



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answer

Religion: Freedom of Expression

Lord Vinson (Conservative) [HL187] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that criticism of any religion is not regarded as a hate crime.

Viscount Younger of Leckie: Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. It is important that all have the right to speak freely, and make legitimate criticisms, and that a strong legal framework provides the appropriate space to do so. Equally, hatred or prejudice against an individual because of their religion will not be tolerated.

The Crown Prosecution Service uses definitions agreed with the National Police Chiefs' Council to identify religiously motivated incidents/crimes: "Any incident/crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's religion or perceived religion." This allows space for legitimate criticism.

Under the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006, which covers the offences of stirring up religious hatred, there is a freedom of expression defence contained in Section 29J, which confirms that nothing in the Act "... prohibits or restricts discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult, or abuse of particular religions, or the beliefs or practices of its adherents."

The Government will continue to protect people's legitimate rights and freedoms whilst also remaining committed to tackling hate crime.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL187/>

House of Commons Library Briefing

The law on assisted dying

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2020-0009/CDP-2020-0009.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Community Security Trust

S5W-26719 John Finnie (Green): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-26541 by Aileen Campbell on 12 December 2019, for what reason it is unable to provide details of all its wider engagements with the Community Security Trust or specific details of what has been discussed with the organisation.

Aileen Campbell: We are unable to provide details of wider Scottish Government engagement with the Community Security Trust as this information is not centrally held. We have therefore provided details of the meetings held between the Community Security Trust and the Connected Communities Unit as set out in the response to S5W-26541.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-26719>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-26541>

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

S5W-26720 John Finnie (Green): To ask the Scottish Government, further to the answer to question S5W-26542 by Aileen Campbell on 12 December 2019, for what reason it is unable to provide details of all its wider engagements with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities or specific details of what has been discussed with the organisation.

Aileen Campbell: I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-26719 on 20 January 2020. All answers to written parliamentary questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at:

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx>

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-26720>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-26542>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-26719>

Welsh Government

Children in Wales will have universal access to the full curriculum

Parents will not be able to prevent their children from learning about religion, relationships and sexuality in the new Curriculum.

Education Minister Kirsty Williams made the announcement today emphasising the need for 'careful and sensitive implementation' of the decision.

Education Minister Kirsty Williams said: Our responsibility as a government is to ensure that young people, through public education, have access to learning that supports them to discuss and understand their rights and the rights of others. ...

There is clearly a need for us to work with communities and all interested parties in developing the learning and teaching for RSE and RE - this work will be vital to enable everyone to have trust in how the change is implemented.

The Minister outlined plans for implementation which include the creation of clear guidance, resources and professional learning for schools and the creation of a Faith/

BAME Community Involvement Group to hold its first meeting this February. The group will engage in the development of RSE guidance, develop a shared understanding of the new curriculum and address concerns raised by faith and community groups during the consultation.

The Minister continued: It is vital that we continue to work with communities across Wales to ensure parents have the right to develop, care for and guide their children into adulthood while allowing our schools to provide a broad and balanced education. ...

The Minister also confirmed plans to establish a new RSE Working Group that will oversee the refinement of the new RSE statutory guidance to form part of the new curriculum guidance. ...

The consultation also showed support for renaming the subject 'Religious Education'.

The most popular choice from respondents was 'Religion, Values and Ethics' and, as a result, the Minister confirmed the subject name would change when the new curriculum comes into effect.

To read the full press release see

<https://gov.wales/children-wales-will-have-universal-access-full-curriculum>

Crown Prosecution Service

LGBT+ bullying and hate crime schools pack launched

"Hate incidents and hate crimes can have a devastating effect on the individuals and communities who are targeted for simply being who they are. Everybody has the right to live free of persecution, but hate crime tramples upon this right."

So said Chris Long, Chief Crown Prosecutor and CPS national lead on hate crime at the launch of a new LGBT+ Bullying and Hate Crime Schools Project pack.

