

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group

Wes Streeting (Labour) [276247] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what engagement the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group has had with the (a) Attorney General's Office, (b) Cabinet Office, (c) Crown Prosecution Service, (d) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (e) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, (f) Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; (g) Department for Education, (h) Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (i) Home Office, (j) Ministry of Justice, and (k) Department for Transport in the last 12 months.

Heather Wheeler: The Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group meets quarterly. Independent members of the Working Group work alongside the listed departments, representatives from the Muslim communities, independent experts, academics, and ex-officio members of the Working Group to tackle anti-Muslim hatred.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-11/276247/>

Churches: Equality

Tonia Antoniazzi (Labour) [277265] To ask the right hon. Member for Meriden, representing the Church Commissioners, what discussions the (a) Church of England and (b) Church in Wales have had with (i) other religious and faith bodies, (ii) the Government and (iii) the Equality and Human Rights Commission on the exemption of those bodies from equality legislation for appointments and provision of services.

Caroline Spelman: The Equality Act 2010 contains provisions that allow religious organisations to apply a limited range of religious occupational requirements to comply with the doctrines of the religion or to avoid conflicting with the strongly held religious beliefs of a significant number of the religion's followers. The ability to apply religious occupational requirements arises where the employment is "for the purposes of an organised religion" and is not specific to the Church of England. The Church of England has regular discussions with other religious and faith bodies,

with HM Government, and with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on matters of mutual interest. From time to time these will include reflections on the importance for religious freedom of the provisions that protect faith and belief in the Equality Act.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-15/277265/>

UK Parliament Home Affairs Committee

Evidence session: Inquiry into the Macpherson Report: Twenty Years On

Q506 Chair (Yvette Cooper, Labour): ... The issue about confidence in policing among BAME communities was raised very strongly in the Macpherson Report. Do you have force-by-force data on confidence in policing by ethnicity?

Nick Hurd (Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service and Minister for London): We track this through the ONS and their survey work. What that shows on this hugely important issue is over time a reasonably stable picture of a gap in the overall system between levels of confidence across the whole community in relation to the police, which remains relatively high, and in relation to BAME communities and particularly the black community. That is particularly pronounced in London ...

Q508 Chair: Does it exist for every force? We struggle to find it for every force.

Scott McPherson (Director General of the Crime, Policing and Fire Group): The primary data we have is from the Crime Survey of England and Wales and that is a national England and Wales figure. I am not sure if we do have it for every force ...

Q510 Nick Hurd: I believe that at least every other year every force is inspected on the legitimacy pillar and issues in relation to equality and diversity as well as use of stop and search, complaints and discipline processes, which are looked at every other year, counter-corruption capability, which is looked at every other year. It regularly looks at workforce diversity as well. ... Every year the HMIC looks at the ethical behaviour of forces and whether they treat the public fairly. ...

Chair: When was the last time they did a thematic investigation that looked at race or diversity?

Nick Hurd: In 2018 they looked at the police response to hate crime, which is obviously relevant. In 2017 they looked at the ability of forces to identify potential discrimination in public complaints and internal misconduct matters. Next year, 2020, they are going to look at the whole issue of workforce representation and the response to the police chiefs' strategy.

Q512 Chair: But when was the last time that the HMIC looked at the overall relationship between the police and BAME communities and confidence in BAME communities?

Nick Hurd: I think what I am trying to say is that they look in some detail at some of the issues underpinning that issue every year in the inspections that are made. I do not have in front of me the last time they did a specific thematic inspection on the basis that you said but they have looked at various things such as disproportionality in complaints and discipline over the year.

Q513 Chair: The last time they looked at it in a serious thematic way was in 2003. The last major one was in 2001. ...

The information I have is that its legitimacy assessment does not look specifically at confidence in BAME communities at all. ... there is no assessment of confidence in BAME communities in the local force at all. ...

Nick Hurd: As I said, it looks at a range of things through the annual inspection within the legitimacy pillar, including many of the drivers of the frustration and dissatisfaction out

there, including use of stop and search, the complaints and discipline processes, a regular look at workforce diversity. ... I don't think the annual review is quite as sketchy and glancing as you suggest.

Q515 Chair: Do you collect the information that individual forces might themselves gather to look at BAME community attitudes to forces?

Nick Hurd: ... we collect it at a national level through the ONS survey.

Q516 Chair: But do you look at the information from forces? ...

Nick Hurd: We look at the national picture. ...

Q517 Nick Hurd: ... if there are issues around the processes of that police force in relation to some of the drivers of increasing or reducing confidence, such as use of stop and search and the complaints and discipline process, we ought to be able to pick them up through the regular independent inspection process.

Q518 Chair: Looking at the complaints and grievances does not look at it by ethnicity, so that would not tell us what was happening with confidence in the BAME community. ... How would you in the Home Office know if a police force or PCC that is not assessing this has a growing problem in its BAME community?

Nick Hurd: I believe we would pick it up through the independent inspection. ...

Scott McPherson: ... in June the Minister chaired a meeting with chief constables, a race disparity audit round table, and one of the things that we identified at that is exactly the issue you are highlighting here. We now have very good national data, which does break down confidence figures by ethnicity, but the Minister was very clear with police chiefs that he would like to have a better understanding of activity at local level. The Minister wrote to all chief constables and PCCS on 12 July asking them to pull together that information at local level and inviting all the forces to publish a statement about the racial disparities that they are experiencing in their own force. ...

Q522 Chair: ... I am still not clear. Are you asking all forces to gather that information and to publish it and are you asking them to do so in a consistent way so that it can be compared?

Nick Hurd: Yes, as part of looking at the broader set of data in the six areas that the race disparity audit highlights in encouraging them to make local statements about their data and their response to that data.

Q523 Chair: You are encouraging them to make local statements but are you also encouraging them to give you information that is comparable? ...

