



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Prisoners: Religion

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [1445] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if his Department will collate statistics on the religious affiliations of the prison population.

Lucy Frazer: Statistics on the religious affiliations of the prison population are published as part of the department's *Offender Management Statistics Quarterly* release.

The most recent data (based on the prison population as at 30 September 2019) can be found in Table 1.5 at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/842604/Population_Q2_2019.xlsx

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-08/1445/>

Religion: National Lottery

Tracy Brabin (Labour Co-op) [1443] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate she has made of the proportion of (a) all lottery funding support bids and (b) successful bids for lottery funding support, from religious organisations.

Helen Whately: Good cause income raised by the National Lottery funds arts, heritage, sport and communities (covering health, education, environment and charitable causes). It is distributed at arms length of Government by twelve Lottery Distributing Bodies.

Religious and faith based organisations are eligible to apply for National Lottery funding and are typically required to demonstrate that projects will benefit the wider community and will not have any religious content.

Information about the religious status of organisations that apply for grants is not consistently collected, so it has not been possible to analyse the data on this basis.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-08/1443/>

Muslim Brotherhood

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [270] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to inform UK citizens of the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins: The UK will continue to take concerns about the Muslim Brotherhood seriously. The Government informed UK citizens of the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in its comprehensive review, completed in December 2015 and published on gov.uk. The review concluded the movement is a secretive organisation and that parts of it – globally – have a highly ambiguous relationship with violent extremism.

The Government keeps under review the views promoted and activities undertaken by the Muslim Brotherhood's associates in the UK in accordance with the five commitments included in the former Prime Minister's statement to Parliament. The Government continues to stand by the judgments of the review, and we will continue to consider any new evidence on the Muslim Brotherhood's activities against the UK's legal thresholds.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-12-20/270/>

The Main Findings of the review referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486932/Muslim_Brotherhood_Review_Main_Findings.pdf

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

54 historic places of worship restored thanks to government pilot scheme

... The scheme provides opportunities to work with experts on maintenance and repair plans and on increasing community engagement. A £1.8 million pilot scheme to help listed places of worship has provided grants towards repairs at 54 historic buildings in its first year. The Taylor Review pilot scheme, which was launched in September 2018, provides advice, guidance and financial support to listed places of worship of all faiths and denominations in Greater Manchester and Suffolk in order to build a sustainable future for these important historic buildings.

Thanks to this scheme, maintenance and urgent repair works have been brought forward by congregations who may have previously been unable to afford such works to keep buildings stable and weatherproof. In total, 54 places of worship in Greater Manchester and Suffolk have received support and been offered advice, with work underway on a number of other projects as the pilot enters its final year. ...

To read the full press release see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/857504/DCMS_Taylor_Review_Pilot_Scheme_Manchester.pdf

Evaluation of the Taylor Review Pilot – Emerging Monitoring and Evaluation Evidence: September 2018 to March 2019

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/854550/TRP_Interim_Evaluation.pdf

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answer

Topical Questions: Housing, Communities and Local Government

Gareth Johnson (Conservative): This year, we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the world war two concentration camps. I ask the Secretary of State, in his communities role, what is being done to mark the occasion, and furthermore, what is being done to tackle antisemitism more generally wherever it occurs?

Robert Jenrick: On 23 January, I will accompany His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the holocaust forum at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps, which brought an end to the murder of 6 million Jewish men, women and children, but as we know, did not bring an end to the cancer of antisemitism. The Government have provided an additional £2.2 million for schools to teach lessons from Auschwitz and £1.7 million for visits to Bergen-Belsen, the camp liberated by British troops. I will continue to champion the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, including requiring all councils to adopt it forthwith.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-13/debates/3FDBF7B8-D145-4106-958D-4742CCDB8545/TopicalQuestions#contribution-562E88AA-873F-42DD-B082-C893B7990F7A>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Debate

Britain in the World

col 772 **Bob Blackman (Conservative):** In the Conservative manifesto, three conflict zones were specifically mentioned: Israel and the middle east, Sri Lanka and Cyprus. Will my right hon. Friend give us a further illustration of what action the Foreign Office will take in those three regions to help to end those conflicts and bring perpetrators of war crimes to justice?

Dominic Raab: My hon. Friend is right: those three areas remain a priority. There is a huge amount of diplomatic work. We talk to our international partners, including not only our traditional partners—the Europeans, Americans and Canadians—but those in the regions of the different conflicts, about not just the importance of getting peace, but the kind of reconciliation that can come only with some accountability for the worst human rights abuses. Bringing into effect the Magnitsky regime is our opportunity to build and reinforce that at home. ...

col 776 **Emily Thornberry (Labour):** ... may I ask what on earth has happened to the Trump Administration's so-called middle east plan? Has the Foreign Office still not had any sight of that plan? Is there even a plan to look at? Now that he is in a place of greater influence, perhaps the Prime Minister will press ahead with the international summit that he promised to convene as Foreign Secretary, so that we, and our fellow allies with an interest in the middle east, can spell out our red lines on the American plan. Or will he go one better, and use such a summit to demand that if the Trump Administration keep prevaricating, we and others will resume the role of honest broker between Israel and Palestinian that Donald Trump is clearly incapable of fulfilling? ...

col 787 **Julian Lewis (Conservative):** ... any sensible defence policy depends on three concepts: deterrence, containment, and a realisation of the unpredictability of future

conflicts. The examples I always give ... are the Yom Kippur war in 1973 that took hyper-sensitive Israel by surprise, the Falklands war in 1982 that took us by surprise, the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 that took everybody by surprise, and the 9/11 attacks in 2001 that took the world's then only superpower by surprise. ...