The pack aims to protect potential victims by deterring would-be abusers and encouraging and supporting victims of identity based bullying to report incidents.

It has been developed by the CPS in partnership with a number of organisations, including Stonewall, the National Police Chiefs' Council, Gendered Intelligence and NASUWT. ...

The resource pack for teachers of key stages 3 and 4 is an updated version of a pack first developed by the CPS in 2014. The original version was viewed 1,800 times a year and requested in hard copy over 1,000 times. ...

Education and working with young people is key to tackling hate crime generally. This is not about prosecution of youths, but about prevention and educating future generations on homophobic and transphobic hate crime and supporting victims in reporting hate crime. ...

A hate crime is: "Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on a person's disability or perceived disability; race or perceived race; or religion or perceived religion; or sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation or transgender identity or perceived transgender identity."

The CPS takes hate crime very seriously, and is determined to hold those responsible to account. Last year, the CPS secured convictions in 84% of the hate crime cases it prosecuted and, due to the severity of hate crime, the courts increased the sentences handed down in 74% of these convictions. This sends a clear message that hate crime is a scourge on Britain and will not be tolerated. ...

Teachers and schools can [download the pack from this website](#). This is a resource for schools, so a password is required to download the pack. This can be requested by emailing LGBTHatecrimeschoolspack@cps.gov.uk

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/lgbt-bullying-and-hate-crime-schools-pack-launched>

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Holocaust

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Lord Ahmad sets out UK commitment to Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum

UK joins 33 other states to adopt a renewed commitment following an International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance meeting.

On 19 January 2020, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for Human Rights, represented the United Kingdom at an International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) meeting, to renew the UK's commitment to the founding principles of the Stockholm Declaration.

The Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust (the "Stockholm Declaration"), adopted in 2000, is the founding document of IHRA. The Declaration continues to serve as an ongoing affirmation of each IHRA member state's commitment to holocaust remembrance and commemoration.

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration, and to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration and extermination camps, representatives from all IHRA member states gathered to adopt a renewed commitment to the Stockholm Declaration.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said: In this important anniversary year for holocaust commemoration and remembrance, the United Kingdom reaffirms our unwavering commitment to eliminating all forms of hate and bigotry, including antisemitism, both at home and abroad.

We will continue to honour the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered, and all other victims of Nazi persecution.

It is important that we reaffirm our collective commitment to combatting prejudice and intolerance, and pledge to the victims and survivors of the holocaust that they will never be forgotten.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/lord-ahmad-sets-out-uk-commitment-to-declaration-of-the-stockholm-international-forum>

Council of Europe

Ministerial Conference - International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA): Deputy Secretary General Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni

The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 to ensure that human rights are protected against any abuse and misuse of power by the state.

To ensure that individuals and groups within our societies are safe against state orchestrated hate and violence.

Promoting and protecting human rights in Europe was a response to what our continent witnessed around the Second World War.

In part the European Convention on Human Rights was a response to the holocaust itself. But fighting racism and hate is a never ending task.

Seventy five years later, antisemitism is on the rise threatening Jewish people and communities and our democracies as a whole.

Our European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI, has long drawn attention to the need for determined action against this scourge.

So remembrance is important.

It is a tribute to the millions of victims of the Holocaust.

It is imperative to our dignity.

Remembrance is also important because it helps us to understand the genesis of evil, its

potential to return and the fragility of our democracies.

It is essential to stability and peace, for living together in Europe.

These are guiding principles for the Council of Europe; they underpin our fight against discrimination and hate speech, our work on education for democratic citizenship, our history teaching programme, including training of teachers, the European Cultural Route of Jewish Heritage and more.

An approach indeed underlined by the conclusions of our 47 foreign ministers last year in Helsinki, and now by the finalisation of a Recommendation on “Passing on Remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity” by the Committee of Ministers. In this endeavour, the 2020 IHRA Ministerial Declaration of today, is very timely and welcome.

