



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Places of Worship: Security Funding

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sajid Javid): ... Yesterday marked the start of Ramadan, a peaceful time of prayer and reflection. Throughout the holy month, Muslims will come together in mosques to celebrate. The tragic events in Christchurch, New Zealand, will never be far from their minds, and the 51 innocent souls who were slaughtered in March will be remembered in many prayers. A terrorist gunned down these Muslim men, women and children as they prayed. A few weeks later, Christians were massacred by terrorists in Sri Lankan churches as they observed their faith on Easter Sunday. More victims were targeted in hotels, with a total of over 250 lives lost. Just days ago, a gunman stormed a synagogue near San Diego, killing an innocent woman on the last day of Passover. Each one of those atrocities was heartbreaking and tragic, and my thoughts are with every single person who has been affected. I know that the House will join me in condemning these hate-fuelled attacks on our freedom and values.

This slaughter has sent shockwaves through our religious communities. People are understandably worried. Many members of my own family contacted me after Christchurch to seek reassurance. They asked, "Just what are you doing to stop this happening here?" With your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to answer that and provide some much-needed reassurance.

There can be no doubt that people have been targeted because of their religion in terrorist attacks around the world, but also in vile hate crimes on the streets of this country—sledgehammer attacks on mosques, a Christian preacher spat at in the street, and a brick thrown through the glass door of a synagogue. I condemn all these attacks with every fibre of my being. No one should be targeted because of what they believe. Everyone, of every faith, deserves the right to observe their religion without fear, and we are doing all we can to ensure that this remains the case in the UK and that our fundamental values are preserved.

Mr Speaker, allow me to update the House on some of the work that is under way to protect our religious freedom. First, I have increased the places of worship protective security fund to £1.6 million for 2019-20—double the amount awarded last year. Expressions of interest

are now open for the next round of the fund, which will open in July. Since the scheme launched in 2016, more than £1.5 million has been awarded, with 63 grants to churches, 49 to mosques, five to Hindu temples and 16 to gurdwaras. They have paid for security equipment such as CCTV, security lighting, new locks or fences. Many more places of worship will now benefit after we made it even easier to apply this year, by removing the need to find multiple quotes and contractors. A separate £14 million grant also provides security for Jewish schools and synagogues against terror attacks.

Secondly, a new £5 million fund will provide security training for places of worship across England and Wales. This funding will support the physical security measures provided by the places of worship fund. It will share best practice and help faith organisations to understand how best to protect their worshippers.

Thirdly, we are consulting religious communities on what more can and should be done to help them. We will shortly announce a programme of engagement, to help us understand what they need and how to make it work in a faith setting. This listening exercise will inform how the £5 million security training fund is spent to ensure that it is effective and will help ascertain how we can best protect worshippers.

Fourthly, we are providing immediate help with a Ramadan package of support for mosques. We know that Muslims are anxious for their safety after the atrocity in Christchurch, and that tensions are heightened during religious festivals. So we are supporting Faith Associates to provide security training and advice for the Islamic holy month. Support is being given in 12 workshops around England and Wales, and guidance is being distributed to over 2,000 mosques, community centres and madrassahs.

Finally, our world-class police provide a vital protection role to all places of worship. Patrols near mosques were stepped up following the Christchurch attack to provide much-needed reassurance and the police have increased activity around religious festivals and holy days, including the Ramadan period. Our security services work tirelessly to disrupt all terror threats known to this country. This includes tackling the growing threat from the far right, with more than four such terrorist plots disrupted since the beginning of 2017. We are also using a range of other powers to tackle the threat of terrorism and extremism in this country. Our robust hate crime legislation has seen far-right influencers jailed for a range of offences, including religiously aggravated harassment. As Home Secretary, I can exclude foreign nationals from entering the UK if I believe that their presence would not be conducive to the public good—a power that I can and do use to stop hate preachers stirring up tension here. I have used that power eight times since I became Home Secretary.