Nick Hurd: It would be my intention to make that information comparable. ... Of course it would be better and desirable to be able to compare and contrast across forces but with all the caveats around the complexities and the need to recognise local differences. ...

Q525 Chair: ... will you gather data on disciplinary processes by ethnicity by force?

Nick Hurd: Yes.

Q526 Chair: Thank you. I think the concern that has been raised with us is about whether or not the Home Office is still taking the recommendations of the Macpherson Report seriously. When recommendation 1 is that a ministerial priority be established for all police services to increase trust and confidence in policing among minority ethnic communities, do you think it is a fair assessment to say the Home Office has not been monitoring this, the Home Office does not have the information force by force to know whether there is a problem and, therefore, has not been making it a ministerial priority to make sure that all forces are doing their bit to increase confidence among BAME communities?

Nick Hurd: It is a ministerial priority and it is a priority of the Home Secretary to increase confidence in the police across all communities but particularly in those communities where there is a confidence gap. ... if you look at the action taken since 2010, or over a longer time period since the Macpherson Report, you can see a lot of action to tackle some

of the drivers that might underlie a confidence gap. ...

We can debate whether that action has made enough of a difference in the areas of concern and we can be quite candid, because the evidence is there, that we clearly still have some significant problems to manage through. ...

... we have made some progress, it is quite clear that there are still some very significant problems and risks that we need to move the needle on further and fastest. ... Although we are looking at report that is 20 years old, its significance is as relevant today as it was then, which is why I welcome this inquiry. ...

Q528 Douglas Ross (Conservative): ... Why should this family continue to have to challenge the Government and others to get this feedback? Why should it have taken 20 years after the inquiry reported for the Government to listen to Mrs Lawrence and others to say there is no easy way to analyse if the Macpherson inquiry recommendations have actually been met? Why weren't the Government doing this themselves?

Nick Hurd: ... when I heard this on the floor of the House and heard the evidence from the Baroness to you, I took prompt action. It seemed to me that given that so much work of this work and effort is the legacy of Stephen's tragic death, it must be right that the family and friends and all those interested should be able to track progress more easily. ...

Q530 Nick Hurd: ... we need to distinguish between action taken in response to the issues and action taken to bring that together into an account for the family and others to be able to track progress. ...

I am very happy to make the commitment to your Chair that we should continue to produce rolling updates on progress, not just for the family ... the issues underlying the Macpherson Report remain enormously significant and relevant now, not least because society and policing have changed so considerably since that time but, as you have heard in lots of evidence, some of the underlying issues, perceptions, fears and anxieties have not shifted. ...

Q533 Nick Hurd: ... The ultimate test is whether it has made a difference and I think I have been very candid about that in relation to a confidence gap, the evidence around perceived disproportionality in the use of stop and search, the failure of any police force in this country to actually represent the community it serves, disparities in relation to allegations of misconduct inside the system. It is very clear that in some very important areas we have not made enough progress over many years. ...

Q534 Douglas Ross: Since the Stephen Lawrence steering group was disbanded, what were the Government and your Department doing to monitor the outcomes of the Macpherson inquiry ...?

Nick Hurd: ... We have the race disparity audit, the first of its kind that any country has ever done, which is designed to throw a spotlight on some very, very uncomfortable truths about our society and some of the most uncomfortable truths are in relation to policing. ... The Home Secretary chairs a very regular roundtable on diversity in the workplace, recruitment, progression, promotion, all those issues. ...

At the moment we do not see a need to reintroduce the steering group that was disbanded in 2005 but I don't want anyone, least of all the Lawrence family, to get any impression that the drive and the leadership and the tough conversations around the tough issues are not happening, because they are.

Q535 Toby Perkins: I want to ask you about the progress that police forces have made in recruitment of BAME officers. ...

Q536 Nick Hurd: Would you allow me to elaborate why it matters? It is not just the reason that everyone gives. ... it is not just about the need for the police force to represent the community it serves, for all the reasons that we understand for building community confidence and trust. ... this is also an issue of equality of opportunity and social justice. ...

Q542 Tim Loughton (Conservative): ... we have had a lot of evidence from all sorts of

people ... but I think the most alarming evidence we had was in a private session from a group of young people from BAME backgrounds in three London boroughs with youth leaders and various projects that they are involved with. They, to a man and woman, were absolutely damning of the mindsets and attitudes of the police ... One witness described it as, "It is a blank systematic stare, ridden of systematic laws, and they are just preaching to you, talking absolute nonsense half the time. You can't have real conversations. ...

Nick Hurd: ... I have not complacent about this ...

Q544 Tim Loughton: I think the Committee has no doubt about the integrity and the keenness and the recognition that the Met chief has in this, but the problem is that it is not shared by black teenagers on the streets of our inner cities. When she says—and I can understand entirely why—that institutional racism is no longer a helpful term, a term that she recognises in her police force in London, in which she has been for the best part of 35 years or whatever it is, and the transformation has been huge, I do not doubt that. But that confidence and that recognition is not shared by the very people who are coming into contact with the police most of all, young black teenagers in our inner cities, as suspected perpetrators but, more importantly, as actual victims. ...

The point of this inquiry 20 years on is how do we restore that level of confidence? ...

Nick Hurd: I do have some data in relation to complaints in here that suggests something like a 40% fall in complaints. What I don't have, and I will have to write to the Committee, is any data on the upholding of complaints and the integrity of the follow-up processes to that. ...

Q550 Kate Green (Labour): Given the disproportionality of both the gang matrix and stop and search in terms of who becomes subject to them, and the at least contested evidence on efficacy, are they institutionally racist tools?

Nick Hurd: No. The evidence on stop and search is contested. ...

In fact, as I think I have made quite clear, we have been very keen to try to build police confidence in stop and search, while not relaxing in any way the very hard messages that we have delivered over many years about the need for it to be done legally, on an intelligence-led basis, with very good processes around the way it is done and the way that communities are engaged before and after. ...

