



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Antisemitism

Nigel Dodds (DUP) [219327] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many anti-Semitic attacks there have been in each part of the UK since 2012.

Heather Wheeler: Hate crimes are unacceptable and the Government is completely committed to tackling them.

In October 2018 the first breakdown of hate crime statistics by religion was released by the Home Office. This data showed that 672 antisemitic hate crimes were recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2017/18. The full hate crime data bulletin for 2017/18 can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf.

The Community Security Trust independently collects its own data on antisemitic attacks in the UK. According to its data, there have been 7742 antisemitic attacks in the UK since 2012, and the highest numbers of attacks have been in London and Greater Manchester.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-11/219327/>

Schools: Religion

Caroline Lucas (Green) [219380] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he made of the effect on people's access to religiously neutral schools of his policy of funding a new round of religiously selective and voluntary aided schools; and whether prior to forming that policy he estimated the number of (a) people living in areas where the only reasonably accessible state school is faith-based and (b) children who put a faith school as their first choice who are prohibited entry to that school on the basis of faith.

Anne Milton: The voluntary aided (VA) scheme will provide additional good school places where they are needed and where there is demand for a particular type of

provision. VA schools may be designated with a religious character or not. The scheme is open to providers of all faiths and none.

In deciding which projects to fund, we will take into account the levels of need and parental demand. We will also look at how the school, once open, will be welcoming and address the needs of pupils from all faiths and none, and from different backgrounds and communities.

Local authorities have responsibility for deciding whether or not to approve proposals to establish VA schools, and will make such decisions in light of their statutory duty to ensure sufficient schools for their areas.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-11/219380/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Religious Hatred: Islam

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP) [HL13561] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims' working definition of Islamophobia, as set out in its report Islamophobia defined: the inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia, published in November 2018, on (1) the efficacy of counter-extremism and integration policies, (2) the ability to study, investigate and criticise political and radical Islam, and (3) community relations, in particular for moderate or liberal Muslims and the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: We are examining the options for a definition of Islamophobia and intend to examine this issue through the newly appointed Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group. Any such approach would need to be considered carefully to ensure that this would have the positive effect intended.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-07/HL13561/>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf>

Labour and Conservative Party Resignations

Statement from Joan Ryan MP

... Equality is the Labour Party's founding principle ...

That requires and demands that we stand up to racism in all its forms ...

Over the past three years, however, the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn has become infected with the scourge of anti-Jewish racism. This problem simply did not exist in the party before his election as leader. ...

I have always believed that we must be especially vigilant against the oldest hatred; history teaches us the tragic and horrific results of a failure to do so.

I have been horrified, appalled and angered to see the Labour leadership's dereliction of duty in the face of this evil.

Given a choice between the support of antisemites, and ridding the party of Jew-hate, they have decided to side with the antisemites.

I refuse to accept that choice and I wish to stand with British Jews and Jewish members of the Labour Party and Members of Parliament who have suffered terrible abuse from supporters of the Labour leadership.

I salute Luciana Berger on her courageous stand against antisemitism. ...

But for now, anti-Jewish racism, we are told, cannot be eradicated within the party and it would be “foolish” to pretend otherwise.

I cannot in good conscience support or represent a party which adopts such an attitude. ... The antisemitism crisis has thrown a harsh light on the values and behaviour of Corbyn’s Labour Party. ...

It engages in bizarre, offensive and dangerous conspiracy theories – ones often founded on classic antisemitic tropes evoking the powerful hidden hand of “Rothschilds”, Zionists and the “Israel lobby” – and sets aside the truth when politically inconvenient. ...

The Jewish community has made clear that it believes a Jeremy Corbyn government would be an existential threat to it. I will not campaign to put such a government into office.

If the threat a Corbyn government posed were simply to Jews, that would be reason enough for me to do all that I can to oppose such a threat.

But it is an oft-state[d] truism that what starts with Jews never ends with Jews.

The mindset, ideology and worldview that tolerates antisemitism poses a threat to the British public, Jew and non-Jew alike. ...

It is one that would rip up the alliances which have kept our country safe for the past seven decades.

It is one that would ostracise the Middle East’s only democracy in favour of the Ayatollahs in Tehran ...

I will continue to fight for the values that the Labour Party has traditionally upheld ...

But I cannot and will not do that from within an institutionally antisemitic party.

To read the full statement see

<https://twitter.com/joanryanEnfield/status/1097980964163276803>

Three MPs, Heidi Allen, Anna Soubry, and Sarah Wollaston have also resigned from the Conservative Party citing a variety of reasons including a “shift to the right”, and that “the Conservative Party appears to have abandoned attempts to modernise or to broaden its appeal and has instead become less tolerant and more inward-looking. ... I do not share their right wing values or those of the UKIP supporters who have been urged to join the Conservative Party via aggressive and well-funded social media campaigns in order to deselect moderate MPs.”