Our Prevent and Building a Stronger Britain Together programmes work with and through local communities to challenge terrorist or extremist ideologies from Islamist to the far right. Together, this comprehensive package of support provides protection for all our places of worship. We know that there are deep and genuine concerns in religious communities; we know that people are feeling vulnerable and scared, but have no doubt that I am listening to these concerns and we are responding. The diversity of this country and our shared values of tolerance and respect are what make us truly great. We will never allow those who seek to divide us to win. The freedom to practise any religion or none is a cornerstone of our democratic society. People must have the peace of mind to worship without fear, and I am doing everything within my power to make this possible. ...

Diane Abbott (Labour): ... The Opposition welcome his statement in principle, particularly the Ramadan package. We are aware that there is particular fear in some of our communities as we enter the period of Ramadan. However, we reserve the right to return to the subject as the detail of implementation becomes clear.

Across the world we are seeing a rise in terror attacks especially on people in their place of worship. The House should contemplate what it means to be gathered together to pray to your God and find yourself a victim of murder and terrorism. In Sri Lanka we saw more than 200 people die, including hundreds of people at Easter services in Christian churches.

We all saw the images of the terrorist entering the church with the rucksack on his back, patting a small child on the head and then proceeding to blow up the innocent worshippers. This followed the terror attacks in Christchurch on Muslim worshippers, which claimed the lives of 50 people and injured 40 more. The attack was livestreamed on Facebook. Most recently, a gunman stormed a synagogue, killing an innocent woman on the last day of Passover. The concern must be that, in this era of online, when someone can literally livestream their terror, there is a danger of copycat incidents. That is one of the things that has inspired fear in different communities.

On this side of the House, we want to make it clear that these terror attacks are murderous and vile, whether they come from admirers of al-Qaeda or ISIS or from admirers of tinpot Adolf Hitlers. As we move towards the European elections, sadly, we may well see a rise in far right activity, which may seek to mirror some of the terrorist attacks that we have seen. That is why we believe that this statement is timely and to be welcomed.

These terror attacks spread ripples of violence throughout communities and countries. The Metropolitan police report that racist and religious hate crimes in London hit their highest levels in a year immediately following the Christchurch mosque shootings. Tell MAMA, the Muslim community organisation, said that there was an almost sixfold increase in reports to its monitoring service immediately after the Christchurch attack. Separately, the Community Security Trust also reports rising incidents. My own Haredi Jewish community in Stamford Hill have seen a steep rise in attacks; sadly, they do not always report them to the police, although I am working with them to encourage them to go to the authorities after all such incidents. There have been similar reports from police forces and monitoring community organisations across the country.

The proposals that the Home Secretary has announced are both timely and appropriate, but we will follow up some of the measures. For instance, the Opposition will wish to know where the worship protection security fund is being allocated, and which organisations have applied for and been awarded the funding. My experience is that sometimes those who obtain Government funding are better at putting in applications, rather than necessarily being the organisations in most need. ...

The terrorist incidents that we have been seeing are both frightening and tragic. We as a House must assure vulnerable communities of our intent to support them, whether financially or in other ways. I welcome the Home Secretary's statement, but he can be assured that we will be following up how it actually unfolds in practice.

Sajid Javid: ... The right hon. Lady rightly started by condemning the recent terrorist attacks around the world—in Christchurch, Sri Lanka and San Diego. She was also right to make a link between those attacks and what she called the ripple effect—the rise in recorded hate crime that we have sadly seen here in our own country. ...

Steve Double (Conservative): ... This issue is not just about buildings. People of faith live out their faith day in, day out in their homes and in their communities, so will he confirm that he will continue to do all he can to ensure we remain an open and tolerant society, and that the principles of freedom of faith, freedom of worship and freedom of speech will continue to be upheld for people of every faith?

Sajid Javid: ... He is right to highlight that this is not just about buildings—bricks and mortar—but the environment that people feel exists for them to practise and talk about their faith. ... There are a number of groups that both my Department and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government work with to try to create the all-important environment that gives people the freedom and security to practise their faith, no matter what that faith is.