Q554 Christopher Chope (Conservative): ... five years ago this month the College of Policing produced the code of ethics that puts an emphasis on fairness and impartiality ... To what extent do you believe that those principles are now fully embedded within all the police forces in England and Wales?

Nick Hurd: ... My sense is that the code is well embedded in the system. Will you always find evidence of police officers not acting in accordance with the code? Yes. That is why, in part, alongside the introduction of the code, the Government increased investment in the independent investigation process. ...

Q558 Christopher Chope: ... What message do you think the public should draw from the news that a majority of people in prisons in England and Wales are now from black and ethnic minority groups?

Nick Hurd: ... I am conscious that some data is out today that signals for the first time that there is some evidence that asserts some disproportionality in that. ... but I think it is the responsibility of the MoJ to produce a diagnosis and a response ...

Q559 Christopher Chope: Surely the straight answer would be that if there are more people in jail from a particular ethnic minority group, that shows that that group has a greater propensity to commit crimes and, therefore, be convicted of them? Isn't that the obvious thing that flows from it?

Chair: No, I don't think that is.

Nick Hurd: No, and I am certainly not getting drawn into that. ...

Q560 Chair: ... the David Lammy inquiry ... did look in very considerable detail at the

broad range of causes and the broad range of complex issues.

Nick Hurd: ... and pointed out that ... there isn't a single explanation for this ...

Q561 Christopher Chope: ... doesn't that illustrate the fact that counting up particular groups and particular ethnic minorities or particular racial propensities or, for that matter, people with particular genders or sexual orientation, and trying to analyse them with data can lead to dangers, in the sense that people then lose sight of the principles that are that policing in this country has to be done on the basis of equality under the law and fairness and impartiality ...

Nick Hurd: ... it is a very positive legacy of Stephen Lawrence's very tragic death and the extraordinary, persistent campaigning of the family. The fact that we are sitting here and having these conversations and analysing this data is a sign of a country that is always alive to the risk and the problems identified all those years ago and constantly challenging ourselves to do better. ...

Q563 Chair: ... Given the information that we have all discussed, given the issues around these still disproportionate misconduct inquiries, given the gap around the confidence for the BAME communities, given the issues around recruitment still and the comments from the former NPCC lead on diversity, Gareth Wilson, who talked about, "If you use the definition in the Macpherson Report you could argue policing is institutionally racist but we've moved on significantly since then"—you will obviously be aware that the Met Commissioner has taken a different view and does not think it is an appropriate description to use today.

Given that the description around institutional racism was about collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate professional service because of people's colour or cultural or ethnic origin, and perhaps to do with unwitting prejudice or unconscious bias in the system, do you think it is wise of police forces to say that they are definitely not institutionally racist, rather than to continually keep an open mind about whether there might be unconscious bias or unwitting prejudice within their structures, processes and collective organisations?

Nick Hurd: ... being accused of racism is bound to generate defensiveness. It is a very difficult accusation to manage. I could not imagine being called anything worse, so I can quite see why that accusation can generate some defensiveness, particularly for one of our most important public networks and institutions whose model depends on the confidence of the public that it serves and protects.

What I have observed—and I do not think I am looking at this through anything like rose-tinted glasses—I can point, as we have done over decades, to streams of big radical initiatives that are designed to change frameworks of accountability, integrity, scrutiny and change processes around things like stop and search, all with the intention to improve integrity and build confidence. The challenge for us is: has it made enough of a difference? I think I have been candid with the Committee in saying that in some very key areas there remain some deep-seated, stubborn problems. ...

I detect—and you have heard it from the commissioner ... that there is a determination, that there is a will that some of the issues underlying this are stubborn and complex but that the recognition of the problem is there. The workstreams to try to fill gaps in understanding are there. ... That gives me confidence that these issues will not get lost because they are pretty front and central to something very important, which is confidence in our police model.

To read the full transcript see

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/the-macpherson-report-twenty-years-on/oral/103826.html>

Home Office

Confronting extremism together

The Home Secretary gave a speech on confronting extremism ...

Growing up in the seventies, looking like this, extremism was part of my life.

I changed my route to school to avoid members of the National Front.

I watched my mum time and time again scrub the word 'Paki' from the front of our shop.

And – rightly or wrongly – as a child, I punched a bully who used the same racist slur to my face. ...

I'm proud to say we're now a more multi-racial, more welcoming, and a more tolerant society.

But just last week I met schoolboy Jamal Hijazi, whose heart-breaking story took me right back to my childhood.

A Syrian refugee who wasn't just insulted by a classmate, he was attacked.

Not in the 1970s, but just a few months ago.

No one can hear his moving story and deny we still have a problem in this country.

And it's not just racism, with the blind hate of extremism showing its face in many ugly forms.

In 2015 we published our ground-breaking Counter Extremism Strategy. ...

But four years on, it's time to take stock and to talk openly about the threat, and to admit it's got worse.

Yes, progress has been made.

But when I hear what happened to that schoolboy, I know we have to do more.

So we set up the Commission for Countering Extremism to help us do just that.

I thank them for their work so far, and while I do welcome their first findings, they lay bare the ugly truth.

Just over half of the respondents to their consultation had witnessed extremism in some way.

One in five had seen it in their own area.

Almost a quarter online.

The targets are many and varied.

And the top group identified by the Commission as most at risk of extremism? Everyone.

When over half of us have witnessed extremism, it's gone from being a minority issue to one that affects us all and the way we all live our lives is under unprecedented attack. ...

Reports of far-right extremism, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate are on the rise.

Women are being robbed of opportunities by religious extremists.

The internet has further emboldened those that are inclined to hate.