TOP

Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answers

United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation

Viscount Eccles (Conservative) [HL13501] To ask Her Majesty's Government when responsibility for the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation will be transferred to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; and how.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: There are no plans to transfer responsibility for the UK Holocaust Foundation to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The Holocaust Memorial Foundation provides independent advice to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government who has overall responsibility for the delivery of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-06/HL13501/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Viscount Eccles (Conservative) [HL13502] To ask Her Majesty's Government what

expenditure of public funds has been made to date on the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: From 2015/16 to the end of January 2019 the Government has spent £4.8 million on the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre programme.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-06/HL13502/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Viscount Eccles (Conservative) [HL13504] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the risk that the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will attract the attention of Holocaust-deniers and anti-Zionists if it is sited close to Parliament.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will have security arrangements similar to the many other public buildings in Westminster. By using the latest technology and security methodology available we intend for the security aspects to be integrated into the design so it does not impact on the visitor experience.

To achieve this we are working with security experts, government agencies and the Metropolitan Police to ensure the necessary security measures are put in place.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-06/HL13504/>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Viscount Eccles (Conservative) [HL13505] To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation has taken place, or is intended, with the UK Jewish community about the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation has engaged extensively with all interested parties, including organisations and members of the Jewish community.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-06/HL13505/>

TOP

Israel

House of Lords Written Answers

Gaza: Trade

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL13480] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bates on 28 January (HL12814), what increases have been achieved for the import and export of goods into and from Gaza in the past 12 months.

Lord Bates: There was a slight reduction in the numbers of truckloads entering and leaving Gaza every month on average in 2018 compared to 2017*. In 2017 an average of 9,876 truckloads (other than fuel) entered and 218 truckloads left Gaza each month; whereas in 2018 an average of 8,843 truckloads (other than fuel) entered and 217 left Gaza each month. The 2018 averages conceal major fluctuations in trade flows, primarily due to escalations in violence which led to tighter movement restrictions.

The UK consistently calls for an end to all violence and regularly calls on the Israeli authorities to ease their restrictions to support ordinary Palestinians living

standards and to support legal trade into and out of the Gaza strip. We also fund the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) which enables Gazan businesses, as well as citizens and families, to get access to imported reconstruction materials following widespread destruction in the 2014 conflict.

*DFID has come to this conclusion from OCHA's reporting of monthly averages of truckloads exiting and entering Gaza (excluding truckloads entering Gaza carrying fuel) in 2017 and 2018.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-05/HL13480/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-14/HL12814/>

Gaza: Job Creation

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL13481] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bates on 28 January (HL12814), what measures they have taken to support job creation in the Gaza Strip in the past 12 months.

Lord Bates: In 2018, DFID's Palestinian Market Development Programme (PMDP) worked to support businesses and to help job creation in Gaza. Over the programme lifetime (2013-2018) the PMDP successfully supported 470 businesses and created around 1,550 jobs in Gaza.

DFID also continued to support the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) which has enabled Gazan businesses, as well as citizens and families, to gain access to reconstruction materials following widespread destruction in the 2014 conflict.

HMG officials have also continued to call on the Israeli authorities to ease their restrictions to improve the living standards of ordinary Palestinians, and to support legal trade into and out of the Gaza strip.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-05/HL13481/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-14/HL12814/>

Gaza

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL13482] To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Lord Bates on 28 January (HL12814), what improvements they hope to see in the conditions in Gaza in the next five years.

Lord Bates: Within the next five years the UK Government hopes to see an improvement in access to clean water, energy and jobs in Gaza. We would also like to see all parties ease movement and access restrictions. This would make it easier for Gazans to sell their goods to Israel and other countries in the region; and for small businesses to grow and create jobs. DFID's new economic development programme will support all these activities.

However, we are clear that a durable agreement is needed to address the underlying causes of the conflict and to transform the situation in Gaza. This is why the UK continues to support progress towards a two-state solution that permanently ends the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such an agreement should ensure that Hamas and other terrorist groups permanently end rocket fire and attacks against Israel and accept the Quartet Principles; the Palestinian Authority resumes control in Gaza and restores effective and accountable governance; and that Israel lifts its restrictions to ease the suffering of ordinary Palestinians and allow the Gazan economy to grow.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-05/HL13482/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-14/HL12814/>

Gaza: Sewage

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL13544] To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made in reconstructing sewage works in Gaza and ensuring that those works function reliably.

Lord Bates: The UK has not supported reconstruction of sewage works in Gaza but has funded improved water and sanitation through UNICEF; and plans to improve water and wastewater services by funding the World Bank.

In 2018, DFID committed to supporting the World Bank's Water Security Development Programme (WSDP). The programme is currently in the design phase but will focus on supporting infrastructure for the water network related to the Gaza Central Desalination Programme and provide technical support to the Palestinian Water Authority. The technical assistance will include support to improve water and wastewater services.

To address Gaza's water and sanitation crisis in 2018, DFID provided £2 million to UNICEF to help reduce the spread of disease by disinfecting water in 280 water wells, 38 desalination plants, and 40 water reservoirs. This support has improved access to water and sanitation services for 2 million people in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-06/HL13544/>

TOP

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>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 4 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 8 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