Stuart C McDonald (SNP): ... Everybody should be able to practise and observe their religion without fear. Any sensible measure that will help to make that happen is to be welcomed. Listening to what our religious communities need is paramount, so I welcome in particular what he said about consultation. It is a tragedy that we are having to have this

discussion on how to protect places of worship in 2019. One reason we are having to do so is that online space has been ruthlessly exploited by those who would peddle hate and encourage such attacks. ...

Yvette Cooper (Labour): ... the Home Secretary ... is right to be very clear that no one should ever be in fear as a result of following their faith.

Will the Home Secretary clarify whether the funding that he announced today is a further development from the announcements in March? Will he say what is being done to address online radicalisation and online religious hate crimes? ... In particular, what action is he aware of to tackle the closed Facebook groups that still have huge numbers of members and about which there are real concerns that religious hate crimes are being pursued?

Sajid Javid: ... The £1.6 million for places of worship is not new, although there is more detail available on it today; I also announced the £5 million for training at the time. What is new today is the Ramadan package.

Like other colleagues, the right hon. Lady expressed her concern about how online platforms are being used. In particular, she mentioned Facebook. When legislation is in place, it will naturally be easier to take action. However, as I have said, there is action that online platforms can take today, including on closed groups. ...

Kate Green (Labour): ... may I also raise the concerns that my constituents have expressed about safety around schools? In particular, Muslim mothers in traditional dress are highly visible as they collect or drop off children and are often vulnerable to abuse and hate attacks. Will the Home Secretary work with his colleague to advise and support schools to ensure that children and parents are safe whenever they attend school premises?

Sajid Javid: ... I mentioned in my statement that there is £14 million of support for the Jewish community, as there should be. Most of that is for Jewish schools. It is right that we take a fresh look at other schools and religious establishments where people of certain faiths gather. Schools and community centres would be included in that. ...

Stephen Doughty (Labour Co-op): ... I remain deeply concerned about the neo-Nazi, extreme-right organisations that are targeting communities throughout the United Kingdom, especially Muslim and Jewish communities. Can the Home Secretary update me on the organisation System Resistance Network, which has been active in my south Wales constituency? It is simply an offshoot of National Action, and I have called for it to be proscribed.

Sajid Javid: ... As for the proscription of groups, whatever type of terrorism or extremism they preach, we take that incredibly seriously. The hon. Gentleman will know that ours was the first Government to proscribe a far-right organisation, National Action. If any proscribed organisation comes up with aliases or tries to get around the rules, we take that very seriously as well. ...

Mike Gapes (Change UK): ... Will the Home Secretary encourage his officials to do more to pursue a policy of interfaith dialogue and co-operation because, ultimately, it is through understanding and co-operation that we will deal with these problems?

Sajid Javid: I strongly agree. ...

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... Hate crimes based on religion were at record levels last year, partly due to antisemitism and to Islamophobic incidents. While security is absolutely necessary, I believe that there is a need for a two-pronged approach, so can he tell the House what has been done to promote freedom of religious belief more generally, so that there would be no need for extra security at places of worship?

Sajid Javid: ... I wish we did not have to have a statement like this today because none of us felt that we needed to provide protection for places of worship. Sadly, that is not the case and I know he agrees that we are absolutely right to focus on this. At the same time, we need to continue to ensure that our laws and regulations

and the environment for religious worship are as strong as they can be, and I hope that today's announcement will help to give reassurance to people of all faiths that, where protection is needed, it will be provided.

To read this very lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-05-07/debates/21C4190A-5CAB-43DA-8360-AA944753E549/PlacesOfWorshipSecurityFunding>

House of Lords Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Places of Worship: Protective Security Funding

The Minister of State, Home Office, Baroness Williams of Trafford repeated the statement made by the Home Secretary in the House of Commons (see above)

Lord Rosser (Labour): ... The Statement deals with a serious issue, in the light not only of the tragic and sickening events elsewhere in the world but of events on our own doorstep, with the increasing number of attacks causing damage to synagogues, temples, mosques, churches and other places of worship, with the fear that, before long, those attacks could be directed more at worshippers than at just the buildings themselves.

