



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Offenders: Religion**

**John Hayes (Conservative)** [218756] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the relationship between an individual's (a) religious identification and (b) propensity to commit crime.

**Victoria Atkins:** The police are not required by the Home Office to record information on the religious identification of perpetrators of crime, and the Home Office has not made an assessment of any link.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-08/218756/>

#### **Sports: Discrimination**

**Jo Stevens (Labour)** [220274] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage (a) anti-racism and (b) anti-homophobia initiatives in sport.

**Mims Daview:** There is no place for racism, sexism, homophobia or any other kind of discrimination in sport. Tackling discrimination lies at the heart of the cross-government sport strategy "Sporting Future". We want sport to be at the forefront of equality, and we work with national governing bodies of sport and organisations such as Kick It Out and Stonewall to tackle discrimination in local, national and international sport.

In relation to football specifically the Government is alive to a rise in the numbers of reported incidents of discrimination at all levels of the sport. I will be inviting the FA, English Football League, Premier League, players' representatives, and groups such as Stonewall and the Community Security Trust among others, to discuss what more football can do to stamp out racist, homophobic and anti-semitic abuse.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-12/220274/>

*The strategy referred to above can be read at*

### **Cemeteries: Vandalism**

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour)** [220301] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what funding his Department has allocated to (a) local authorities and (b) the police to protect Jewish and Islamic cemeteries from targeted vandalism in each of the last four years.

**Heather Wheeler:** Vandalism and the desecration of cemeteries are criminal offences and we are confident that these offences will be dealt with appropriately by the police, local services, and criminal justice system. Where these criminal offences are aggravated by hostility towards particular religious communities these will be investigated as hate crimes.

The Government provides funding support to specialist third party organisations the Community Security Trust and Tell Mama, both of which report hate crimes to the police, spread awareness about hate crimes, and provide victim support.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-12/220301/>

## **House of Lords Oral Answers**

### **Schools: Racist Incidents**

**Baroness Chakrabarti (Labour):** To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made in meeting the recommendation of the Report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, published in February 1999, that schools record all racist incidents and that the numbers of racist incidents are published annually on a school by school basis.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My Lords, schools are best placed to monitor and tackle racist incidents. We do not mandate that schools record or publish these, but they are required to have a behaviour policy that outlines measures to prevent racist and other forms of bullying, and are held to account by Ofsted. They are also required to take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate racial harassment. We provide support to schools to do this.

**Baroness Chakrabarti:** I am grateful to the Minister for that Answer. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to my noble friend Lady Lawrence of Clarendon, perhaps the greatest campaigner for race equality that this country has ever known. When I think of the last 20 years since the publication of the Lawrence report and the challenges that those years have brought to the cause of race equality, I think of terrorism, anti-immigration sentiment, rising inequality, and sadly even recent debates around Brexit. Too often, social media has been an engine and vehicle for the transmission of race hate before, during and after class. Will the Minister set out his thinking on what can be done on the part of the Government to better resource hard-pressed teachers and schools to tackle this, and what the Government intend to do about it?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** I echo the thoughts of the noble Baroness and pay my own tribute to the noble Baroness, Lady Lawrence. We have an inaugural Stephen Lawrence Day coming up on 22 April, and I am sure many schools will want to take part. We trust the professionals in our schools to act in the best interests of their pupils. What counts is what is happening on the ground. Schools do not operate in isolation so issues soon come to light, and schools work closely with local authorities, regional schools commissioners and their governing bodies.

**Baroness Garden of Frogna (Liberal Democrat):** My Lords, now that the Government at last have the power to make PSHE compulsory in all schools, including academies, what steps will they take to ensure that racial and religious discrimination forms an

essential part of that curriculum?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Racism of any kind is completely unacceptable and abhorrent in any setting. The Government are fully committed to eradicating it and are taking several actions. The DfE is providing over £2.8 million of funding between September 2016 and March 2020 to four anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying; again, it is action on the ground. Those include the Anne Frank Trust, which we are funding to develop and deliver its “Free to Be” debate programme.

**Baroness Berridge (Conservative):** My Lords, my noble friend is correct that the professionals and schools are at the front line of dealing with these issues. In the past, one issue has been the lack of diversity in the workforce in our schools. What progress has been made in ensuring ethnic diversity in the workforce, and particularly in the leadership of our schools?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** My noble friend is right. The Government recognise the importance of a representative and diverse teaching workforce, which is vital for both teachers and their pupils. That is why we published a statement of intent last year, alongside 10 co-signatories including the ASCL, the NAHT and the NGA, to commit to work together to address the diversity of the teaching workforce. The latest figure that I have, as of November 2017, indicates that 7% of head teachers in primary schools and 8% in secondary schools were from ethnic minorities; there is always more work to do.