This is why we are pleased to be here today and are determined to continue to work with IHRA and other partners in this important endeavour in the future.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/deputy-secretary-general/-/ministerial-conference-international-holocaust-remembrance-alliance-ihra->

United Nations

Secretary-General's remarks at opening of Exhibit Marking the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau

... Seventy-five years ago, when soldiers of the Soviet army entered Auschwitz, they were stunned into silence by what they saw. The Nazis had attempted to hide some of the evidence of mass murder. But the millions of clothing items and tons of hair told their own appalling story.

Liberation ended the Holocaust. But it was just the beginning of our efforts to make sure such crimes never happen again.

I will never forget my visit to Yad Vashem two years ago. I was shocked once again by the ability of antisemitism to reinvent itself and re-emerge time and again, over millennia. Even after the Holocaust, when its catastrophic results could not have been clearer, antisemitism continues. Sometimes it takes new forms, and is spread by new techniques, but it is the same old hatred. We can never lower our guard.

The past few years have seen a frightening upsurge in antisemitic attacks both in Europe and the United States, part of a troubling increase in xenophobia, homophobia, discrimination and hatred of all kinds. Even Nazism itself is threatening to reemerge — sometimes openly, sometimes in disguise.

As the former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, Jonathan Sacks, has said, “The hate that begins with Jews never ends there.”

Remembrance and education are an essential part of our prevention efforts, because ignorance creates fertile ground for false narratives and lies. “Never again” means telling the story again and again. ...

As survivors grow older, it is essential that we keep their memories alive and carry their testimony forward in new ways for new generations.

That is why the United Nations Holocaust Outreach Programme and UNESCO provide written testimony, photographs, videos and other resources for schools and institutions around the world.

And that is why exhibitions like this are so important. These portraits of Holocaust survivors speak to us of the dignity, humanity and interconnectedness of each unique member of our human family.

Their heartbreaking stories of survival and courage inspire us to do more, in whatever way we can, to combat persecution, hatred and discrimination, wherever they are found.

We will gather at the General Assembly in a few days to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust and to renew the commitment of the international community to prevent any

repetition of such crimes against humanity.

Understanding our history connects us to the essential human values of truth, respect, justice and compassion.

As these values come under attack from all sides, we must reaffirm them more strongly than ever.

We will stand firm every day and everywhere against antisemitism, bigotry and hatred of all kinds.

The world failed all those who died, and those who continue to suffer as a result of the Holocaust.

We cannot fail them again by allowing their stories to be forgotten. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-01-21/secretary-generals-remarks-opening-of-exhibit-marking-the-75th-anniversary-of-the-liberation-of-auschwitz-birkenau>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Ian Paisley (DUP) [3208] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to monitor the delivery and spending of UK Official Development Assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

Andrew Murrison: DFID has robust measures in place to ensure UK Aid reaches its intended beneficiaries. UK aid to the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) health and education sectors is channelled through the EU Palestinian-European Socio-Economic Management Assistance Mechanism. Our money goes into a dedicated bank account before being paid to individuals who have been vetted in advance. The bank account is only used for UK aid. Independent auditors check that the money paid out from this bank account only went to the vetted individuals after every disbursement.

UK assistance to the PA for water and energy will be through the World Bank Partnership for Infrastructure Development in the West Bank and Gaza Multi Donor Trust Fund. UK aid will flow from the trust fund to dedicated accounts that will be managed by the PA in accordance with rules established by the World Bank, and be subject to the review of external financial auditors to provide assurance that the expenditure of funds was only on agreed programme activities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-14/3208/>

Israel: Palestinians

Ian Paisley (DUP) [3209] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK official development assistance to the Palestinians facilitates peace-building with Israel.