It is a sorry state of affairs when people of different faiths do not always feel safe simply practising their religion. The language of hate that seems increasingly to be used only ramps up the likelihood of such attacks. What is even more appalling is that that language is used by some who hold or seek to hold office in our democratic structures and intuitions, and by so doing give that language an air of respectability.

Places of worship should be open to the public as havens for quiet reflection, contemplation, prayer and worship, and as places where an understanding hearing and help may be found. But it is increasingly difficult to keep places of worship open for most of the day because of the threat of attacks in one form or another—increasingly difficult because people, often volunteers, are needed inside to ensure that nothing untoward occurs, and, even then, a single person on their own may feel too vulnerable to want to carry out that role even when they have the time.

We support making more money available for protective security measures as a means of seeking to reduce fear and apprehension for those practising their faith in places of worship. But this cannot be regarded as a solution to the problem. We need, beyond the increased security measures set out in the Statement, resources directed at those who preach or practise hatred or encourage others to do so, and in particular also at those who might find such messages seductive or compelling. That requires further resources not simply for our seriously overstretched police but for community organisations and local government and our schools, for example, which have also been denuded to the bone to the detriment of the extent and level of what they can achieve in this field. ...

Baroness Hamwee (Liberal Democrat): ... She repeated the Home Secretary's four specific items. I thought that the third, which was, "consulting religious communities on what more can and should be done to help them", might have been the first one in the list. The amounts of money which are mentioned are welcome, but they are very small when one compares them to the cost to the community of an attack—any sort of attack, but particularly a major attack. The aim must be to eliminate religious hatred.

The focus of this Statement—I do not think it pretends to be otherwise—seems to be on relatively low-level physical security. ...

I have a couple of questions for the Minister about the application form on the Home Office website. There are questions about the building, asking whether: "The exterior and interior ... is in a good state of repair and look well maintained", whether there is "natural surveillance"—I am not sure what that means—and whether it is in a conservation area. What is the relevance of some of these questions? There are questions about security

measures, such as whether personal injury or assault has been experienced in the past 12 months and whether the building is, “visible and identifiable as a place of worship? e.g. Symbolism/description on exterior of building, building dominate town or hidden away etc”. My reaction on reading that is that we should be loud and proud about faiths which are practised. Again, will the Minister tell the House the purpose of such questions? Five million pounds is proposed over three years for training. I appreciate that the Community Security Trust is outside this scheme, but I mention it because I was struck by an email circulated to members of my synagogue asking for volunteers to come forward for specific levels of training, and I realised how much these groups depend on volunteers. Is the Home Office satisfied that all communities that need training will be able to access this funding? ...

Baroness Williams of Trafford: ... The noble Lord commented that this is not just about buildings. He is absolutely right—it is not just about buildings. Just securing a building will not create confidence or put the minds of communities at rest. I do not know whether he recalls it, but the reassurance that was provided by the police following the “punish a Muslim” letter was exemplary. Communities up and down the country were very grateful for that, and the police will be doing the same over Ramadan. ...

[Baroness Hamwee] also talked about some of the funny things on the application form. As she listed them, I reflected on why you would need to know whether the institution in question was in a conservation area. I surmise that it is because you would need to know what you can stick on the outside of or put around buildings. Certainly, whether a building is secluded or in full sight will influence the risk assessment. Similarly, a building in a poor state of repair is clearly more of a security risk. Basically, it allows an assessment of risk.

The noble Baroness talked about the £5 million-worth of training and asked whether all communities that need training will get it. I really hope that communities that need it will come forward. The consultation will be online very shortly. I know that organisations such as the CST and Tell MAMA are fully engaged when it comes to working with each other, so there will be community involvement and participation. I look forward to the details of the consultation coming online in due course. ...