**The Lord Bishop of Ely:** My Lords, the Minister will be aware that the Church of England is responsible for many schools where the majority of pupils are from a BME background. Those schools operate in great harmony. That is along with our initiative, Living Well Together. It would be good to hear more about how the DfE makes use of the information and statistics that it receives. There is an issue about holding the whole estate accountable, which cannot be left entirely to the local situation.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The right reverend Prelate is right to raise that point. The DfE has an integrated communities strategy, which I am sure he is aware of. Education has a vital role in promoting integration. Through education, we can ensure that the next generation learns the values underpinning our society. All schools are required to promote mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, as well as democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty. I hope that is clear.

**Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon (Labour):** My Lords, as you are aware, my interest in this subject is around the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, where schools are given a definition of a racist incident and what they are expected to do in the circumstances, which is to record, report and publish. In researching online, I found it difficult to find any results on this. All I could find was material about filling in forms. An academy in Swindon said that: “Schools should be aware that there is no ... requirement to collect data relating to racial incident reporting as academy schools are not obliged to share this information with the LA”.

The Parent Zone website states that: “Schools are required to record and respond to racist incidents”.

What steps have the Government taken to make sure that schools take racist incidents seriously and report and publish them on an annual basis?

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The noble Baroness raises an important point. As I said earlier, schools should develop their own approaches to monitor bullying, including racist bullying, and exercise their own judgment on what will work best for their pupils. We have not gone down the route of mandating figures to be published because, for some schools, it will mean recording incidents so that they can monitor incident numbers and identify where bullying is recurring between the same pupils, but other schools may prefer to survey their pupils anonymously to identify bullying

trends and gauge how safe pupils feel at school. As I have said, it is work on the ground that counts.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-02-18/debates/8D64EB63-9F50-4C1D-AA24-002A5ABF0613/SchoolsRacistIncidents>

*The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277111/4262.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf)

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Library

**Debate Pack: Antisemitism in modern society**

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2019-0042/CDP-2019-0042.pdf>

## Scottish Government FoI Release

**Communication between First Minister and Confederation of Friends of Israel Scotland**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-19-00247/>

and

<https://tinyurl.com/y35t2fet> )

## Welsh Assembly Oral Answers

**56 Gareth Bennett (UKIP:** First Minister, a fortnight ago, you answered questions here in the Chamber from the Conservative leader, Paul Davies, in which you expressed the wishes of the Welsh Government to address the issues of Holocaust denial and the growing prevalence within society of anti-Semitism. Will you reiterate that those wishes still form your outlook and that the Welsh Labour Government is still genuinely committed to tackling these problems?

**The First Minister (Mark Drakeford):** Llywydd, the Welsh Government is committed to challenging stigma wherever that takes place, to protecting the rights of all members of our society, whatever their faith or culture. That is absolutely the case in relation to anti-Semitism, but it is true in relation to forms of abuse that other communities in Wales have experienced, and we are committed to that right across the board.

**Gareth Bennett:** Okay. Thank you, First Minister, for that commitment. I'm not sure that the Labour Party is likely to be an effective vehicle from which to tackle the specific problem of anti-Semitism, though. We saw yesterday that seven Labour MPs felt moved to leave the Labour Party. One of the reasons they cited being the increasing prevalence of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party. Indeed, one of them said that the Labour Party is now institutionally anti-Semitic. Now, we had a Welsh Government statement on this 18 months ago, which talked about training for officials to make them more aware of anti-Semitism and working with Victim Support Cymru to identify instances of this. Given that the problem appears to be increasing, does the Welsh Government now need to do more?

**The First Minister:** I think awareness training is very important and it is essential that, as new challenges emerge, people keep up to date. And that is true not simply of people who work for the Welsh Government; it's true for people who work in the Welsh Government. And Llywydd, I would say that it is true of any Member of this Assembly as well.

**Gareth Bennett:** Yes, I agree with your sentiments, First Minister. I do think you need to

look closely at your own party. ... There has been one investigation by Shami Chakrabarti, which was rather undermined when she immediately joined the Labour Party. Then, within weeks of finishing the so-called inquiry, she was given a Labour frontbench seat in the House of Lords. Hers was clearly a whitewash rather than a genuine inquiry. We now have another inquiry going on in which your party's general secretary refuses to reveal how many complaints of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party she has received, because the truth is just too embarrassing. First Minister, how long can your Welsh Government go on pretending to be against this form of racism when your party is utterly riddled with this problem from top to bottom?