col 837 Bob Blackman (Conservative): ... I turn to our relations with Israel, which has the 10th biggest economy in the world and some superb science, and where we have opportunities for even greater trade. I am delighted that we will ensure that local authorities attempting to boycott Israel will be denied the right to do so. It is absolutely wrong that public bodies should attempt, in some shape or form, to boycott democracies, particularly the only true democracy in the middle east. It is in our long-term security interests to form a security alliance not only with the United States, Canada and Australia, but with India, Israel and France, so that we can secure the free world. ...

col 845 John Howell: ... let me briefly echo the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow East (Bob Blackman) on Israel. The UK is the second largest trade partner with Israel. We are a phenomenal trade partner with that county. Let me just declare another interest as vice-chairman of the Conservative Friends of Israel. I will provide Members with an example of how this could work to our own benefit. Immediately after the election—the day after the election—I was on a plane to Israel to attend an event in Jerusalem. I went there because I thought that it was the best antidote to electioneering, even though Israel itself is just about to go into its third general election in the space of a year. None the less, it was a very good place to visit. I went to the Israeli ambulance service. Everything there works on the basis of an app that sends the appropriate ambulance to the scene—whether it be so large and so well stocked that an operation could take place in the back of it, or whether it be something more modest. A person can press an app that immediately sends the details of what drugs they are taking, and what treatment they are going through to the ambulance service. When that ambulance arrives, the staff can begin treating them in an appropriate way that helps to save lives. That sort of technology is available for us if we want to look at it carefully. If we want to take it, scale it up and use it across the UK, it has the potential to save a tremendous number of lives. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-13/debates/3C015023-C583-4D04-91DC-77AFC1994182/BritainInTheWorld>

House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Iran

col 757 Bob Blackman (Conservative): The malign influence of the IRGC extends from the strait of Hormuz through Lebanon, Gaza and Yemen and almost anywhere, and now into Europe. Is it not time that we sent a very strong signal by proscribing the IRGC, freezing its assets and saying, “We will give you an opportunity to unfreeze them once you restore proper, normal diplomatic actions and behaviours across the world”?

Dominic Raab: My hon. Friend makes a strong point about the pernicious behaviour of not just the IGRC but the Quds force, of which General Soleimani was the head. The Quds force is the element, the component or the wing of the regime that is responsible for working with the militias, the proxies and the terrorist groups from Lebanon through to Iraq and Syria. It is absolutely right to make that point. On proscription more generally, they are subject to sanctions, but we will obviously keep the issue under very careful review. ...

col 758 John Howell (Conservative): The Foreign Secretary will have seen pictures of the Israeli flag being tied to the British flag and both being set alight. That hardly speaks of de-escalation. How is the attempt at de-escalation working throughout the region? What

particular factors are being taken into account to protect Israel?

Dominic Raab: We work closely with all our international partners and we are engaged with Israel on the issues that we have in common with it. On de-escalation so far, after the death of General Soleimani we saw an Iranian response that was dangerous and reckless, but none the less we have not seen any major military intervention from Iran since then. Our message to all sides in the region is that we need to take baby steps towards de-escalating over time, and then, gradually, as the situation defuses, think about what positive measures can be put in place to build up confidence in the region. Until we get on that train and on that track, it is difficult to see how the wider diplomatic initiatives can bear fruit. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-13/debates/44B1EA65-94AE-4167-A2B3-CFA6720DF31F/Iran>

House of Commons Written Answers

Iran; Israel and Saudi Arabia

Scott Benton (Conservative) [458] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) Israel and (b) Saudi Arabia to help ensure the adequacy of defences against the increased military threat to those countries from Iran.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Following the attacks on Saudi oil production facilities on 14 September 2019, we are working with other international partners and the Saudi Ministry of Defence to consider how best to improve the effectiveness of Saudi air defence systems.

With Israel, the UK undertakes routine Defence Engagement, including joint exercises, exchanges, visits, and training. In this current period of tension between Iran and the US, Israel has not approached the UK for any additional support.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-06/458/>

Aviation: Middle East

Stephen Doughty (Labour Co-op) [1435] To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice his Department has provided to (a) UK civilian airlines and (b) airlines operating in and out of UK airports on flying over (i) Iran, (ii) Iraq, (iii) the United Arab Emirates, (iv) Qatar, (v) Kuwait, (vi) Oman, (vii) Lebanon, (viii) Israel, (ix) Turkey and (x) Egypt.

Paul Maynard: We are closely monitoring the developing situation in the region and have been keeping our advice to UK carriers under constant review. Both UK and foreign carriers continue to make their own routing decisions based on Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) and internal risk assessments.

Last week, the Department for Transport issued NOTAMs requesting that UK carriers avoid operating in Iranian and Iraqi airspace. This is in line with similar advice provided by international partners including the US, Canada, France and Germany.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-08/1435/>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

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

European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill

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

Second Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-13/debates/8EE15EAD-6927-4613-AC95-DA6B64711D28/EuropeanUnion\(WithdrawalAgreement\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-13/debates/8EE15EAD-6927-4613-AC95-DA6B64711D28/EuropeanUnion(WithdrawalAgreement)Bill)

Select Committee on the Constitution Report

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5801/ldselect/ldconst/5/5.pdf>

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

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

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 3 days**

Equality Act 2010: Commencing the socio-economic duty (Welsh Government)

(closing date 17 January 2020)

<https://gov.wales/equality-act-2010-commencing-socio-economic-duty>

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill (closing date 31 January 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/113449.aspx>

TOP

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