The Lord Bishop of Rochester: ... The Minister has already observed the tragic events in Christchurch, Sri Lanka and San Diego. It seems to me that one of the learnings from those events is the impossibility of predicting where, or even when, a dreadful event might occur. With that in mind, I am particularly grateful for the broadening of the eligibility criteria in relation to potential grants from the fund, whereby it is now not necessary for places of worship to have experienced an incident of hate crime in order to make an application. ... the balance between ensuring security and maintaining welcome and openness ... is a daily concern for our cathedrals and other nationally significant places of worship of different faith traditions, but it is also relevant for what one might call the humbler, local ones. Reference has already been made to the role of volunteers in making sure that buildings remain open. It seems that continued engagement is needed on how to get the balance right between, on the one hand, openness and accessibility and, on the other, the security of both buildings and persons.

I have a final observation and question on the security of persons. I am conscious that some religious leaders in the public eye—I am not thinking particularly of people like me—might be at greater risk precisely when they are not within their place of worship. ... It is when they are at home, with their family or in other settings that the risks might be greater. Is consideration being given to support in terms of security in the homes of the public religious leaders of faith communities? ...

Baroness Williams of Trafford: ... the real benefit of the consultation is that people ... can point out some of the wider risks that we have not perhaps considered in deliberating on the security of not just places of worship but the people who worship

there and those who lead people in worship. ...

People go to places of worship for such a wide range of reasons. ... It is always so sad when a church or other place of worship is closed for security reasons. ...

Lord Harris of Haringey (Labour): ... Three years ago, I reviewed London's preparedness for a major terrorist incident and had some consultation meetings with faith communities. Complacency may be the wrong word, but I was concerned about the sense that came across from so many of the faith communities that "this would not happen to us because we are good people", and therefore their unwillingness even to contemplate it. ... I was slightly concerned that this is a Statement made by the Home Office as much for show as for reality. This is not new money ... Spending £1.6 million between the country's 60,000 places of worship equals £26 each, which does not buy much in the way of CCTV or physical preventions. ...

Baroness Williams of Trafford: ... I think it is fair to say that we are all complacent until something happens to us—we never quite think that it will. He asks whether this is all for show. No, it is not. As we go into the holy month of Ramadan, there are people who are concerned, and I think it absolutely right to reiterate what is and what will be available to them and to give them reassurance. ...

To read this lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-05-07/debates/87DD4900-8974-4B6F-80C6-B5A5626C240B/PlacesOfWorshipProtectiveSecurityFunding>

Welsh Assembly Debate

Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality

175 Jane Hutt (Deputy Minister and Chief Whip): ... Fifty people died in the terrorist attacks in Christchurch on 15 March and 250 more in Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019. On 27 April 2019, on the last day of passover, the shooting at a synagogue outside San Diego left one woman dead and three others injured. The shooting came exactly six months after a shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue, killing 11 people in the deadliest attack on Jews in US history. The global response to these terrorist attacks has been powerful and inspirational. ...

177 We must publicly condemn racism, Islamophobia, Afrophobia and anti-Semitism wherever it occurs, and we must take further action to tackle racial inequalities that are present in our own country. We know that means that we must take action here in Wales. ...

178 In Wales, the systems we have in place for addressing hate crime and supporting victims are seen as world leading. ...

180 Let us be in no doubt, everyday racism, structural racism and racially motivated crimes are still each and every day having a profound impact on the lives and life outcomes of people in Wales. It's unacceptable that many BAME people in this country have come to the conclusion that they just need to tolerate everyday racism. In 2017, the British social attitudes survey evidenced that a quarter of people admitted being very or a little prejudiced towards people of other races. Structural and institutional racism is also very real. ...

181 Likewise, there is substantial evidence that many of our BAME children and young people are experiencing racist bullying in schools. ...

182 Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are also very real issues in Wales today, with extremist groups fuelling hatred and spreading lies. ... That's why, for example, we're investing £2.4 million to expand our regional community cohesion programme, to identify and mitigate community tensions. ...

184 This isn't about tokenism or making up numbers. Wales needs diverse representation of ethnic minority groups, women and other protected characteristics in our top

management positions and in our politics. ...