Andrew Murrison: The UK Government, alongside other governments, works in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to improve the lives of Palestinians in support of our commitment to maintain the viability of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This includes humanitarian support to meet immediate needs in Gaza, support to key services such as education and health in the West Bank, and promoting economic development across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

DFID's work supports stability and the development of a capable and accountable Palestinian Authority that can act as an effective partner for peace with Israel. We also support People to People work that aims to bring together Israelis and Palestinians to cooperate on issues that can have a positive impact on both communities. Building understanding between people on both sides of the conflict will be crucial in helping build support for a peaceful, negotiated lasting resolution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-14/3209/>

UNRWA

Ian Paisley (DUP) [3210] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment he has made of the long-term viability of the UN Relief and Works Agency.

Andrew Murrison: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is an essential humanitarian and stabilising force in the region, providing vital services to millions of Palestinian refugees every day. The UK recognises the need for UNRWA to reform to help ensure its sustainability. To this end, in 2018 UNRWA undertook serious steps to improve its long-term viability by broadening its donor base and securing funding from 12 new donors, signing 8 new multi-year funding commitments in 2018, and implementing significant programme reform measures

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-14/3210/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Occupied Territories: War Crimes

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL181] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to give evidence to the International Criminal Court's proposed investigation into war crimes allegedly committed in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a strong supporter of international criminal justice and accountability. We are aware of the statement of 20 December by the International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the conclusion of the Preliminary Examination into the situation in Palestine, and her request for a jurisdictional decision from the Court prior to opening an investigation. We respect the independence of the ICC Prosecutor in these matters. We have not received any request for co-operation from the Court.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL181/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=20191220-otp-statement-palestine>

Gaza

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL182] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their current assessment of the findings of the report Gaza in 2020: a liveable place?, published by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in 2012.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza and the report in question's prediction that Gaza could become uninhabitable by 2020. UK aid has supported economic development, provision of basic services, and enabled reconstruction through support to the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. The Minister of State for the Middle East visited Gaza

on 28 May 2019 and saw the extent of this first hand.

However, as the report makes clear, aid alone cannot solve the problems in Gaza. Improvements in infrastructure, employment, energy and water are essential to improve living conditions. The Government will continue to urge all the parties to take the necessary practical steps to improve conditions. We will continue to press for a sustainable political solution for Gaza and to address the underlying cause of humanitarian strife in Gaza by more than doubling the amount of UK aid spent on economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories to around £38 million over the next five years (2018-2023). This will include support to addressing the water and electricity crisis and seek to address movement and access restrictions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL182/>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/file/publications/gaza/Gaza%20in%202020.pdf>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL183] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the Human Rights Watch report Born without civil rights: Israel's use of draconian military orders to repress Palestinians in the West Bank, published in December 2019.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made an assessment on the report in question, we have been clear that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority must demonstrate through their policies a genuine commitment to the two-state solution. They should do all they can to reverse the negative trends – including systematic settlement expansion and demolitions in the West Bank. We want to see a contiguous West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as part of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL183/>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/12/17/born-without-civil-rights/israels-use-draconian-military-orders-repress>

United Nations

Illegal Settlement Growth, Widespread Hopelessness among Youth Eroding Middle East Peace Prospects, Under-Secretary-General Tells Security Council

Rosemary Dicarolo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, said that heightened regional tensions threaten to destabilize an already volatile security environment, recalling the Secretary-General's appeal to leaders to exercise maximum restraint: "The world cannot afford another conflict," she said. The United Nations has routinely stated that peace will not return to the Middle East without the sides taking firm action to achieve a two-State solution, based on international law, relevant resolutions and prior agreements. Citing a recent survey by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), she said that 65 per cent of Israeli millennials believe that the conflict will never end. Palestinians are also pessimistic, with 52 per cent also holding that belief. The international community has a responsibility to help build a future that promises hope and peaceful coexistence, rather than occupation and conflict, she asserted.

For its part, the United Nations has continued its engagement with all Palestinian factions, she said, stressing the need to hold long-overdue legislative and presidential elections.

