



Representing, connecting and supporting Jewish people in Scotland

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Debate

Debate on the Queen's Speech

col 231 **Baroness Mallalieu (Labour):** ... In some respects, sadly, we are not world leaders ... This is my personal red line. In countries across the world, non-stun slaughter is already prohibited, including in parts of the EU. The British Veterinary Association is very clear that millions of farm animals are slaughtered here in a manner which causes unnecessary suffering. I recognise the cultural and religious sensitivities and applaud the Muslim population who, in many parts, have agreed to changes to what would have been the requirements. Indeed, the majority of halal meat is now pre-stunned. I would prefer a ban here but surely, at the very least, consumers who want to buy only pre-stunned meat should be able to identify it.

I am very disappointed that the new Environment Secretary, Theresa Villiers, who had hitherto an excellent record on animal welfare, apparently recently ruled out such labelling. I hope her view will change, especially in the light of the Government's emphasis on the importance of animal welfare and the development of new stunning methods which appear to comply with religious requirements. If this Government are really serious about animal welfare, the millions of our farm animals destined for slaughter should be at the very top of the list. ...

col 241 **The Earl of Shrewsbury (Conservative):** ... I agree entirely with the remarks made by the noble Baroness, Lady Mallalieu, on the stunning of animals before slaughter; it is high time we took a route down that path. The consumer must be informed about whether the meat they are eating was killed in a pre-stunned manner or not. It is vital. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-10-17/debates/33FEA568-1FAF-4F3F-8DF4-B8DB96929A58/Queen%E2%80%99SSpeech>

Race Disparity Unit

Race and the City: from demonstrations to data: speech to the conference 'Race and the City: Tackling Race Inequality'

... if you stitched a golden thread through the decades... through the protests, the demonstrations, the marches on Westminster, the traumas, and sadly the deaths... you'd see that it is we in Britain who became the epicentre of Civil Rights in Europe. It was our movement that opened up the dialogue in Europe to protect the rights of ethnic minorities living there. It is because of our activism – British activism - that every country in the EU now has a Race Directive to secure equality for all their citizens. ...

We've come a long way since the 1960s. And fought many battles against racism and discrimination since, despite the legislation that existed to prevent us from having to do so. ...

Stephen Lawrence's brutal murder over 25 years ago, and the inquiry that followed, was a watershed moment. It was during this time and in the aftermath that Doreen Lawrence and other activists came together to campaign for change once again. And then we had the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. A stunning victory that mandated every public service in the country to promote race equality. ...

... the 'Race Disparity Audit' was launched in October 2017.

For those who don't know, the purpose of the Audit is to expose disparities - differences in treatment or outcomes - which affect people from diverse ethnic or social backgrounds. The RDA's website - Ethnicity Facts and Figures – brings together all Government's own data and analyses it across 176 topics on education, healthcare, housing, criminal justice, the economy and infrastructure. Regularly updated, it constantly evolves to include new areas of public interest or concern – like unemployment rates, organ donations, hate crime and even the Honours system.

In this way the RDA helps us to demonstrate, to 'evidence', the real – and sometimes stark – inequalities that people of colour or class experience. Inequalities that can now no longer be dismissed as apocryphal. ...

Using data to demonstrate inequalities really does work. It is one of the RDA's most compelling features. A big positive that we found from schools, universities, Ministers, public servants, and businesses has been an acceptance of most of the data, and a willingness to collaborate to put things right. ...

But Government can't do this all by itself. It takes leadership at all levels – in every sector. These leaders should also be looking at what the data says about the impact of their own policies. If it doesn't show a diverse workforce, they need to act. If it shows that people of colour and women are being paid less than their White peers, they need to act. If it shows that children from ethnic minority or socially deprived backgrounds are less likely to do well at school, are less able to access mental health services when they need them, are less likely to live in a house that is safe, clean and warm at night, they need to act. Otherwise they are tacitly enabling inequality. ...

We're no longer asking for people to be decent...to show equality...to do the right thing. In the spirit of Dr King, Bernie Grant, Rosa Parks, and Claudia Jones, we're demanding it. We owe it to them and to ourselves to do so.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/race-and-the-city-from-demonstrations-to-data>

Welsh Government

Engaging young people early key to creating cohesive communities

Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt ... announced £350,000 for the Hate Crime in Schools project which will be delivered through the Welsh Local Government Association.

Hate crime reporting has increased year-on-year since the Welsh Government published its Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents Framework in 2014. ...

The WLGA will work with partners with the expertise to visit schools across the country to encourage critical thinking skills and challenge myths which children may have heard. This will be achieved in approximately 100 schools during the 2019/2020 academic year.

Jane Hutt said, Together we're working to build a strong and diverse society here in Wales, where people of any race or faith are valued for their character and their actions. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://gov.wales/engaging-young-people-early-key-creating-cohesive-communities>

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Holocaust

British Embassy Vilnius

UK's Special Envoy for post-Holocaust issues visited Lithuania

On 14-16 October UK's Special Envoy for post-Holocaust issues the Rt Hon Lord Pickles paid a visit to Lithuania, to learn more about historical memory of the Holocaust as well as endeavors to preserve Jewish heritage before 2020, the year of Vilna Gaon, Lithuanian Jews and Sugihara. ...

Lord Pickles visited the memorials of Holocaust victims in Paneriai and Kaunas, laid flowers at the memorial stone for Righteous Among Nations, met different state officials and visited a number of Jewish-related cultural and historical places. During his visit Lord Pickles not only emphasised the importance of speaking the truth, but also focused on the importance of preserving historical memory, citing London's new world-class Holocaust Learning Centre's as an example of advancing Holocaust education around the world.

