians on the question of the persecution of Christians around the world, including in the Middle East. The Foreign Secretary has requested that the Bishop of Truro leads a review of British Government support for persecuted Christians. I regularly raise the issues being faced by Christians and other religious minorities during my meetings with governments in the Middle East and North Africa. The UK remains committed to supporting the fundamental human right of all persons to practice, change or share their faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-01-15/208809/>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Open Doors 2019 World Watch List

Lord Harries of Pentregarth (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List of the 50 countries where Christians face the greatest persecution.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): My Lords, the Government are deeply concerned about the severity of violations of the freedom of religion or belief in many parts of the world. We regularly raise our concerns at ministerial and senior levels. To ensure that the United Kingdom is supporting Christians in the best possible way, my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary has commissioned an independent global review into additional practical steps the Government can take to support persecuted Christians. The aim is for this review to make an initial report by Easter.

Lord Harries of Pentregarth: ... The right of people to freedom of religion or belief is absolutely fundamental, whether they are Muslim, Hindu or atheist, but does the Minister not agree that there is a particular crisis affecting Christians at the moment, with the

number of countries in which Christians are suffering persecution at a very high level, having doubled in the past year? ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I agree with the noble and right reverend Lord on the issue of persecuted Christians. Around the world today 245 million Christians in 50 countries have been identified as suffering persecution of varying levels. As the noble and right reverend Lord said, that has doubled over the last four or five years. Clearly, action is needed. This does not preclude the fact that we will continue our efforts, and it is right that we stand up for all persecuted communities around the world, including those of no faith. ...

Baroness Brinton (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, in order to develop an appropriate policy to help persecuted Christians and other religious or belief groups, it is vital to have accurate data about them. Can the Minister say whether Her Majesty's Government have made any progress in developing a database across government that tracks violations of freedom of religion and belief, and other important data about religion or belief minorities?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, the noble Baroness raises a very important point. It is certainly something that I have been looking at very closely since my appointment last summer as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief. There are many sources that we currently utilise to determine the level of persecution of different communities around the world. Equally, we have strong partnerships with representatives and leaders of different communities around the world. But her case for having a comprehensive database is a valid one, and certainly we will be looking to see how we can validate data that is provided by communities and organisations such as Open Doors, to ensure that it is verifiable and that we can share it with key partners to ensure that the issues of persecution can be addressed. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-01-23/debates/82287D93-5207-46B6-937F-AC9C9CE2738A/OpenDoors2019WorldWatchList>

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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>

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 7 days**

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