187 Last but not least, tackling racist incidents, hate crimes, and structural racism has never been more urgent than at present: 68 per cent of all hate crimes are racially motivated. And nor can we afford to ignore the impact of right-wing extremism in Wales. Numbers may be small, but the activities of such groups, both online and locally, can have a disproportionate effect on our communities, and are a disgrace to our society as a whole. ...

190 **Mark Isherwood (Conservative):** ... Although people's experience of hate crime captured by the crime survey of England and Wales has gone down steadily over the last decade, police recorded hate crime in England and Wales has more than doubled since 2012-13, when 42,255 such crimes were recorded. In part, this is due to improvements made by the police in identification and recording of crime offences and, in part, to more people coming forward to report these. However, there have also been spikes of hate crime. ...

207 **Jenny Rathbone (Labour):** ... we can see the very real differences that have been achieved where educational outcomes amongst different ethnic groups have been almost eliminated in terms of differences. If anything, ethnic minorities now outperform our indigenous white community. ...

208 I have noticed a much more robust response in clamping down on racist language in schools that I'm involved in, as well as, I hope, most schools. Remarks that were previously ignored or overlooked are now dealt with and addressed. Persistent offenders are subject to disciplinary proceedings, including exclusion, and quite rightly so. ...

209 Sadly, this is against a rising tide of racist incidents outside school. A recent Cytûn analysis highlights a 40 per cent increase in religious hate crime, which has doubled over three years. Islamic communities have been the most targeted, followed by Jewish communities. ...

212 **Leanne Wood (Plaid Cymru):** ... Apart from isolated voices on the far right, few would argue that someone could be less worthy because of the colour of their skin, despite the fact that many people undoubtedly hold those views in private. But this is exactly why we must put in place systems that directly challenge structural racism and discrimination. Stopping people speaking in favour of racism is not enough. Stopping people acting on it is what is vital. ...

214 We know that the far right is on the rise, and we must, on a global scale, call out the slurs and the prejudicial comments that poison our political debate and cause harm to people. But calling this out is only useful if we go deeper and challenge the ideology of subtle racism that runs through our political discourse and society, because the far right did not emerge from nowhere. ...

215 Racism is part of our history. Whilst our country has spent most of its history being ruled from London, we've also taken part in the British colonial empire that was responsible for countless wars and numerous genocides of non-white peoples. ... It's this heritage that makes it so easy to believe that other people around the world are somehow problematic adversaries that we must either dominate or keep out. ...

218 **Dawn Bowden (Labour):** ... as we all know, no-one is born racist. It's something taught and learned. That's why it's so important that we invest time and money in anti-racist education ...

234 **Mohammad Asghar (Conservative):** ... Since 1973, governments in the United Kingdom have spent millions and millions of pounds on race relations. Today, have we really achieved it? ... Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and so on ... the jobs sector, families, schools, children. The young generation hasn't been taught the beliefs of others. That is the problem. ... Now, this is the fourth or fifth generation of ethnic minorities, and still we call them ethnic minorities. It surprises me, because now my child is fourth generation. We are British. That Britishness is not there—or Welshness is not there. ...

236 In Islam ... our belief is that when you live in a different country as a Muslim, live like them. I'm not saying that I'm agreeing or disagreeing with Boris. Personal views are different. He might have seen a woman living with purdah or a hijab in a different way. But there is a personal choice. ... Extremism has come out of all this nonsense about third-world countries, or the middle east when the problem started. Islamophobia has become the norm for others, and people take one step backwards from Islam. ...

237 Purdah is a religious belief. Let people think what they believe, but I would not go against anything, because we've got to abide—. It's not against the law in this country yet, so why are we discussing it? ...

238 Education is the most important. If we start doing it now, in 2019, it may take another 15 to 20 years to make sure our young generation will understand each other nicely. ... We have failed. We all failed to bring this racial equality. ... But, to make our future better, we must make some better rules and regulations in this Chamber. ...