... Despite compromises made by all factions, President Mahmoud Abbas has not issued the decree needed to call elections, explaining that he would not do so until the polls can take place in East Jerusalem. ...

Negative developments continue to undermine the prospects for a two-State solution, she said. The start of 2020 has seen continuous settlement-expansion and the threat of annexation of parts of the West Bank, with 1,900 settlements planned for Area C; the retroactive “regularization”, under Israeli law, of an outpost and advancement of plans in two other locations that were regularized in 2019; and tenders announced for 2,200 units in Area C and East Jerusalem. On 9 January, Israel’s Ministry of Defense announced the director of a new task force that will look into so-called “illegal Palestinian construction” in Area C. ...

Meanwhile, she said that violence in the occupied West Bank continued throughout the reporting period, with 220 Palestinians injured in various incidents, including 50 by tear gas inhalation. In Gaza, where the situation is still fragile, there has been a welcome reduction in violence, as the understandings brokered by the United Nations in Egypt continue to be broadly upheld. In addition, the organizers of protests along the Gaza fence suspended those demonstrations and a relative calm has prevailed, with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs now reporting that injuries sustained during the protests are the lowest since March 2018, when they began. At the same time, there has been a resurgence in incendiary balloons and kites from Gaza towards Israeli communities. ...

On 20 December 2019, the International Criminal Court Prosecutor announced that a preliminary examination into the situation in Palestine found that all statutory criteria have been met for the opening of an investigation, she said. War crimes have been or are being committed in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Prosecutor found. The Court’s jurisdiction applies to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Meanwhile, in line with Knesset legislation, on 29 December 2019, Israel withheld \$43 million in clearance revenues that it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. That amount is in addition to \$139 million previously withheld. ...

Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, updating the Council on her recent six-day mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, said that meetings with individuals and representatives of international and humanitarian partners conveyed their hardships and challenges alongside opportunities for positive change. In the West Bank and Gaza, half the population, some 2.4 million people, need humanitarian aid in 2020 due to a protection crisis stemming from the occupation, the Gaza blockade, recurring cycles of violence and more than a decade of Hamas being in control, which is fuelling divisions. ... Raising concerns about Israel’s excessive use of force and the instrumentalization of children by Hamas, she said that, since March 2018, more than 210 Palestinians were killed and another 8,000 were shot with live ammunition at demonstrations at the Gaza fence. Medical facilities are overstretched, with more than 1,200 people requiring limb reconstruction, and with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting more than 200 incidents which have injured 270 staff. Since the start of 2019, most multiple escalations of hostilities among armed groups in Gaza and Israel were contained via joint United Nations-Egypt mediation efforts ... Acknowledging Israel’s improvements in easing the movement of people and goods, she said that more must be done, particularly related to medical supplies and equipment. ... “These improvements give me hope for Gaza if we build on this momentum,” she said, adding that Israel must further relax movement restrictions alongside measures that stimulate the economy, in line with Council resolution 1860 (2009), the Palestinian Authority must refrain from impeding the allocation of resources to people in Gaza as a way of exerting pressure on Hamas, and Hamas must prioritize people’s needs.

In the West Bank, she recalled a visit to a Bedouin community in the Jordan Valley, saying

many people live off the electricity grid while facing threats from Israel settlers and settlement-expansion. ...

Turning to humanitarian efforts, she said that operating space is constrained by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities, with efforts to delegitimize action in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continuing to undermine the ability to protect and assist people in need at a time of record-low funding. ...

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, said that any impartial assessment of the situation reveals that Israel, the occupying Power, continues “exploiting the Security Council’s paralysis and the blind support of its main ally”. Reviewing various disturbing statistics from 2019, he said that it brought Gaza closer to the United Nations country team’s “Gaza 2020” report projecting that Israel’s illegal blockade and military aggressions would render the area uninhabitable by 2020 if not reversed.

