



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

Westminster Hall Debate

Online Abuse

col 3WH Helen Jones (Labour): ... disabled people who report abuse are often told to go offline. That is as unacceptable in the 21st century as it would be to tell a black person or a disabled person not to go down the high street in case they get abused. ...

col 4WH Our inquiry has led us to conclude that social media companies do not employ enough moderators, or enough suitably trained moderators, to deal with this abuse. Given how much profit they are making, that is frankly scandalous. We also found that there is a lot of confusion about what is the responsibility of social media companies and what is the responsibility of the police. That confusion is often fed by the social media companies themselves. ...

col 5WH Social media companies should certainly do more. For example, we found that Twitter talks about dealing with threats of violence by removing an offending tweet or suspending an account, but nowhere does it say that threats to kill are a serious criminal offence and should be reported to the police. That in itself is breeding confusion. We often found that the police were having to pick up things that should really have been dealt with by social media companies. ...

Social media companies need clear rules, policies, mechanisms and settings that are accessible to all disabled people. They also need to be much more proactive in removing hate speech from their sites and reporting potential criminal offences ...

col 6WH The Government should make disability hate crime an offence in the same way that crime against someone due to their race or religion is an offence. At the moment, it is only an aggravating factor at sentencing, and it is necessary to prove that someone committed a crime because of hostility to someone due to their disability, which is a very high threshold. ...

col 8WH Nick Herbert (Conservative): ... Bullying has been around as long as the human race, but it has been enabled, amplified and in many ways made a great deal worse by social media. ... As recently as two decades ago we simply would not have been talking about this as an issue. Online bullying has exploded because of the prevalence of social media. ...

The Law Commission has said that “in 2017 28% of UK internet users were on the receiving end of trolling, harassment or cyberbullying.” ...

Although the Law Commission’s November 2018 report stated that “we do not consider there to be major gaps in the current state of the criminal law concerning abusive and offensive online communications,”

it then gave the very important caveat that “there is considerable scope to improve the criminal law in this area”. ...

The Law Commission noted that there are several practical and cultural barriers to enforcement. That is the second issue. The first is whether the law itself is adequate. Even if the law is correctly framed to deal with online abuse—as I have said, there are areas where it needs improving—the real question is whether it is being effectively enforced. There is little doubt that the law enforcement authorities have struggled with how to deal with the huge explosion of social media. The Law Commission noted: “the sheer scale of abusive and offensive communications, and the limited resources...a persistent cultural tolerance of online abuse” ...

...technical barriers that make it difficult to prove the identity of perpetrators; and jurisdictional issues in a highly globalised world. Those are all reasons why it might be hard to enforce the law, but that does not mean that we should not make greater efforts to do so.

col 9WH We are entitled to expect social media companies to do more to deal with the persistent trolling of people and to ensure that reports of such activity are investigated effectively. We must face down those who say that there should be free speech in this area, that we should all have broad shoulders, and that it is not the role of social media companies to act as police officers. ...

The fourth area ... relates to civil society itself and our responsibility to encourage a discourse that is civil, respectful and not hateful. All those who lead in society, not least Members of Parliament, must say that there are ways of speaking to people that are no more acceptable simply because it is in an online discussion than they would be if it were a face-to-face discussion. ...

col 11WH **Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op)** Much social media abuse is organised in secret and closed groups. The trolls then dogpile and harass people, and it sometimes takes a physical form, when employers are contacted, for example. The police do not have specialist teams or the legal force to deal with that. ...

col 16WH **Liam Byrne (Labour):** ... The policing environment for online hate is failing comprehensively. There is a very old concept in policing known as keeping the Queen’s peace. Online, the Queen’s peace is simply not observed. ... Some time ago, people started producing memes of what goes up online every 60 seconds. As far back as 2017, the statistics were half a million tweets, 500 hours of video and 3.3 million Facebook posts. There is no way any police force on earth will police that waterfront and keep it safe and sound to protect and preserve the Queen’s peace throughout that space. Therefore, we have to put the onus back on some of the most profitable companies on earth. ...

col 21WH **The Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries (Margot James):** ... self-regulation has failed ... that is why the Government will establish a new statutory duty of care to make companies take more responsibility for the safety and security of their users and tackle the harm caused by the content and activity on their services. Compliance with the duty of care will be overseen and enforced by an independent regulator. Companies will be held to account for tackling a comprehensive set of online harms, including behaviours that may or may not be illegal but none the less are highly damaging to individuals and threaten people’s rights online. The Government are consulting on the most appropriate enforcement powers for a regulator. ...

col 22WH The [Law Commission]report concluded that abusive communications are theoretically criminalised to the same or even greater degree than equivalent offline

behaviours – I did not necessarily accept that verdict myself—but practical and cultural barriers mean that not all harmful online conduct is pursued through criminal law enforcement to the same extent that it is in an offline context. I think the consensus in this room is that that is definitely the case. ...