**Leanne Wood (Plaid Cymru):** Says the racist [*Laughter.*].

**The First Minister:** Llywydd, it is like arriving in a parallel universe to receive questions from the party that embraces Tommy Robinson and the creed that he is prepared to advocate, and then ask for other parties to account for themselves. Let me be clear, Llywydd: there is absolutely no place in my party or anywhere else in Wales for prejudice against people of other races or religions. And, that does not simply include those that the Member has referred to today, but all those others that, in the past, he has been prepared to attack in the position that he now occupies.

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5427#C168344>

## Labour Party Resignations

### Statement from Luciana Berger MP

I have been a member of the Labour Party and have campaigned for it all my political life. The Labour values and traditions I grew up with ... have not changed. ... Devastatingly and in sharp contrast, the Labour Party, its culture and what it stands for has become wholly unrecognisable. ...

As a proud member of the British Jewish community, I have also seen the Labour Party allow antisemitism to take root and fester in a way that is unprecedented in modern British politics. We were told that zero tolerance would be extended to antisemites in Labour's ranks, and yet in reality the situation has only got worse.

It was nearly a year ago that we saw the unprecedented event of a minority community, the Jewish community, take to Parliament Square to demonstrate against the Labour Party and say Enough is Enough. And yet since then, despite a mountain of evidence, we have only seen this situation of racism against Jewish people within its ranks worsen. ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://twitter.com/lucianaberger/status/1097609017663340550>

### Statement from Ann Coffey MP

... I thought I would be in the Labour Party for the rest of my life but political parties are not an end in themselves in a parliamentary democracy. The Labour Party has lost sight of this. It is no longer a broad church. Any criticism of the leadership is responded to with abuse and accusations of treachery. Anti-Semitism is rife and tolerated. ...

So I leave the party with great sadness. But in hope that we as an independent group of MP's can start to change a political system in which people feel they have no voice

**To read the full statement see**

<http://anncoffeymp.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Statement.pdf>

### Statement from Mike Gapes MP

I have always considered myself Labour to my core. ... I care passionately about traditional Labour values of fairness, social justice, equality and internationalism. ...

Recent political positions taken by the leadership of the Labour Party have been

increasingly difficult to justify or support. ...

I am sickened that Labour is now perceived by many as a racist, anti-Semitic party. The National Executive Committee did eventually, despite the opposition of the Party Leader, agree to the full International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism and all working examples. But there has been considerable reluctance since then to seriously deal with hundreds of cases of anti-Semitism and several prominent anti-Semites have been readmitted to the Party. ...

**To read the full statement see**

[https://www.facebook.com/mikegapesilford/posts/931922737015021?\\_tn=K-R](https://www.facebook.com/mikegapesilford/posts/931922737015021?_tn=K-R)

#### **Statement from Chris Leslie MP**

... the Labour Party we joined – that we campaigned for and believed in – is no longer today's Labour Party. We did everything we could to save it, but it has now been hijacked by the machine politics of the hard left. ...

... there is an appalling culture:

- Intolerance
- Closing down of debate
- Abuse and hatred online ... and offline, in Party meetings
- Antisemitism

So we have no choice but to say collectively: enough is enough. There has to be a better way forward. ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://www.theindependent.group/chris-leslie>

#### **Statement from Gavin Shuker MP**

... Today, the Labour party is riddled with anti-Semitism, it presents a threat to our national security and it's perfectly content to enable the hard Tory Brexit ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/gavin-shuker-mp/the-future-of-british-politics/1209523202537570/>

#### **Statement from Angela Smith MP**

... The Labour leadership has also presided over a betrayal of the culture which has traditionally characterised the Labour Party. The 'broad church' which encouraged a wide spectrum of progressive thinking is now destroyed, dismantled over a period of time by Corbyn supporters organised to intimidate and invalidate any strain of thought contrary to that of the leadership. A party built on tolerance and respect is now characterised by vicious intolerance, where complete loyalty is demanded to a leader who has done next to nothing to deserve it. Take, for example, the way he has presided over the emergence of a deeply shaming set of anti-Semitic behaviours in the party; not only has he done very little to combat this, his own history is enmeshed in a reluctance to accept the legitimacy of the state of Israel. ...

It is also a party beyond redemption. There is no way back. The leadership of the party is gradually adapting the machinery to its own image, embedding the anti-democratic culture which has grown to dominate every aspect of the Labour party's existence. ...

