



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answer

Voluntary Schools

Lord Warner (Crossbench) [HL13723] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they made of public opinion on the issue of religious selection in state schools during the process leading to their decision to fund new voluntary aided religious schools.

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The department undertook an extensive series of activities as part of the Schools that Work for Everyone consultation to understand the variety of opinions relating to faith schools. Having considered the views of respondents, and a range of stakeholder views, the department decided to establish the voluntary-aided capital scheme alongside retaining the 50% cap in faith admissions in faith designated free schools. The statutory process for establishing new voluntary-aided schools has not changed. It remains possible for proposers of any faith or no faith to propose a new voluntary-aided school, and likewise the voluntary-aided capital scheme is open to bids from proposers of all faiths and none.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-13/HL13723/>

UK Parliament House of Commons Library

Debate pack: The Twentieth Anniversary of the Macpherson Report

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CDP-2019-0052>

Labour Party Resignation

Statement from Ian Austin

... I grew up listening to my Dad – a refugee from the Holocaust – teaching me about the evils of hatred and prejudice. One of the main reasons I joined the Labour Party as a teenager here in Dudley more than 35 years ago was to fight racism, and I could never have believed that I'd be leaving because of racism too.

I have fought intolerance and prejudice all my life. Our first campaign when I became an MP was to work with local councillors and community groups to drive the BNP out of Dudley. Last year I organised a Rally Against Racism in the Birmingham hotel where Enoch Powell made his "Rivers of Blood" speech 50 years before. I've stood with Muslim constituents targeted by the BNP or the EDL and I will always fight for a more tolerant and united society. ...

I am appalled at the offence and distress Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party have caused to Jewish people. It is terrible that a culture of extremism, antisemitism and intolerance is driving out good MPs and decent people who have committed their life to mainstream politics.

It is wrong that Luciana Berger has been bullied out of the Labour Party by antisemites. It is wrong that the party threatened Margaret Hodge when she spoke out on antisemitism, like they threatened me when I raised the issue with the party chairman. They had to back down because we had done nothing wrong, but the hard truth is that the party is tougher on the people complaining about antisemitism than it is on the antisemites.

Jeremy Corbyn and the people around him have turned a mainstream party into something very different. He has spent his entire political career working with and supporting all sorts of extremists, and in some cases terrorists and antisemites. I always thought he was unfit to lead the Labour Party and I certainly think he is unfit to lead our country. ...

To read the full statement see

[http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/i have taken the difficult decision to leave the labour party](http://www.ianaustin.co.uk/i-have-taken-the-difficult-decision-to-leave-the-labour-party)

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House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Universities

Vicky Foxcroft (Labour) [220971] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of the decision by the US Administration to cut funding to Palestinian university programmes in the West Bank and Gaza on the provision of those programmes; and whether the Government plans to provide additional support or scholarships to Palestinian students in response to that cut in funding.

Alistair Burt: We are aware of the decision by the US Administration to cut funding to Palestinian university programmes. The UK is already making a significant contribution to higher education in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Our support to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education helps 25,000 young Palestinians to receive an education, and we support a number of Palestinian students every year to study at masters level in the UK through the Chevening scholarship programme.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220971/>

Israel: Gaza

Ian Paisley (DUP) [220905] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of reports of renewed tunnel construction into Israel by Hamas in Gaza.

Alistair Burt: We remain deeply concerned by Hamas's attempts to re-arm and rebuild militant infrastructure, including the tunnel network, in Gaza. Such actions

undermine efforts to improve the situation in Gaza and harm the prospects for peace.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220905/>

Palestinians: Politics and Government

Ian Paisley (DUP) [220906] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of democratic processes in the Palestinian Authority.

Alistair Burt: While we have made no recent assessment of this matter, we continue to believe that inclusive, accountable and democratic institutions and processes, based on respect for the rule of law and human rights, are crucial elements in establishing a viable and sovereign Palestinian State.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-13/220906/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL13679] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 5 February (HL13041), what steps they intend to take to protect the rights of Palestinians from illegal settler expansion.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including settlement expansion and the announcement on 11 February that Israel intends to retroactively legalize structures built on private Palestinian land. We are encouraging both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-12/HL13679/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-22/HL13041/>

Israeli Settlements: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL13680] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 5 February (HL 13137), what steps they intend to take to protect Palestinians from Israeli settler violence given Israel's obligation to protect Palestinians under international law.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We urge the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance of settler violence and bring those responsible to justice. Most recently we raised our concerns about settler violence with the Israeli authorities on 5 February. We have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-12/HL13680/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

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>

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes today**

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 4 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>

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