The Law Commission has been asked to complete a wide-ranging review of hate crime legislation in order to explore how to make hate crime legislation more effective, including whether it is effective in addressing crimes targeting someone because of their disability. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-04-29/debates/65420802-6952-4830-9CF3-1B4001FFE0EA/OnlineAbuse>

The report of the Inquiry referred to above can be read at

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmcompetitions/759/759.pdf>

The Law Commission report referred to above can be read at

https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lawcom-prod-storage-11jsxou24uy7q/uploads/2018/10/6_5039_LC_Online_Comms_Report_FINAL_291018_WEB.pdf

House of Commons Written Answer

Religious Hatred

Jo Stevens (Labour) [247111] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for the 415 per cent increase in religious hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales since 2011-12.

Heather Wheeler: Police recorded religiously motivated hate crime has increased in recent years despite a backdrop of a longer-term downward trend in the experience of hate crime overall according to the Crime Survey of England and Wales. We know that there have been trigger events for increases in hate crime, such as the EU Referendum and the terror attacks in 2017, though data shows that these have been temporary. A considerable driver for this overall increase is general improvements in police recording, and through our work with the National Police Chiefs' Council and third party services such as the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA, police are better at identifying whether a crime is a hate crime and victims may be more willing to come forward.

The Government has a comprehensive plan to tackle hate crime in all its forms, as set out in the refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan published in October 2018, which sets out a programme of work across Government and by the police.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-24/247111/>

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

House of Lords Oral Answers

Religious Schools: Admission Policies

Baroness Bakewell (Labour): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of religious schools' admission policies on those schools.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education (Lord Agnew of Oulton): My Lords, many schools with faith-based admissions have

diverse intakes. Faith schools do not have significantly different populations of ethnic groups compared to non-faith schools. Admission authorities must ensure that their arrangements are clear, fair and objective and will not disadvantage unfairly a child from a particular social or racial group. Anyone who believes that a school's admission arrangements are unfair or unlawful may make an objection to the schools adjudicator.

Baroness Bakewell: I thank the Minister for that Answer. Fifty-two per cent of British adults identify themselves as having no religion, and 53% of rural primary schools are faith schools. Almost three in 10 families in England live in areas where most or all of the closest primary schools are faith schools. What have the Government to say about children effectively being forced into faith schools against their parents' wishes?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: To reassure the noble Baroness, the voluntary aided scheme is focused on providing the diverse range of places that parents want and is aimed at meeting demand for those places from within particular groups. Where parents are not offered a place at the schools they expressed a preference for, the local authority must offer them a place at another suitable school with places available. Just to reassure the House, in 2018 93% of parents got one of their first three choices of secondary school and 97% of parents for primary school.

Lord Deben (Conservative): My Lords, I have used faith schools and my children do so. Is it not true that faith schools are extremely popular and are very often overcrowded because people want their children to go to them? Faith schools are the product of the people who first started education in this country and we ought to be very proud of the Catholic and Anglican schools which serve us.

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My noble friend is quite right: the largest voluntary-aided schools are Catholic schools. There are some 850,000 pupils in those schools, and 33% of those pupils are from other faiths or none. They get higher results, on average, than the state system and they started free education in this country before the Government.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): My Lords, does the Minister agree that while it is important to look at the interaction between people of different faiths in choosing the intake of faith schools, it is equally important to ensure that a broad curriculum of religion is taught so that people are taught about other religions in a respectful way and about how to respect those different faiths? The teaching should focus on underlying ethical imperatives common to all faiths.

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The noble Lord is quite right. With the help of all Members of this House, we got the relationships and sex education regulations through last week. They underpin the whole concept of preparing children for our very diverse society. To reassure noble Lords on the recent voluntary aided application system, we were very clear in the criteria that anyone applying for it had to address the needs of all pupils in that community, of all faiths and none. They have to prepare children for life in modern Britain and create inclusive environments. Nothing is more important, beyond a good education, than an integrated system.