The visit also provided an opportunity to commemorate the legacy of former British diplomat Sir Thomas Hildebrand Preston, British Consul and later Charge d'Affairs in Kaunas, who in 1940 provided illegal Palestine certificates for Jews, to enable them to escape from Lithuania through Istanbul to Palestine. He also provided 800 Jews with legal travel certificates, a few hundred of which were able to cross the Baltic Sea to neutral Sweden. ...

The UK's Special Envoy for post-Holocaust issues later described his three day engagement as: ... Moving and poignant, forming links that we will build on.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-special-envoy-for-post-holocaust-issues-visited-lithuania>

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Israel

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel must uphold obligation to prevent torture and investigate claims over Samer Al-A'rbeed, say UN rights experts

Israel must immediately investigate allegations that a Palestinian man, Samer Al-A'rbeed, was tortured in custody, say UN human rights experts.

According to information received by the experts, Israeli security forces arrested Mr. Al-

A'rbeed outside his workplace in Ramallah on 25 September 2019. He was detained on suspicion of involvement in a bomb explosion that took place near the settlement of Dolev in the occupied West Bank in August 2019. A 17-year-old Israeli girl was killed and her brother and father were injured.

"We are gravely concerned that Mr. Al-A'rbeed has suffered torture and ill-treatment in the course of being interrogated and we call on the State of Israel to ensure a prompt and impartial criminal investigation," the experts said. ...

"We also urge Israel to revise its laws and practices and bring them into line with its international obligations prohibiting torture in absolute terms. The ban protects everyone, including suspects who are alleged to have committed serious offences."

"We are very concerned about serious gaps in Israel's laws and practices that may be in violation of an absolute prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including through allowing the use of so called 'special interrogation measures'," the experts said....

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25168&LangID=E>

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Foreign Affairs

UK Parliament Early Day Motions

Ruth Smeeth (Labour) (44) Attack in Halle, Germany – That this House condemns the attack and the ideology that radicalised the attacker in Halle, Germany; shows sympathy towards those who were tragically murdered, recognises that had it not been for the protective security measures at place in the synagogue, then it is likely that the death toll and the subsequent impact on the local and other Jewish communities would have been significant; recognises the tireless work that the Community Security Trust engages in to secure UK Jewish communities; and praises the UK's efforts in seeking to share expertise with non-Jewish communities in the UK.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/53388/attack-in-halle-germany>

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Other Relevant Information

United Nations

Citing Enforced Disappearances, Anti-Semitic Acts, Migrant Deaths at Sea, Experts Press Third Committee Delegates To Uphold Human Rights Treaties

... **Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief**, stressed that violence, discrimination and expressions of hostility driven by anti-Semitism are serious obstacles to enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief — and a range of other human rights. The frequency of anti-Semitic incidents appears to be increasing in several countries, including online, he said, noting that his report (document A/74/358) is the outcome of consultations in nine countries with victims of anti-Semitic acts, and leaders of Jewish communities, among others. The report demonstrates the global nature of the problem and considers anti-Semitism a multigenerational concern. While the ways in

which anti-Semitism is manifested have evolved, the ethnic, religious and racialized narratives used to incite violence against Jews throughout history continue to inform anti-Semitic views today. Social media platforms enable their extensive dissemination. Despite the number of cases in which Government officials have reacted responsibly to anti-Semitic acts — by denouncing anti-Semitic expression, for example — some Government officials have remained silent, equivocated or even leaned into such sentiments.

Recalling the Holocaust — the ultimate example of religious and racial hatred — he reminded States of their human rights law obligations, including to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion or belief. He recommended that States enforce hate crime legislation, appoint a senior official to work with Jewish communities and respond to hate crimes and other acts driven by anti-Semitism, highlighting the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and civil society in this regard. Moreover, he urged the Secretary-General to appoint a senior-level focal point to coordinate system-wide efforts to combat this global scourge, stressing that anti-Semitism presents serious challenges ending all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief. Therefore, it not only poses risks to Jews, but to minorities everywhere, he asserted....

Israel's delegate said that anti-Semitism is not a new problem and has often been called the "oldest hatred". She noted an increase in anti-Semitism in recent years, in large part due to the Internet and social media. The ability to spew hate — and not only get away with it but receive praise for it — has made it all the more popular. "It can be written on one continent and incite violence in another," she said. ...

The European Union's representative asked how dialogue can be structured with Jewish organizations, their allies and the United Nations to better combat anti-Semitism. ...

The United States delegate, recalling those who perished in attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and San Diego, highlighted violations of religious freedoms in Iran, where blasphemy and proselytizing of Muslims by non-Muslims are crimes punishable by death. ...

Iran's delegate said Islamophobia is overtaking all other forms of bigotry, mostly thanks to populist politicians and media complacency. United States politicians in particular are provoking prejudice and intolerance against individuals, including Muslims and their communities, he said.

Mr. Shaheed replied that with regard to blasphemy laws, there is often a misconception that freedom of expression and religion are antagonistic, when they are actually mutually reinforcing. To Israel's representative, he said UNESCO has offered to organize a workshop with the Special Rapporteur on addressing anti-Semitism through education. A starting point would be to work with United Nations agencies to engage with communities. ... To the representative of the European Union, he highlighted the importance of empathy training, noting that Jewish people are not exclusively victims, but rather, also make valuable contributions. Jewish life should be regarded in all its aspects. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/gashc4269.doc.htm>

Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance (A/74/358)

<https://undocs.org/A/74/358>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/divorcedissolutionandseparation.html>

Domestic Abuse Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/domesticabuse.html>

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Welsh Government Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-24 (closing date 19 November 2019)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-09/strategic-equality-objectives-2020-2024-consultation.pdf>

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