**To read the full statement see**

<http://angelasmithmp.co.uk/old/index.php/statement>

#### **Statement from Chuka Umunna MP**

... the party I joined has changed beyond recognition these last few years. It is, to all intents and purposes, a new and different party. ... Given my values and principles, I can no longer in all conscience continue as a member of the party and argue for its election to Government. ... Above all, I have observed with great alarm the changing culture within

the party. Visceral hatred of other people, views and opinions, something completely contrary to our values, is common place in the party. Bullying behaviour by supporters of the leadership – on and offline – is tacitly sanctioned. I have been ashamed of the antisemitism which has been allowed to percolate through the party at all levels. Not only does it fly in the face of the party’s history of fighting racism but it has revealed attitudes which are anything but respectful, liberal or open minded. ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://chuka.org.uk/2019/02/18/resignation-from-the-labour-party/>

**For more information about all of the MPs who have resigned, and about the new Independent Group, see**

<https://www.theindependent.group/who-we-are>

### **Statement from Jeremy Corbyn**

I am disappointed that these MPs have felt unable to continue to work together for the Labour policies that inspired millions at the last election and saw us increase our vote by the largest share since 1945.

Labour won people over on a programme for the many not the few – redistributing wealth and power, taking vital resources into public ownership, investing in every region and nation, and tackling climate change.

The Conservative Government is bungling Brexit, while Labour has set out a unifying and credible alternative plan. When millions are facing the misery of Universal Credit, rising crime, homelessness and poverty, now more than ever is the time to bring people together to build a better future for us all.

<https://labour.org.uk/press/statement-jeremy-corbyn/>

### **Statement from Richard Leonard, Leader of the Scottish Labour Party**

I am of course disappointed that these MPs have decided to leave the Labour party but today’s events will not deter us from our mission of working to achieve real and lasting change here in Scotland, and as part of the wider effort to change the UK. ...

Today’s events will simply mean that we will all redouble our efforts to achieve a better and more equal society based on those lasting values.” ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://twitter.com/LabourRichard/status/1097483169589280768>

### **Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl reacts to decision of MPs to quit Labour Party**

Board of Deputies President Marie van der Zyl has reacted to the decision of a group of seven Labour MPs to quit the Labour Party and set up an independent group in Parliament. Marie said: “Today a group of seven Labour MPs announced their decision to leave the Labour Party and sit as an independent group in Parliament. In a searing indictment of the Labour leadership both Luciana Berger MP and Mike Gapes MP accused the party of being institutionally antisemitic. In the light of the horrific abuse aimed at Jewish MPs, we stand in solidarity with all those who have been targeted. Labour has failed to deal with antisemitism since the Jewish Community’s Enough is Enough demonstration called on the Labour leadership to act against this racism. This is a moment of great shame for the Labour Party and a tragedy for the thousands of Jews who have supported the Party for generations.”

<https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-president-marie-van-der-zyl-reacts-to-decision-of-mps-to-quit-labour-party/>

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**See also the Fol release “Communication between First Minister and Confederation of Friends of Israel Scotland” listed in the Home Affairs section above.**

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Palestinians: Antisemitism**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [220730] 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 broadcast on 14 December 2018 on official PA TV, that Jews (a) expose their fangs whenever they get the chance and (b) are always plotting against humanity.

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [220731] 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 broadcast on 4 November 2018 on official PA TV, that Jews knew only to make money, trade, weave plots, corruption, and such.

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [220732] 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 broadcast on 10 April 2018 on official PA TV, that the Holocaust was a lie.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK strongly condemns any language or actions that could stir up hatred and prejudice. The UK regularly raises allegations of incitement and antisemitism with the PA at senior levels. I did this most recently in my meeting with PA Minister for Education Sabri Saidam on 21 January 2019. We will continue to press the PA to uphold their commitment to promote peace and tolerance.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220730/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220731/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220732/>

#### **Palestinians: Schools**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [220733] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 28 January 2019 to Question 211628, what assessment her Department has made of the PA Minister of Education's assertion on 22 January, as reported by al-Watan, that the minister stressed the ministry's and all the Palestinian people's rejection to the attack on the national Palestinian curriculum lead by the Zionist lobby.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK is committed to working with the Palestinian Authority (PA) to ensure that the pilot Palestinian curriculum is consistent with the PA's commitment to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to take action against incitement to violence. The UK will conduct an independent review into allegations of incitement in textbooks, with findings to be published by September 2019. I personally discussed the content of the pilot Palestinian curriculum with Palestinian Authority (PA) Education Minister Sabri Saidam earlier this year. Minister Saidam has committed to engage constructively with the findings of the textbook review,

and to consider its recommendations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220733/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-01-23/211628/>