Lord Storey (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, I am sure the Minister will agree that it is important that children and young people, whatever their faith and whether they have a faith or not, should have an opportunity to learn and socialise together rather than being separated because of their religion. My question is about admission arrangements. Maintained schools, academies and some faith schools have different admission criteria, and because of all these different arrangements it is often difficult for local authorities to find places for pupils, let alone for parents to navigate their way around. How can the Minister make it easier for parents to understand the admission arrangements within their area?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Lords, academies are required to put their admissions policy on their websites so that they are quite clear to parents who apply. As I

mentioned in response to an earlier question, the vast majority of parents get a school in the top three of the ones they choose to apply to. I mentioned in my opening remarks that the schools adjudicator is there as the final resort for parents who are concerned about admission arrangements. It is very reassuring to know how few objections are raised. In 2015-16, there were 300; in 2016-17, 100; and in the last academic year, 129.

Lord Lea of Crondall (Labour): My Lords, my father was the headmaster of a Church of England junior and infant school for some years. There is a danger of a caricature emerging. Over the last two centuries many village schools were, in practice, schools for everybody but they were Church of England maintained schools—I am sure that the right reverend Prelates will know how that works. On the one hand we have to make sure that there is no question of religion being stuffed down people's throats, which I think is the implication of some of the questions, and, on the other hand, to recognise that we now have a very diverse society and ensure that the Church of England maintained schools, which are subject to local authority criteria, are not out of place in modern society.

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The noble Lord talks absolute sense.

Lord Polak (Conservative): My Lords, although purporting to promote tolerance, the humanist campaign is in fact aimed at limiting access for people of faith to state-funded education. Does the Minister agree that, rather than give credence to those who want to limit parental choice, we should protect our British values, promote tolerance and respect the rights of parents?

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My noble friend is completely correct. One of the most powerful things in our education system is diversity, and faith schools exist simply because there is huge demand for them. As I mentioned earlier, they have a higher level of oversubscription than most other school systems. They are required to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, and they are inspected by Ofsted on that basis.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-04-29/debates/27B4C0DF-0DF6-4BF5-8C99-E6F0DF9ABFF1/ReligiousSchoolsAdmissionPolicies>

House of Commons Library

Briefing: Contribution of Sikhs to the UK

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2019-0101/CDP-2019-0101.pdf>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: International Assistance

Stephen Twigg (Labour Co-op) [246438] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department plans to contribute funding to the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Harriett Baldwin: We continue to closely monitor the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and are considering providing further humanitarian support in 2019. Last year we provided £2 million to UNICEF which was included in the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for the OPTs. This support has helped reduce the spread of disease in Gaza by disinfecting water in 280 water

wells, 48 desalination plants, and 40 water reservoirs.

We have also recently announced a new package of £2 million to the International Red Cross Committee (ICRC) to support Gaza's struggling health sector. This funding is contributing to the delivery of surgical equipment, drugs and disposables, wound dressing kits, and rehabilitative prosthetics. It will also help to provide physical rehabilitation services for up to 3,000 disabled people. This support is fully in line with the objectives of the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-23/246438/>

Gaza: Health Professions

Jo Stevens (Labour) [246538] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to help protect Palestinian health workers in Gaza.

Harriett Baldwin: We are clear that no health workers or aid workers anywhere should be at risk of violence. The UK continually monitors the humanitarian situation in Gaza and we are aware of the significant strain on the health sector and health workers. We regularly raise with the Government of Israel the urgent need to ease all access and movement restrictions on Gaza, including for health workers. In particular we have stressed the importance of protecting civilians, especially children and medical personnel. We have recently announced that we will be providing £2 million to the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) Appeal to contribute to the delivery of urgently needed surgical equipment, medicines, wound dressing kits, prosthetic limbs and post-surgery physiotherapy. We continue to closely monitor the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and are considering providing further humanitarian support in 2019.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-23/246538/>

Gaza: Health Services

Jo Stevens (Labour) [246539] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to ensure Official Development Assistance allocated to Gaza supports the sustainable development of Gaza's health system.

