

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)
[Israel](#)

[Foreign Affairs](#)
[Relevant Legislation](#)
[Consultations](#)

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Community Relations: Religion

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [280207] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what grants his Department has made to (a) Muslim, (b) Jewish, (c) Christian, and (d) inter-faith organisations to support integration and community cohesion, by organisation, in each year since May 2015.

Rishi Sunak: A range of funding has been identified which is focussed on enabling Muslim, Jewish, Christian and inter-faith organisations to support integration and community cohesion, since May 2015:

Projects	Organisations	2015/16 (£000s)	2016/17 (£000s)	2017/18 (£000s)	2018/19 (£000s)	Total
Expanding Bridges not Boycotts	B'nai Brith Hillel Foundation (Jewish)	0	31	50		81
Holocaust Memorial Day	Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (Jewish)	980	980	1,150	1,146	4,256
Inter Faith Network (IFN)	Inter Faith Network (inter-faith)	220	305	382	384	1,291
Jewish Muslim Network	Jewish Muslim Network (inter-faith)	5	0	0		5
Joseph Interfaith Foundation	Joseph Interfaith Foundation (inter-faith)		7	0		7
Near Neighbours 11-12 to 13-14	Church Urban Fund (Christian)	1500	1,710	2,150	1,882	7,242

Remembering Srebrenica	Umma Help (Muslim)	333	400	400	400	1,533
Solutions not Sides	One Voice Europe (inter-faith)	0	50	100		150
Strengthening Faith Institutions	Fayre Share Foundation (inter-faith)	125	275	487	800	1,687
Tell Mama	Faith Matters (inter-faith)	182	504	829	892	2,406
Together in Service	Faith Action (inter-faith)	48	0	0		48
Tough Options	Forum for Discussion of Isarel & Palestine (inter-faith)	0			62	62
Nisa Nashim	Nisa Nashim (inter-faith)				30	30
70 Years on	Faiths Forum for London (inter-faith)		5	70		75

In addition the Department funds a range of projects to help build strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-22/280207/>

Community Relations and Radicalism

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [280208] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information his Department has provided directly to the public to help (a) understand the threat from extremism and (b) promote integration; and whether such information has been made available in languages other than English.

Rishi Sunak: The Government published the *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper* in March 2018, inviting views on our vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. In February 2019, we published the *Integrated Communities Action Plan* alongside the Government’s response to the consultation on the Green Paper. This set out the actions that Government will take to create socially and economically stronger, more confident and integrated communities. These documents were published in English.

Assisting the public to understand the threat from extremism is the responsibility of the Home Office. The independent Commission for Countering Extremism published the findings from their call for evidence earlier this month, which was the first public consultation on extremism. The Commission’s full study into the threat we face from extremism and the current response, including advice on new policies to tackle it, will be published in the autumn in English and Welsh.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-22/280208/>

The Green Paper referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778045/Integrated_Communities_Strategy_Govt_Action_Plan.pdf

UK Government

<u>The Cabinet</u>	
Prime Minister	Boris Johnson
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Michael Gove
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Sajid Javid
Home Secretary	Priti Patel
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	Dominic Raab
Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union	Stephen Barclay
Secretary of State for Defence	Ben Wallace
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice	Robert Buckland
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care	Matt Hancock
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Andrea Leadsom
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government	Robert Jenrick
Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade	Elizabeth Truss
Secretary of State for Education	Gavin Williamson
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Theresa Villiers
Secretary of State for Transport	Grant Shapps
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions	Amber Rudd
Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal	Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
Secretary of State for Scotland	Alister Jack
Secretary of State for Wales	Alun Cairns
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	Julian Smith
Secretary of State for International Development	Alok Sharma
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	Nicky Morgan
Minister without Portfolio (Cabinet Office)	James Cleverley
<u>Also attend Cabinet meetings</u>	
Chief Secretary to the Treasury	Rishi Sunak
Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons	Jacob Rees-Mogg
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Whip	Mark Spencer
Attorney General	Geoffrey Cox

Minister of State (Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (Energy and Clean Growth)	Claire Perry
Minister of State (Home Office) (Immigration)	Caroline Nokes

<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/government-and-opposition1/her-majestys-government/>

TOP

Israel

Welsh Assembly Written Answer

Welsh Government Procurement

Janet Finch Saunders (Conservative) [WAQ78577] Will the Minister explain the Welsh Government's policy with regards to procuring from businesses that source goods from the occupied territories in Israel, and provide a list of procured goods originating from those areas?