Angry words whip up a climate of fear and incite hate, violence, public disorder, oppression and segregation.

Women beaten on a bus because they are gay, sledge hammer attacks on mosques, children being forced into marriage.

Christians, Muslims and Jews being slaughtered in Sri Lanka, Christchurch and Pittsburgh.

Public discourse is hardening and becoming less constructive. ...

... if we are to stop extremism in its tracks we must have the courage to confront it, the strength to take decisive action, and the foresight to tackle the root causes. ...

Extremism can be the thin end of a wedge.

The unpleasant words that skate on the right side of the law, but stir up hate and drive violence in others.

Of course, you shouldn't arrest everyone with a suspect view. ...

But the challenge is being able to identify where an opinion crosses the line into extremism. ...

... there's a delicate balance between personal and religious freedom and protecting our shared values.

In this country, everyone has the right to observe their cultural and religious practices without any fear of abuse.

We celebrate differences and in part that's what makes us great. ...

But cultural sensitivities must not stop us calling out extremism.

To back away from a problem because of someone's ethnicity is not liberal, it is weak. ...

So we need to combine the more gentle approach of working with communities and promoting shared values with an unashamedly tough approach to those who spread extremist poison.

So our work embraces those we need to help fend off extremists:

- strengthening communities through our Building A Stronger Britain Together programme and the Integrated Communities Strategy
- protecting religious institutions from hate crime with our Places of Worship Protective Security Programme
- and boosting integration by committing to new British Values Tests and strengthened English Language provision ...

I can announce today that in anticipation of the Commission's full report, I've asked my officials to start work on a comprehensive new Counter Extremism Strategy. ...

Extreme views can be found on all sides of the spectrum, from Islamist organisations like Hizb u-Tahrir and IHRC, to far right groups like Britain First and Generation Identity.

And those that spread intolerance and division from all corners are often given a platform by media and political figures. ...

So I have amended the guidance for sponsoring migrant workers.

This will allow us to refuse or revoke a sponsor licence where an organisation behaves in a way that is inconsistent with British values, or that's detrimental to the public good.

I can tell you now that I plan to revoke CAGE's licence on this basis, subject to representations. ...

I know what it's like to be an outsider.

I want everyone to have the opportunities that I had, to feel they belong to our brilliantly diverse Britain.

But, sadly not everyone does, and that cultural separation can sow the seeds of extremism.

The extremists set out to fracture our society, therefore we must unite to defeat them.

We need fewer labels that divide, and more overlapping layers that draw us together.

First, community – when people truly come together we build unbreakable local networks that extremists cannot breach.

Second, language – I saw how hard it was for my own Mum when she came to this country speaking very little English.

We estimate that 1 million people living here today that cannot speak English well or at all.

And if we can't communicate with each other, how can we build bridges? ...

Third, integration ...

And finally, national identity ...

I'm from an immigrant family, I know what it's like to be told to go back to where you come from – and I don't think they mean Rochdale!

Some worry that new arrivals will take over their communities – that our national identity will be diluted. I firmly reject that. ...

This is not just a job for the Government alone.

But we will lead from the front.

It takes the whole of society to challenge these vile views.

Everyone has a part to play: *broadcasters who must not give platforms to extremists...

*police who must swoop on the worst offenders... *and public figures who must moderate their language.

And anyone can challenge the myths that are peddled by extremists that deepen divisions.

So tell your friends and shout it loud and proud: people from minority backgrounds do not steal their jobs, they're not terrorists, and that there is no global 'Zionist conspiracy'. ...

I will do everything in my power to stop those who seek to undermine our country.
And I will tackle the root causes.
To unite communities, to protect our fundamental values, to protect those most at risk. ...
To read the full transcript see
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/confronting-extremism-together>

Scottish Government

Autumn 2020 for organ donation opt-out system

Legislation to introduce an opt-out system of organ and tissue donation for deceased donors will come into force in Autumn 2020.

The new law will add to the package of measures already in place which have led to significant increases in donation and transplantation over the last decade.

It will follow a public awareness campaign of at least 12 months which will provide more information about what the changes mean and what choices people will have.

Under the new law, if an adult does not opt-in or opt-out of donation they may be deemed to have authorised donation for transplantation. This is subject to the safeguards in the Act which seek to ensure that donation will not go ahead where it would be against the person's wishes.

Public Health Minister Joe FitzPatrick said: "... We will continue to work with key stakeholders and the NHS as we prepare for the introduction of opt-out in Autumn 2020 to ensure this legislation is implemented effectively.

"In Scotland there are an average of more than 500 people waiting for an organ transplant at any one time so it's important that we do all we can to improve the lives of those on the waiting list.

"I would encourage people to continue to make a decision about donation, record this on the NHS Organ Donor Register and discuss it with their family." ...

The Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill amends the existing Scottish legislation that supports donation by introducing a new, additional form of authorisation called 'deemed authorisation'. This means that donation may proceed where a person was not known to have any objection to donation.

Under the system there will be protections for adults without capacity to understand deemed authorisation, adults resident in Scotland for less than 12 months and children under 16 who will not be subject to deemed authorisation and will only be able to donate if they, or someone on their behalf, explicitly authorises it. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.scot/news/autumn-2020-for-organ-donation-opt-out-system/>

TOP

Israel

House of Lords Debate

Palestine: United States' Peace to Prosperity Economic Plan

col 422 Lord Cope of Berkeley (Conservative): ... I have seen for myself the tremendous achievements of Israel. ... Of course, the Israelis have made great contributions to science, medicine and agriculture, and in many other ways.

This impressive progress in Israel is in contrast to the problems and repression in Palestine, originating in the period of British rule but exacerbated by the present policies of the occupying power. ...

... this long-awaited document ... comes from the White House, rather than the State Department, which gives it added significance. ...