Harriett Baldwin: DFID is aware of the continual strain Gaza's health system faces. The UK is committed to alleviating the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. Last month, DFID announced new funding to the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) to deliver urgently needed surgical equipment, medicines, wound dressing kits, prosthetic limbs and post-surgery physiotherapy. It will also help to provide physical rehabilitation services for up to 3,000 disabled people. The UK continues to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. Restrictions in Gaza were most recently raised with the PA in January 2019 by a UK Government official.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-23/246539/>

Gaza: Non-governmental Organisations

Jo Stevens (Labour) [247112] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of increased restrictions on (a) personnel and (b) material entering the Gaza strip on the work of NGOs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Harriett Baldwin: We continually monitor and remain deeply concerned about

restrictions on movement and access in Gaza, and the impact that this is having on the humanitarian situation. Recognising the challenges, the UK has committed to an extension of support for the UN Access Coordination Unit (ACU) until 2021 which works to facilitate humanitarian access for UN and NGO workers. DFID has also allocated £1.8 million for the Materials Monitoring Unit (MMU) of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) since it was established in October 2014. The GRM/MMU was set up to facilitate timely access of large amounts of construction materials into Gaza and enable Gazan citizens, families and businesses to get access to reconstruction materials following widespread destruction in the 2014 conflict. We continue to call on the Israeli Government to ease movement and access restrictions for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-24/247112/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

At this holy time of year, we urge the new mandates to pursue a lasting legacy of peace. Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council Open Debate on the situation in the Middle East

... the United Kingdom continues to encourage a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Our understanding, this is shared by most Council Members, continues to be that a sustainable peace requires a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps; Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states; and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees. ...

The Balfour Declaration was written in the midst of the First World War; the 100th anniversary of the declaration was two years ago in 2017. It was a product of its time. We understand and we respect the sensitivities about the Balfour Declaration and the events that have taken place in the region since 1917. We are committed, as I've just said, to establishing security and justice for Israeli and Palestinians through a lasting peace. So just as we fully support and we are proud of our role in the creation of the modern State of Israel as a Jewish homeland, so we fully support the objective of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

Mr President, there are two halves of Balfour: the second half of which has not been fulfilled. The occupation is a continuing impediment to securing the political rights of the non-Jewish communities in Palestine that the Balfour Declaration also envisaged. ...

But I want to today, Mr President, join others who are calling for us to look forwards, not backwards. We urge the new Israeli and Palestinian Governments to seize the opportunity to reverse the current destructive dynamic, to improve the immediate situation on the ground, and to strive to create the conditions conducive to negotiating a lasting peace. ...

The United Kingdom firmly believes that prosperity and strong Palestinian institutions serves Israel's long-term security interest. We encourage the Israeli government to reverse its decision to withhold revenues, which undermines the Oslo Accords ... And we encourage the Palestinian Authority to accept the remainder of the revenues on a provisional basis, as refusing all revenues will only harm Palestinians.

The advancement of yet more illegal settlements is eroding the physical viability of the two-state solution. We condemn the announcement on 4 April by the Israeli authorities to advance plans for over 4,600 settlement units across the West Bank – as many have noted, the single largest settlement announcement in recent years. We are also deeply concerned by pre-election comments made by Prime Minister Netanyahu in support of the possible annexation of at least some parts of the West Bank. Such a move would be contrary to international law and destructive to peace efforts. ...

We condemn, in the strongest terms, without equivocation, the terrorism of Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza. Settler violence also needs to be condemned wholeheartedly and the Israeli authorities have a responsibility to provide appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Mr President, we are second to none in recognising Israel's legitimate need to provide security but we continue to have concerns about excessive use of force by the IDF. Measures used must be appropriate and in line with international law. Accountability must be sought through swift, transparent investigations.

Mr President, the new Israeli and Palestinian Governments have the ability to lead their people to a better future free from violence. Leaders can either seize the opportunity to move forward and create a new dynamic, or they could continue with short-termism and self-interest, which will only lead to further deterioration for their people. At this holy time of year, following Pesach and before the start of Ramadan, we urge them to use their new mandates to pursue a lasting legacy of peace. ...

To read the full statement see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/at-this-holy-time-of-year-we-urge-the-new-mandates-to-pursue-a-lasting-legacy-of-peace>

United Nations

Civil Society Speakers Paint Grim Picture of Deepening Crisis in Occupied Palestinian Territory, as Security Council Takes Up Middle East Situation

... **Rosemary A. Dicarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs**, warned that under the pressure of violence, settlement expansion, unilateral measures, intra-Palestinian division and deepening mistrust, the prospects for a just and lasting peace are growing ever more elusive. "The status quo will only lead to further deterioration of the situation," she said. ...