### **Israel: Bedouin**

**Wes Streeting (Labour)** [220974] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with the Israeli authorities on the humanitarian implications of the proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK is deeply concerned by the humanitarian implications of the proposed demolition of Khan al-Ahmar. We have frequently raised our 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 have said before in this Chamber, the Israeli 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/2019-02-13/220974/>

*The speech referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/obstacles-to-peace-in-israel-and-palestine>

*The UN statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1019492>

### **Israel: Bedouin**

**Wes Streeting (Labour)** [220975] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Israeli authorities on the proposed 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.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220975/>

## **Department for International Trade**

### **UK and Israel sign trade continuity agreement**

... International Trade Secretary and President of the Board of Trade, the Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP, signed the UK-Israel agreement in Tel Aviv today ... with Minister of Economy and Industry, Eli Cohen. ... This will help to further strengthen the trading relationship between the UK and Israel, which was worth £4 billion in the year ending 2018 Q3.

The British vehicles sector could avoid up to £9 million a year in tariff charges on their exports that would apply if the agreement wasn't in place, while machinery and mechanical appliance exporters could avoid up to £5 million a year.

The agreement also protects existing preferential market access for important products. Consumers in the UK will continue to benefit from more choice and lower prices on goods imported from Israel, such as pharmaceutical products, with Israeli companies acting as major suppliers to the NHS. The deal will ensure crucial protection for intellectual property rights and maintain high trading standards across industry.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said: Britain's relationship with Israel is stronger than it has ever been with record levels of bilateral cooperation in trade and investment between our two nations. ... We look forward to further strengthening an ambitious trade and investment relationship with Israel as we work closer together in the future.

Anita Leviant, President of the Israel Britain Chamber of Commerce (IBCC) said: The IBCC community, both in Israel and in the UK is very pleased and encouraged by the signing of the continuity trade agreement between both countries. Bilateral Trade between the UK and Israel has been booming during the last several years and the UK is Israel's second largest trade partner, with over 300 Israeli companies choosing to set up their businesses in the UK. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-israel-sign-trade-continuity-agreement>

### **UK and Palestinian Authority sign trade continuity agreement**

... In Ramallah, the UK-Palestinian Authority agreement was signed by both the International Trade Secretary and Her Excellency, Abeer Odeh, Minister of National Economy. The agreement simplifies trade and will allow businesses to trade as freely as they do now once the UK leaves the EU. ...

The agreement allows Palestinian businesses to continue access to the UK market tariff-free which will continue to benefit Palestinian producers in priority sectors, including exporters of fruit, nuts and vegetable fats including dates and olive oil.

Today's signing reflects the importance of bilateral relations between the UK and the Palestinian Authority. The Agreement demonstrates the UK's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation, promoting Palestinian economic growth, and maintaining the UK's strong commitment to a two-state solution.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said: ... The agreement reflects the importance of the UK-Palestinian relationship, a thriving Palestinian economy is in all our interests. We look forward to further strengthening our trade and investment relations with the Palestinian people. ...

Antoine Mattar, Chair of the Council, said; The Palestine Britain Business Council welcomes the trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the Palestinian Authority. This agreement avoids unnecessary tariffs which will ultimately save British consumers money on items such as dates and olive oil. Frictionless trade also helps to keep people in employment and create new jobs, supporting the Palestinian economy and helping Palestinians work towards a prosperous future. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-palestinian-authority-sign-trade-continuity-agreement>

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## Other Relevant Information

### Council of Europe

#### **Statement by Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland**

I unreservedly condemn the anti-Semitic, barbaric and disgusting acts of desecration of the Jewish cemetery in the Alsatian town of Quatzenheim, not far from Strasbourg, where the Council of Europe has its headquarters. I express my complete solidarity with the Jewish community, which has once again been targeted. This defilement of graves, perpetrated in a context of recent anti-Semitic outbursts in France, as well as in a number of other member States of the Council, shows that the threat posed by racism, anti-Semitism and hate speech is sadly still very much a real one. That is why we have a duty to combat these phenomena, without any hint of compromise. The Council of Europe remains faithful to its original calling to uphold and protect human rights, which is just as vital today as it was when we started out.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/declaration-du-secretaire-general-thorbjorn-jagland-sur-les-derniers-actes-antisemites-en-alsace>

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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 5 days**

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

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

**\*\* closes in 9 days**

**Racial harassment in higher education** (closing date 28 February 2019)

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

**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>

**TOP**

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