The document is advertised as an economic development document, but the chosen wording throughout is drenched with politics. It never refers to “Palestine”, only “the West Bank and Gaza”, thus avoiding admitting that there is such a place as Palestine. It also leaves out east Jerusalem, which the United Nations, the Palestinians, we and others agree is essentially part of occupied Palestinian territory. It never refers to the Palestinian Authority but “the Palestinian public sector”, even when discussing essentially governmental activities such as tax collection. It frequently mentions “Palestinian people” but never “Palestinian nation”. In other words, it systematically tries to pick off the individual people and not allow them any nationhood at all. It denies the two-state solution and looks entirely to one state—otherwise known as annexation. ...

col 423 Gaza needs access to the outside world, but this document does not refer to building an airport or seaport. The international community actually did just that some years ago; Israel promptly bombed them flat. ...

What is principally needed for the economic development of Palestine is for the occupying power to stop crushing local initiative and stop building on occupied land. The document analyses what is required for Palestinian development but is also, in its way, a terrible indictment of what the occupying power has used its effective best to prevent happening. ...

... peace will not come from ignoring the Palestinians’ right to self-determination, nor from brutal repression. The document deliberately ignores Israel’s security problems and policies; that is not what it is about. The fact is that the policy of the present Government of the occupying power is not based even on the Biblical “an eye for an eye” but on “a bullet for a stone”. ...

col 424 **Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour):** ... what President Trump calls the “deal of the century” ... envisages a major capital investment in education, health and infrastructure for the Palestinians, but makes no mention of Jerusalem, the settlements, boundaries or Palestinian statehood. ...

Some 88% of Palestinians believe that the US is partisan, and, as all signals from the US have shown, it is. It can hardly be a trusted, honest broker. ...

Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (Liberal Democrat): ... The Palestinians boycotted the conference in Manama, rejecting the plan out of hand. The Israeli government representatives were not invited to attend.

For a deal, one needs a willing buyer and a willing vendor; ... there has to be a level of compromise on both sides. A state of Palestine has to be on the table. Security and recognition of Israel have to be on the table. Hamas needs to drop its aim of removing Israel from the map and stop firing rockets. As a first stage, Israel needs to cease expansion of settlements outside the land swap area. ...

col 425 ... the UK should continue to stress the need for a two-state solution. What role can the UK play in advancing some of those proposals? We could of course remind people of the Jews from the Arab lands—about 850,000—who fled there. ... there were 76,835 Jews in Baghdad in 1947 and there are none now. That is the other side of this disaster. ...

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench): ... The Kushner plan is heavy on infrastructure projects, capacity-building and ideas to entice investors, but light on who will pay, which Government will oversee development and where the land is. The projects listed are old initiatives and ones never executed because of the refusal to grant permission to allow the movement of both people and goods. ... The architects have failed to recognise that only the Palestinian Government can lead the development of their national economy. ...

It should also not be forgotten that the United States and European countries have designated Hamas as a terrorist organisation. The Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act prevents the PLO and the PA accepting economic aid from the US. ...

col 426 The natural resources necessary for projects include water, quarries, gas, minerals and tourism sites under Israeli control. The plan does not envisage Israel relinquishing its control. Although a major road between Gaza and the West Bank is called for, sovereignty over the corridor is not. ...

The Lord Bishop of Southwark: ... I am only too well aware of the State of Israel's just concerns for its security and its safeguarding of the holy places of Jerusalem, but I have witnessed Bethlehem walled in on three sides, Palestinian agricultural land divided and appropriated by military structures, and the acquisition of swathes of the West Bank and east Jerusalem for the settlement of Israel's citizens and the exclusion of Palestine's. ...

The Peace to Prosperity initiative is meant to convey a sense of progress and, if implemented, rapid transformation. But without a proper relational settlement, this is a chimera. Israel must be free, and Palestine must be free. ... While Palestine is under occupation and that is an implicit factor in international affairs, this plan and any like it will be destined to fall. ...

col 427 **Baroness Morris of Bolton (Conservative):** ... That the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, almost seven years ago, appointed a trade envoy to Palestine as one of eight trade envoys to be appointed around the world, shows the importance that the UK attaches to Palestine and her prosperity. ...

When I came back from my first trip as trade envoy, I was fizzing with ideas ... But I soon came to realise that, however enthusiastic and ambitious you may be, you cannot avoid the occupation, which not only subjugates the people but frustrates the normal rules of economics. There are some amazing Palestinian companies and entrepreneurs, and their ability to thrive in this environment speaks volumes for what they could achieve in a free, sovereign Palestinian state. ... the Prime Minister emphasised the UK position of a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders, with agreed land swaps, a realistic settlement for refugees and with Jerusalem as a shared capital of both states. That is the first, not last, step to peace and prosperity, and the only key to unleashing the phenomenal potential of the Palestinian people and their economy. ...

Lord Turnberg (Non-affiliated): ... The history of Palestine has shown repeatedly that simply offering money has never worked. In the 1920s and 1930s there were debates in this House in which much was made of the belief that, since the Palestinian Arabs were then so much better off than their cousins living in Egypt and Syria, they would automatically accept their country, as they saw it, being taken over by the influx of foreign invaders from Europe. The Zionists were certainly bringing increasing prosperity, with rising employment and better wages and living conditions, and Arabs from elsewhere were immigrating in increasing numbers, but never for one moment did the Arabs accept the idea that they were not being given the independence to govern themselves ... and that they were powerless to stop the influx of the Jews. Prosperity and money did not talk then, and it will not do so now. ...

col 428 **Lord Dykes (Crossbench):** ... I have always admired Israel as a wonderful country, but I am convinced that if justice is given to the Palestinians, next door to it another wonderful country will be created. With full peace and justice between them and all these decisions resolved, they will shake hands and work together as two of the most dynamic countries in the Middle East to promote not only their own reciprocal prosperity, strength and political security but that of others in the area as well. ...