The Minister for Finance and Trefnydd: As Minister with responsibility for procurement, where and whenever possible, I am committed to leading by example in directing how the Welsh Government spends its own money. I am also encouraging the wider public sector to use our collective £6bn annual procurement expenditure to deliver against the goals set out for us in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. To do so, we need to consider how and with whom we do business, and to go beyond our direct contractual relationships to concern ourselves with and to influence behaviours within our supply chains. The Wellbeing Goals recognise our responsibilities in this regard, requiring that we act to be 'a Globally responsible Wales'. When doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, we are required to take account of whether or not our actions will make a positive contribution to global well-being.

I am aware of recent calls by Amnesty International and some public sector bodies which have passed motions in line with the determination that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are illegal under international law and calling for goods not to be procured from those areas. However, I under the current legal framework governing public procurement, the Public Contracts Regulations (PCRs) 2015, it is not possible to implement a procurement policy that gives effect to such motions.

The PCRs prescribe the reasons businesses may be excluded from bidding. Regulation 57(1) sets out mandatory grounds – e.g. corruption, fraud, bribery. Regulation 57(8) sets out the discretionary grounds – e.g. grave professional misconduct, distortion of competition. Where a bid is not disqualified on any of these grounds, it must be treated equally with all other bids and pursuant to the EU Treaty principles of fairness, transparency and non-discrimination.

Consequently, a procurement policy that involves the exclusion of all goods sourced from, or companies which have business interests within, Israel's illegal settlements in the occupied territories would be non-compliant with PCR 2015.

Should the context of the current legal framework change, then the Welsh Government could consider the issue afresh.

The Welsh Government does not encourage or offer support to economic or financial activities in the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. We support the UK Government's policy based on compliance with international law and of seeking a peaceful two-state solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict.

We do not currently hold information to provide a list of procured goods originating from those areas.

<http://record.assembly.wales/WrittenQuestion/78577>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Oral Answers

FCO Support for Persecuted Christians

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's support for persecuted Christians.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): My Lords, the Bishop of Truro's independent review of FCO support for persecuted Christians proposed a series of ambitious recommendations, which the British Government have considered carefully. We accept all the recommendations, and we will take them forward as part of our work to support freedom of religion or belief for all.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon: ... Sadly the appalling treatment of Christian minorities around the world is mirrored in the persecution of other religious minorities ... Does the Minister agree that the underlying cause of religious persecution is the religious bigotry inherent in aggressive assertions that the one god of us all, way above human emotions, favours one group of humans to the exclusion of others?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... when we look at Christian persecution around the world, the figures and the persecution are horrendous. Equally, where Christians are persecuted we can be sure that, tragically, other religious minorities are also persecuted. ...

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour): My Lords, in Syria, Christians are afraid to enter UNHCR camps because of violence against them, and there is also violence in the camps in Germany, yet the Government accept only refugees from those camps, unlike Belgium and Australia. The result is that in the first quarter of 2018, no Christians from Syria were accepted in this country and the Government have steadfastly refused to give any figures since because of the likely embarrassment. Why is that? ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... We have sought to work with the UNHCR to ensure that applications are progressed effectively and efficiently. There has been a suggestion that Christians should be prioritised over others. I believe that, whether you are Christian or of any other faith, or of no faith whatever, common humanity dictates that we stand up for the rights of others, including Christians, as well as our own rights.

Baroness Berridge (Conservative): ... Has my noble friend considered whether the UK Government taking on the role of defining anti-Christian hatred could expose victims of persecution to more risk? Surely this is a role for communities—for example, the Jewish community has done this and the Muslim community is doing it—rather than for the UK Government. ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... one issue that the Bishop of Truro identified in his report was that singling out Christians for support and for the processing of claims of religious persecution or requests for asylum would ... put them at greater risk. I also agree with her totally that it is right that community and faith leaders define religious hatred, as has been the case with the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. ...

The Lord Bishop of Ely: ... does the Minister accept that there is nothing to be gained

and everything to be lost by encouraging a competition for victim status, and that such energy would be better spent in further developing the framework of international human rights protection?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I totally agree with the right reverend Prelate. ...

To read the transcript in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-07-24/debates/C543F060-04D4-4322-8887-15470922AC76/FCOSupportForPersecutedChristians>

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

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>

TOP