While the situation in Jerusalem's holy sites remained calm in the past month, the cycle of violence regrettably continued, she said, recalling that on 30 March, Palestinians in Gaza marked the first anniversary of the "Great March of Return" protests, which remained largely peaceful despite some protesters who ignored calls for restraint and engaged in acts of violence. Seven Palestinians, including four children, were killed by the Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza and more than 1,300 were injured, she added. Reiterating calls that children should never be the targets of violence, be put at risk or encouraged to participate in violence, she also called on Israel to use lethal force only as a last resort and in response to imminent threat of death or serious injury. Also during the reporting period, Palestinian militants fired 30 rockets and mortars from Gaza towards Israeli civilian populations, she continued, stressing that such indiscriminate attacks are prohibited under international humanitarian law and must cease immediately. ...

Noting that settler-related violence also continued during the period under review, she recounted incidents of violence committed by Israeli civilians as well as the tying, blindfolding and shooting of a 15-year-old Palestinian boy allegedly for throwing stones. Meanwhile, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded 14 Palestinian attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians in the West Bank ...

Nada Majdalani, Palestinian Co-Director of EcoPeace Middle East, said that 97 per cent of Gaza's ground water is not suitable for human consumption and 30 percent of illnesses are from water-borne pathogens. With an average power supply of just four hours, wastewater facilities fail to operate, emptying the equivalent of 34 Olympic swimming pools of raw sewage into the Mediterranean Sea every day. ... Underlining the critical importance of water and climate security issues for the region's people, she said that while politicians can speak of a disengagement policy, it is not possible to disengage from a shared environment, she said, citing the demise of the River Jordan as an example

of the broader Arab-Israeli conflict's environmental cost. ...

Gidon Bromberg, Israeli Co-Director of EcoPeace Middle East, recalled a memorable time when he joined Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian mayors in a jump into the River Jordan together. Planning for that moment required years of work by EcoPeace ... Describing decades of conflict and competition over water in the Middle East, he said each side — including Israelis and Palestinians — once fought for every drop. “Water was left unresolved as a final-status issue because coming to an agreement over sharing scarce water resources was difficult and would produce winners and losers,” he said. In contrast, he noted, new desalination and other water technologies have eased such constraints over water in the region. Some 70 per cent of Israel's water now comes from desalination, and the fair sharing of water between Israelis and Palestinians is now possible. ...

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, warned that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is declining rapidly. The outlook has become even grimmer after the Israeli elections, which further entrenched “the extreme right that has come to rule Israel as a racist, apartheid State” under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ...

The Palestinian right to self-determination has long been recognized and supported globally, he continued, noting the growing international consensus in that regard. ... The wanton killing, wounding and terrorization of Palestinian children, women and men by occupying Israeli forces and extremist Israeli settlers constitutes gross violations of international law. Israel's 12-year-long blockade of the Gaza Strip remains illegal, he said, underlining that isolating and imprisoning 2 million people is mass collective punishment tantamount to a war crime. ...

Stressing the need to end all such illegal practices, he called on the international community to stop normalizing the occupation and treating it with deference. ...

Danny Ben Yosef Danon (Israel) said it is a painful time for the Jewish people, noting last Saturday's shooting at the Chabad centre in California. ...

Delivering his statement, he said he would present four pillars proving Jewish ownership of the land of Israel based on the Bible, history, law and the benefit to international peace and security. Citing the Bible, he said the Jewish right to the land of Israel is confirmed in both the Old and New Testaments. The Jewish claim is confirmed time and again, not only in Jewish history, but in world history, he said. It is not just the Hebrew bible or the 50 million Jews around the world who accept this, but all three monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, he said, adding that the Koran itself accepts the “divine deed of the Jewish people to the land of Israel”. When the Romans destroyed the Jewish kingdom, they sent the Jews into a 2,000-year-long exile, he said, adding that the Romans knew that the land belonged to Israel but they still confiscated it and named it Palestine.

For the next 2,000 years, the land of Israel continued to be conquered by others but despite that, a Jewish community remained. “We knew some day we would return to our homeland,” he said, adding that Jews pray three times a day for the return to Zion, the Jewish land. “If this is not enough proof, let us consider international law,” he continued, noting the Balfour Declaration's endorsement of the Zionist cause. After the Ottoman Empire fell, the British Empire took legal ownership of the land and committed to establishing a Jewish homeland. These documents are Zionist documents, he said, insisting that Zionism is the realization of the self-determination of the Jewish people in their homeland. ...