col 429 The reality is that the Israeli Government have to accept that they must change. If they do, Israel and Palestine will come together. Palestine cannot be the only UN member state in the world to be denied its sovereignty. ...

col 430 **Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour):** ... Kushner's plan completely failed to mention any of the key political factors that are barriers to Palestinian economic development, including the occupation of territories and lack of a Palestinian state; the

security challenges to both Israel and the occupied territories; the settlements in the West Bank; US cuts to UNRWA and other aid programmes ... and Hamas control of Gaza. ...

col 431 Baroness Goldie (Conservative): ... The UK Government welcome US efforts to support development of the Palestinian economy, which is fragmented, with slowing growth and rising unemployment among a young and growing labour force. I recognise that neither Israel nor the Palestinian Authority were represented at the workshop, but it was none the less a useful opportunity for the international community to consider how we can support the Palestinian economy. ...

The plan ... proposes valuable programmes that seek to address a number of significant barriers to growth in the OPTs, and the proposals encourage international discussion on the development of the Palestinian economy, which is vital to reducing unemployment, promoting growth and improving Palestinian livelihoods. At this time, there are no political components to the plan and, for the time being, the occupation continues. The UK remains of the belief that a negotiated political settlement, leading to a viable and sovereign Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel, is necessary. A two-state solution—a negotiated political solution—must be the umbrella to any economic proposals ...

... we continue to focus our economic development support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and we shall double the amount of UK aid spent on economic development in the OPTs to nearly £40 million between 2018 and 2023. This UK programme is focused on helping to address restrictions on movement and access, and improving water and energy supply, particularly in Gaza. ...

col 432 The current impasse on the transfer of clearance revenues, which Israel is withholding, threatens the collapse of the Palestinian Authority. We believe this is in no one's interest and that it endangers stability and security. ...

On the distressing and perplexing issue of refugees, we remain one of the largest donors to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. ... The UK's programme of work in the OPTs reflects our desire to see the creation of a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian state, living in peace and security side by side with Israel. ...

We will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Sadly, we have not yet reached that point. In support of this ambition, we maintain pressure on the parties to end all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution. This includes Israeli settlement activity, demolition of Palestinian property in the West Bank, and evictions of Palestinians from their homes, particularly in east Jerusalem; equally, the Israelis have the right to live in peace and security, free from the threat of terror from Hamas and other militant groups. However, settlement development and related activity call into question Israel's commitment to peace. We would strongly oppose any move to annex all or any part of the West Bank.

For the Palestinian economy to improve, Palestinians and Palestinian goods must be permitted to move more freely and on an equal regulatory footing. ... We remain clear that the main constraints holding back Palestinian economic development are those imposed by the Israeli occupation. ...

col 433 ... we believe that much can and should be done to improve the economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As I have indicated, the United Kingdom is doing what it can to provide support, help and encouragement, and we call on Israel to engage and work with the Palestinian Authority to that end. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-07-18/debates/3A1E5E4F-8701-413D-8376-F177413580BF/PalentineUnitedStates%E2%80%99PeaceToProsperityEconomicPlan>

"Peace to Prosperity", which is the subject of the above debate, can be read at

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/peacetoprosperity/unleashing-economic-potential/>

House of Lords Written Answers

The following three questions all received the same answer

Data Protection

Lord Freyberg (Crossbench) [HL17040] To ask Her Majesty's Government which third countries have been recognised by the EU as providing adequate data protection.

Lord Freyberg (Crossbench) [HL17041] To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) businesses, (2) territories of, or (3) specified sectors within, third countries have been recognised by the EU as providing adequate data protection.

Lord Freyberg (Crossbench) [HL17042] To ask Her Majesty's Government what factors they will take into account when making data adequacy decisions after Brexit.

Lord Ashton of Hyde: The European Commission has so far made a full finding of adequacy in respect of: Andorra, Argentina, Guernsey, Isle of Man, Israel, Jersey, New Zealand, Switzerland and Uruguay. The Commission has made partial findings of adequacy in respect of Japan, Canada and the USA. You can find more information about these decisions on the Information Commissioner's website.

When the UK leaves the EU the power to make adequacy decisions will be repatriated to the Secretary of State. In February 2019 Parliament passed a Statutory Instrument (SI) setting out the criteria and process. The SI recognises and effectively rolls over all existing adequacy decisions that have been made by the EU as well as recognising EU states themselves as adequate. The SI also replicates the EU adequacy regime in UK law with a number of technical changes to make it work properly. The factors that the Secretary of State would need to take into account in reaching an adequacy decision include the rule of law, respect for human rights, and other relevant legislation in the third country being assessed.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-09/HL17040/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-09/HL17041/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-09/HL17042/>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Debate

Persecution of Christians Overseas

col 1018 **Chris Philp (Conservative):** ... Around the world, there are horrifying stories of Christians being attacked and often killed, of churches being destroyed, and of Christians being persecuted and prevented from worshipping. This is happening on an industrial scale in multiple countries. Often, the Governments in those countries turn a blind eye, or are even responsible for the persecution themselves. Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world. The International Society of Human Rights says that 80% of religious persecution in the world is against Christians. Open Doors estimates that 245 million Christians around the world—one in nine—face persecution. ...

col 1019 **Lisa Cameron (SNP):** ... Does [Chris Philp] agree that we must also be very careful that individuals in this country have freedom of religious belief ...? Does [he]

agree that these issues are also troubling people across the United Kingdom? ...

Chris Philp: ... Of course, the first place that we should champion and protect religious freedom is here in the United Kingdom; that is of course our first duty as Members of Parliament, but let us not forget the duty we also owe to persecuted minorities around the world ...

col 1022 **Susan Elan Jones (Labour):** ... However inconvenient it might be for politicians from western democracies, we must recognise that part of that universal declaration includes the right to convert or to change religion or belief, including the right to have no belief, which is a fundamental part of religious freedom. ...

col 1023 we must all take responsibility. I do not want to be partisan, but when people describe Muslim women wearing burqas as looking like letterboxes, that is irresponsible, wherever it comes from. We have to protect these freedoms. ...