256 Caroline Jones (Independent): ... When I joined UKIP, the leadership made it clear that there was no place in the party for racists, and it even said on the application form to become a member that you could not become a member if you had been a member of a far-right party. And this changed when Gerard Batten became leader. And it was sickening when Gerard Batten and Neil Hamilton shared a platform with Tommy Robinson, and they went further into decline when they welcomed Carl Benjamin, Mark Meechan and Paul Joseph Watson into the party. ... How could the UK leader and the Welsh leader condone outright racism and bigotry? How could they share a stage with people who celebrated Nazi values, if they weren't of those same beliefs?

257 Anti-Semitism also has no place in society, and many remarks that have been made are distasteful and have incited hatred and riots. ... We must eradicate the ideology of the far right and the far left who believe it is okay to discriminate based upon race or religion. ...

260 Neil McEvoy (Independent): ... our welcoming way of being is under threat ... There's been large immigration to Wales over centuries ... But we have a culture in Wales that is strong enough and attractive enough that people embraced it. ...

261 When things get tough, we don't have to turn on our neighbours, because that's what too many irresponsible politicians are doing nowadays. And it's also not so simple to say, 'Racists bad, non-racists good', because we've all been socialised in society, and we all sometimes need to recognise our own prejudices that need to be overcome by reason. ...

271 Jane Hutt: ... In spite of progress, it's all too clear that there is a long way for us to go, and we must be vigilant and active to make sure that we don't slip backwards or lose any of the progress that's been made. ...

280 I think this is an opportunity. We've talked a lot about education and, in fact, taking on board all of the recommendations from the BAME engagement group ... The fact that Race Council Cymru have recently had a meeting with the curriculum officials ... it's vital that we see this as embedding in our curriculum, in our schools and education.

281 But I'm also, finally, very pleased that there's a cross-party group on race equality, which is going to be chaired by John Griffiths. So, finally, we call for the support across this Assembly on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales to facilitate the development of that cross-party Welsh declaration, embodying the principles of the international convention and reinforcing, reinvigorating our commitment as Welsh Government to support wholeheartedly the global fight to root out racism and racist ideology.

To read the full transcript see

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5654#A50827>

TOP

Holocaust

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation

Prime Minister leads unprecedented support for Holocaust Memorial as further £25m committed

The Prime Minister Theresa May has led cross-party support for the new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, planned for Victoria Tower Gardens beside Parliament.

In an unprecedented move, the Prime Minister has been joined by the 4 living former Prime Ministers – Sir John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and David Cameron – to back the proposal to ensure we never forget one of the darkest chapters in human history.

Prime Minister Theresa May said: By putting our National Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre next to our Parliament, we make a solemn and eternal promise that Britain will never forget what happened in the Holocaust.

Seeing this through is a sacred, national mission. In the face of despicable Holocaust denial, this Memorial will stand to preserve the truth forever.

And this education centre will ensure that every generation understands the responsibility that we all share – to fight against hatred and prejudice in all its forms, wherever it is found. A further £25 million has also been committed to the new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre ...

The funding will be matched by a newly established charity headed up by member Gerald Ronson CBE and Lord Andrew Feldman to support the landmark proposal.

The further £25 million committed to the new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, is contingent on the securing of £25 million of match funding and on planning permission being obtained.

Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said: I believe there can be no more powerful symbol of our commitment to remembering the men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust and in subsequent genocides than by placing the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, in the shadow of our Parliament at the heart of our democracy.

Education on the Holocaust and subsequent genocides is one of the most powerful tools we have in the fight against prejudice, intolerance and misinformation. ...

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial is dedicated to the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of the Nazis and their collaborators.

The Learning Centre will focus on the Holocaust and subsequent genocides and will educate future generations on the importance of fighting prejudice and persecution in all its forms. ...

British Heroes of the Holocaust award

... The British Heroes of the Holocaust award is a national award given by the UK Government in recognition of British citizens who assisted in rescuing victims of the Holocaust. It was first awarded on 9 March 2010 following a campaign by the Holocaust Educational Trust.

Speaking at the ceremony in the Wiener Library, London, the world's oldest Holocaust archive, the Communities Secretary praised the courage and humanity of the late Joan Stiebel MBE and the late Lady Rose L. Henriques CBE for their service to Britain. They are 40th and 41st recipients of the British Heroes of the Holocaust award.