The Arabs have rejected opportunities for peace time and again, including one presented by the United Nations in 1947 and others in the years since, he said. It weakens the Council's mandate to continue to blame the side that offers solutions and to reward the side that keeps rejecting them, he said ... real peace will only be possible when the Palestinian people accept the Jewish State and end their campaign of incitement. “Enough

is enough,” he said demanding: “How can Israel be expected to make any concessions to a leader who pays others to harm Israel?” ...

Rodney M. Hunter (United States) [said that] While Israel is often blamed for the difficult situation on the ground, the real culprit is Hamas, which places its own interests above those of the Palestinian people ...

Karen Pierce (United Kingdom) [*see above to read details of the UK statement*]

François Delattre (France) expressed concern about the worrying situation on the ground, including Israel’s approval of thousands of new housing units and its policy legalizing so-called “wildcat settlements”. He expressed particular concern that such activities in East Jerusalem’s Old City are leading to heightened tensions around the Temple Mount. Citing a shift towards de facto annexation of the West Bank — which would contravene international law — he warned that a situation in which two peoples exist in an unequal manner within the same territory would lead to violence. He went on to condemn all violent actions, including rocket fire into Israel, emphasizing that France does not recognize Israel’s sovereignty over Jerusalem, the Golan Heights the West Bank or the Gaza Strip ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13794.doc.htm>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

United Nations

Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson for the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) on the Attack on a Synagogue in Poway, California

Mr. Miguel Moratinos, the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) strongly condemns the attack on a synagogue in Poway, Southern California on Saturday, 27 April 2019. He notes that the attack is a hate crime targeting Sabbath worshipers on the last day of Passover.

The High-Representative reiterates that such cowardly attacks are not confined to one religion, country or ethnicity . He stresses that this spate of violence against houses of worship targeting innocent & peaceful citizens should not obstruct our efforts to combat hatred, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination. He vows to continue to work on developing his Plan of Action for safeguarding religious sites to guarantee that worshipers can observe their rituals in a spirit of peace and compassion.

On behalf of UNAOC, the High Representative expresses his deepest condolences to the family of the victim and wishes those who were injured a speedy recovery.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1037491>

Political, Religious Leaders Have Special Duty to Promote Peaceful Coexistence, Secretary-General Stresses in Statement on Intolerance, Hate-Based Violence

... Around the world, we are seeing a disturbing groundswell of intolerance and hate-based violence targeting worshippers of many faiths. In recent days alone, a synagogue in the United States and a church in Burkina Faso have come under attack.

Such incidents have become all too familiar: Muslims gunned down in mosques, their religious sites vandalized; Jews murdered in synagogues, their gravestones defaced with swastikas; Christians killed at prayer, their churches often torched.

Houses of worship, instead of the safe havens they should be, have become targets.

Beyond the murders, there is loathsome rhetoric: xenophobia aimed not only at religious groups, but also at migrants, minorities and refugees; assertions of white supremacy; a resurgence of neo-Nazi ideology; venom directed at anyone considered the “other”.

Parts of the Internet are becoming hothouses of hate, as like-minded bigots find each other online, and platforms serve to inflame and enable hate to go viral. As crime feeds on crime, and as vile views move from the fringes to the mainstream, I am profoundly concerned that we are nearing a pivotal moment in battling hatred and extremism.

That is why I have set in motion two urgent initiatives: devising a plan of action to fully mobilize the United Nations system’s response to tackling hate speech, led by my Special Representative on Genocide Prevention; and exploring how the United Nations can contribute in ensuring the safety of religious sanctuaries, an effort being led by my High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations.

The world must step up to stamp out anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred, persecution of Christians and all other forms of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and incitement. Hatred is a threat to everyone — and so this is a job for everyone. Political and religious leaders have a special responsibility to promote peaceful coexistence. I will count on the strong support of Governments, civil society and other partners in working together to uphold the values that bind us as a single human family.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sqsm19559.doc.htm>

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>

House of Lords Library Briefing

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2019-0051/LLN-2019-0051.pdf>

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>

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

Online Harms White Paper (closing date 1 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

**** Opt-out organ donation: organs and tissues excluded from the new system**
(closing date 22 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/opt-out-organ-donation-organs-and-tissues-excluded-from-the-new-system>

TOP

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