Sarah Newton (Conservative): ... Christian persecution, like no other, is a global phenomenon. Thus Christian persecution is not limited to one context or challenge. ...

... this is not about special pleading for Christians, but about making up a significant deficit.

... If one minority is on the receiving end of 80% of religiously motivated discrimination, it is simply unjust that that minority should receive so little attention. ... this is also about being sensitive to discrimination against, and persecution of, all minorities. Because the Christian faith is perhaps the one truly global faith, it has become a bellwether for repression more generally. Renewing the focus on Christian persecution is therefore a way of expressing our concern for all minorities who find themselves under pressure. ...

... from its earliest days the Christian faith presented a radical challenge to any power that made absolute claims for itself. ... Indeed, the Christian faith's inherent challenge to absolutist claims explains why it has been such a key foundation stone of western democratic government, and why we should continue to support it vigorously wherever it is under threat. ...

col 1024 **Ruth Jones (Labour):** ... I thank the Bishop for making it very clear at the outset that this review is not about pitting one faith against another or about legitimising the hatred and loathing of Islam or Judaism. This is about ensuring that all our faiths are respected, and that all those who practise are free to do so safely and peacefully. ...

Rehman Chishti (Conservative): ... Islam itself says, "La iqra ha fiddin": people should be able to practise their faith whatever it is—there is no compulsion. As this report sets out, religious freedom is not only a civil right, but pretty much the fundamental core of people's own faith and scriptures: to respect each other's faith. ...

col 1025 **Andrew Griffiths (Conservative):** ... We are a multicultural and multi-faith society, and we should embrace and champion that, but when we see that 80% of all religious persecutions around the world are persecutions of Christians, it is important that we as a nation stand up and say that we will not accept this and are going to come to the aid of those Christians around the world. In the same way that we deplore it and speak out when the Rohingya are persecuted in Myanmar, the Yazidis in Iraq and the Uyghur Muslims in China ...

col 1028 **Brendan O'Hara (SNP):** ... the Open Doors charity publishes an annual watchlist of countries where it believes persecution to be extreme, very high or high. One country was on that list five years ago: North Korea. Today, no fewer than 11 countries are considered to be in the extreme category, and we have all watched in horror the systematic attempt to eradicate all traces of Christianity from the ancient middle east homeland that we all love. ...

col 1029 **Rehman Chishti:** ... does [Andrew Selous] agree with the former Bishop of Rochester, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, who said that the greater use of our aid for persecuted Christian communities around the world is something that we should seriously consider? ...

Andrew Selous (Conservative): ... It is really important that DFID ... makes sure that British aid is going to everyone who needs it, regardless of their faith ... we need to make sure that where overseas aid, trade and arms exports are concerned, they should be subject to requiring robust action on dealing with persecution. ...

col 1030 I end my speech by drawing the House's attention to examples of one people group or faith coming to the aid of another that is being persecuted. In the second world war, when Jews were being rounded up into railway trucks for deportation, the Patriarch of Romania, in full ecclesiastical dress, came to the station and quoted the words of Ruth from the Old Testament: "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."

We need more of that type of intervention. ...

col 1031 **David Drew (Labour Co-op):** ... the one blemish ... is that the Bishop was called in by the Israeli ambassador to be admonished about the fact that he chose to mention Israel and Palestine as a reason why Christians have left the middle east. It is important that we stand with the Bishop and make it clear that, whatever the discrimination, those who may not be openly discriminatory are still, none the less, covertly allowing such things to go on. ...

col 1032 **Theresa Villiers (Conservative):** ... Christians have been living in the middle east since the earliest days of the faith. They have an unbroken presence of 2,000 years in the middle east, and yet they are under pressure in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen ...

The situation is so severe that the very survival of Christianity as a living religion in the middle east is now in doubt. A century ago, 20% of the population was Christian, but now, according to the report, the figure has fallen to 5%. It is distressing to read the Bishop of Truro's finding that some of Christianity's "oldest and most enduring communities" are facing what he calls "decimation". There are tragic parallels with the situation of the Jewish community, whose connection with that region goes back just as far and who were largely forced out—800,000 of them were forced out—in the years between 1948 and the 1970s. ...

col 1034 **Steve Double (Conservative):** ... It is often difficult for those with no faith to understand exactly what it is like for someone to find that their right, or their freedom, to worship, to practise and to express their faith is taken away. It is as if their identity has been taken away. To take the right of freedom of faith away from anyone is the ultimate violation of human rights. ...

col 1035 **Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... all religious or belief communities throughout the world face violations of article 18 of the universal declaration of human rights, and protecting one group requires protecting all groups. ...

col 1037 **Stephen Kerr (Conservative):** ... does [Fiona Bruce] share my concern about the deterioration of tolerance towards Christians in this country? I point to the example of the hon. Member for East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow (Dr Cameron), who has been subject to the most intolerable feedback in relation to her vote of conscience last week.

Fiona Bruce (Conservative): I agree—we must call out criticism of those in this place and elsewhere who simply want the freedom to express their biblically-based beliefs. ...

Ross Thomson (Conservative): ... The very birthplace of Christianity is under threat. Christians in countries across the middle east find themselves driven from their homes and imprisoned, tortured or killed on the basis of the faith that they hold or the texts that they follow. ... The presence of Christianity in more and more parts of the world faces nothing short of complete extinction, while Governments fail to provide a bulwark against the tide of attacks. ...

col 1040 **Stephen Kerr:** ... I fully support the Bishop's recommendation that freedom of

religion or belief should become the underpinning of the operation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. ... I think that some of our diplomats need to have a clear direction on the appropriate response to the persecution of Christians, because I feel ashamed that so many Christians have been persecuted around the world and we have done so little to stop it, or even to speak out about it. It is right that we have spoken out to condemn violence against other minority groups, but it is wrong that at times we have been too restrained—or indeed silent—in condemning the persecution of Christians. ...