Mr Brokenshire said: We can draw real inspiration from the women awarded British Heroes of the Holocaust medals today.

They refused to turn away and leave it to others to do the right thing. Instead they took on personal responsibility and their courage and human compassion saved many lives.

I hope these medals will ensure their legacy is never forgotten and will inspire us all to confront injustice, bigotry and hatred.

Holocaust Educational Trust Chief Executive, Karen Pollock MBE, commented: As the Holocaust moves further into history, this Memorial and Learning Centre positioned right next to Parliament will send a clear signal for generations to come of the important place that the Holocaust has in our nation's history and will stand as a warning of what happens when we let hate and prejudice go unchecked. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-leads-unprecedented-support-for-holocaust-memorial-as-further-25m-committed>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Middle East: Peace Negotiations

Steve Double (Conservative) [248719] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on that country's Middle East peace plan.

Mark Field: We continue to discuss US Middle East peace efforts with the US Administration, including the Foreign Secretary with Jared Kushner on 10 April. We continue to encourage the US Administration to bring forward detailed proposals for a viable Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-29/248719/>

Egypt: Gaza

Maria Caulfield (Conservative) [248728] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the Egyptian blockade of the Gaza Strip on the humanitarian situation in that region.

Mark Field: Ministers and officials regularly raise the situation in Gaza with the Egyptian Government both in London and in Cairo. We remain deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Gaza and support the Palestinian Authority returning to administer Gaza. The Foreign Secretary discussed Gaza with new Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 20 March. We continue to urge Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt to work together to ensure a durable solution for Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-29/248728/>

Israel: Palestinians

Andrew Percy (Conservative) [249260] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 1 April 2019 to Question 236490, what comparative assessment she has made of whether the Palestinian Authority prisoner payment system is equivalent to conventional welfare payments.

Harriett Baldwin: The UK Government deplores any act of violence or incitement to violence. The UK government does not consider the Palestinian Authority's (PA) prisoner payments system to be equivalent to conventional welfare payments. The UK government acknowledges that people in need are entitled to access support

that is based on objective social need. For this reason we continue to press the PA to make the prisoner payments system more needs based, transparent and affordable. UK Ministers have raised this personally with the Palestinian Foreign Minister, and officials raised this with the PA at senior levels most recently on 28 March 2019. No UK aid is used for payments to Palestinian prisoners or their families.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-04-30/249260/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-03-25/236490/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Palestinians: USA

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL15329] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of the United States in regard to reports that the United States Agency for International Development is preparing to reduce the size of its West Bank and Gaza mission and to lay off many of its local employees; and what impact this will have on international efforts to build the capacity for a future Palestinian state in accordance with UK policy to support a two state solution.

Baroness Sugg: The UK maintains a regular dialogue with the United States (US) on a range of Middle East issues, including reduced levels of US funding to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The UK is concerned about the effects of US cuts to the OPTs on both the Palestinian Authority's (PA) ability to deliver essential services to Palestinians and on the prospects for peace and stability in the region. A UK official spoke to a US Government official regarding this in February, and in March the former Secretary of State raised wider reductions in US funding to the OPTs with Nita Lowey, Chair of the House Appropriations Committee. The UK will continue to work with the international community to support a stable PA which can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel, as part of UK efforts to prepare the ground for a two state-solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-24/HL15329/>

United Nations

Secretary-General, Following Events in Gaza with 'Deep Concern', Condemns Rocket Fire into Israel, Warning against Further Escalation, Loss of Life

... The Secretary-General is following with deep concern the latest security developments in Gaza, and the risk of yet another dangerous escalation and further loss of life on the eve of the holy month of Ramadan.

He condemns in the strongest terms the launching of rockets from Gaza into Israel, particularly the targeting of civilian population centres. He urges all parties to exercise maximum restraint, immediately de-escalate and return to the understandings of the past few months.

His Special Coordinator, Nickolay Mladenov, is working closely with Egypt and all concerned parties to restore calm.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sqsm19563.doc.htm>

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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>

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

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>

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