The year also witnessed daily arrests, with more than 5,500 Palestinians — including women and children — detained. Outlining unprecedented rates of illegal Israeli settlement-expansion, housing-demolition and settler violence, he said that annexation threats also grew louder. “It is clear that Israeli officials believe they’ve secured United States support for such an illegal scheme,” he said. In addition, Israeli leaders made explicit threats to demolish Palestinian towns, including Khan al-Ahmar, even after the International Criminal Court announced its intention to open an investigation into war crimes committed in Palestine. ...

“It is past time to end the double standard that has allowed such sheer impunity by Israel,” he said, calling for accountability to be paramount. In that regard, he demanded the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and an end to the illegal blockade of Gaza, adding that there should be no hesitation to pursue the prosecution of perpetrators or to impose sanctions should Israel continue to defy the law. “This is not Israel-bashing,” he stressed. Instead, it is a call for respect for the law and shared international values, as well as for safeguarding human rights and finally ending the long-standing, tragic conflict.

Danny Danon (Israel) said that Iranians are ruled by a regime which remains the biggest threat to peace in the region ... The regime funds terror, its armed forces shoot live ammunition at protestors and it lied to the international community to cover up the fact that it took the lives of those aboard a Ukrainian flight. ... He called it absurd that the people who invented human rights are ruled by a regime that tramples them. “Israel is on your side,” he said. ...

Since the Syria conflict, Iran has spent \$30 billion to support Syria’s President, and every year, gives \$100 million to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad — funds that would be better spent domestically. ...

Kelly Craft (United States), recalling that this week commemorates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Holocaust, said Israelis have won 13 Nobel prizes, improved drip irrigation technologies and enhanced surgical technologies. The Council should not lose sight of these facts. “I will not allow us to,” she said, advocating, as well, for a focus on the regional actor fomenting hatred. ...

Karen Pierce (United Kingdom) urged Iran to “come in from the cold” and pursue its legitimate interests in the region peacefully and in full respect for international rules. She recalled recognition of Israel in this context. The Council must remain engaged to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Stressing that all sides are obliged to create an atmosphere more conducive to peace, she said that, for Israel, that means a halt to its settlement activities. She condemned Israel’s plans for 1,900 housing units across the West Bank as illegal under international law and urged avoiding a suggestion that parts of Palestinian territories must be annexed. She called for an immediate end to the demolition of Palestinian-owned homes and eviction of Palestinians from them, pressing Israel to

provide a clear route to construction for Palestinians in Area C. For Palestinians, she condemned attacks against civilians by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which must cease, and called for renewed efforts towards reconciliation, with the Palestinian Authority resuming its government functions in Gaza. The Palestinian Authority also must set a date for elections in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Gaza, as soon as possible. A just resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue, she said, underscoring the United Kingdom's commitment to achieving a negotiated settlement leading to a safe, secure Israel, living alongside a sovereign Palestinian State based on 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital and an agreed settlement for refugees. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14085.doc.htm>

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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>

European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill

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

Report Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-21/debates/EE4D93F9-2E96-4491-B70E-10EF7A648601/EuropeanUnion\(WithdrawalAgreement\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-21/debates/EE4D93F9-2E96-4491-B70E-10EF7A648601/EuropeanUnion(WithdrawalAgreement)Bill)

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-21/debates/0B422782-6258-4FF1-B915-3BA5D6A494A8/EuropeanUnion\(WithdrawalAgreement\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-21/debates/0B422782-6258-4FF1-B915-3BA5D6A494A8/EuropeanUnion(WithdrawalAgreement)Bill)

Third Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-21/debates/84B94A0E-5545-44CD-8055-32CE232201FC/EuropeanUnion\(WithdrawalAgreement\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-21/debates/84B94A0E-5545-44CD-8055-32CE232201FC/EuropeanUnion(WithdrawalAgreement)Bill)

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

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

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 9 days**

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

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

Harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education (closing date 27 March 2020)
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/76f6bdd3-bb14-4956-b089-cd1598323d55/consultation-on-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education.pdf>

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