We have a special responsibility—a moral responsibility—because of our privileged status in the world, and with our Head of State being the head of a Christian Church, to speak out and protect Christians around the world. Renewing a focus on Christian persecution, as the Bishop said, is actually a way of expressing our concern for all minorities who find themselves under pressure. Ignoring Christian persecution might well mean ignoring other forms of repression. ...

col 1041 **David Linden (SNP)** ... one of the most powerful images I have ever seen was from Egypt's Tahrir Square in 2011. That scene, of Christians forming a human shield around Muslims who were on their hands and knees praying ...

Whether it is a subconscious post-colonial guilt or not, there is sometimes a feeling that the persecution of Christians is often ignored or given less attention. That is alarming when we consider the sheer scale of the persecution of those of us who follow Jesus Christ. We know that Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the whole world. ...

col 1043 **Liz McInnes (Labour)**: ... I very much welcome the Government's initiatives to put the persecution of Christians centre stage globally. However, human rights groups and others are concerned about whether they will maintain the momentum. In July 2018, the Prime Minister took the very welcome step of appointing Lord Ahmad as her special envoy on freedom of religion or belief. One way to alleviate the concerns of human rights groups would be to make the role of the special envoy permanent, providing appropriate resources and an ability to work across Departments ...

The Bishop of Truro said in his review that we must be prepared to consider imposing sanctions on perpetrators of serious human rights abuses against religious minorities, including Christians. ... Another potential measure is to include human rights clauses in future trade agreements. ...

col 1045 **The Minister for Europe and the Americas (Alan Duncan)**: ... The world is an increasingly challenging place for people of faith, and in some parts of the world for those of no faith. ... the statistics tell us, as we have heard again today, that Christians suffer more persecution than any other religious group in the world, yet we hear far less about this than one would expect. We are too reticent about discussing Christian persecution, and we must overcome this mindset; the evidence justifies a much louder voice. ...

... this is not just a Foreign Office thing. Indeed, it is not just an envoy thing; it is an everything thing, which means that all Departments, all of Government, and all Government policies must bear this in mind. And in doing so we should not be timid; we should be bold and ensure that the UK's response to Christian persecution is in proportion to the problem, and that, as the report suggests, now demands serious effort. ...

Fiona Bruce: Does the Minister also agree that if we are to call this out internationally, we must also call out criticism of those in this country who feel inhibited perhaps and unable to speak out on issues as a result of their religious views? That is wrong.

Alan Duncan: We cannot have one set of standards for abroad and a different set of standards for our own domestic life; they all have to be consistent ...

col 1046 ... the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been tackling religious persecution on three levels: first, we work with the United Nations and other global organisations ... secondly, at country level Ministers and officials raise individual cases ... and thirdly, the Government, through the FCO, fund and support projects that promote respect for all people of faith and those of no faith. ...

The report suggests that there is more to be done, and I am pleased to announce ... that the Government have decided to accept every recommendation in full. ...

We will put freedom of religion or belief at the heart of FCO culture, policy and operations. We will publicly articulate our goals, and give guidance to our diplomats on how to reflect these values. ...

We will strengthen our data on freedom of religion or belief ...

We will encourage arm's length bodies and partners such as the British Council to develop appropriate policies on freedom of religion or belief. To promote religious literacy ... all Foreign Office staff will undergo mandatory training where this is relevant to their job. We will create a clear reporting framework to formalise how we engage with minority and religious leaders on the ground ... We will ensure that human rights reporting mentions faith-based persecution wherever relevant.

col 1047 To improve co-ordination, we will investigate whether new Whitehall structures could strengthen cross-Government thinking. We will initiate regular themed discussions with civil society representatives, and convene Ministers across Government to give a consistent international approach. At the United Nations, we will explore how best to deliver a new Security Council resolution urging all Governments in the middle east and north Africa to protect Christians, and to allow UN observers to monitor the necessary security measures. ...

... the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is demonstrating its firm commitment to addressing the recommendations of the review and to improving freedom of religious expression around the world ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-07-18/debates/67C97979-3C43-4C65-A353-0007F07CFD63/PersecutionOfChristiansOverseas>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad address to the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom

... Freedom of religion or belief has long been at the heart of UK foreign policy and diplomacy. ...

Whilst we take pride in our achievements there is so much more that needs to be done, if real change is to be affected and that is why our foreign secretary commissioned an independent review of the situation of persecuted Christians and I am pleased to announce today that we have fully accepted the review's ambitious recommendations in full.

These include making religious literacy compulsory for all our relevant diplomats a personal priority for me. ...

Now is the time to be the voice to the voiceless millions of persecuted religious minority. Now is the moment, right here, right now, for our collective commitment to build that world free of religious bigotry and hate.

Now is the time to act. For our biggest challenge, your Excellencies is not when we stand up for our own rights and beliefs. The real test is when we stand up for the rights and beliefs of others.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/lord-tariq-ahmad-address-to-the-ministerial-to-advance-religious-freedom>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/divorcedissolutionandseparation.html>

Domestic Abuse Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/domesticabuse.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>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

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>

Civil Partnerships: Next Steps Conversion (closing date 20 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/civil-partnerships-next-steps-and-consultation-on-conversion>

Regulation of pre-paid funeral plans (closing date 25 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulation-of-pre-paid-funeral-plans-consultation-on-a-policy-proposal>

Islamophobia in Scotland (closing date 26 August 2019)

<https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=13027>

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