



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Islam: Religious Hatred

**Neil Coyle (Labour)** [3767] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans her Department has to include steps to tackle Islamophobia in the forthcoming online harms Bill.

**Matt Warman:** Anti-Muslim hatred is completely unacceptable and has no place in our society. The Online Harms White Paper will establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. Companies will be held to account for tackling harms occurring on their platforms, including hate crime. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has the cross-government lead on countering anti-Muslim hatred, and we will continue to work with them closely on this policy. The Secretary of State is looking to bring forward online harms legislation as quickly as possible

We are also ensuring that the criminal law is fit for purpose to deal with online harms. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport and the Ministry of Justice have now engaged the Law Commission on a second phase of their review of abusive and offensive online communications. The Law Commission will review existing communications offences and make specific recommendations about options for legal reform in a final report in 2021. The Law Commission is also looking into the adequacy of protection offered by hate crime legislation. This strand of work is expected to report in 2021.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-15/3767/>

*The White Paper referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/793360/Online\\_Harms\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793360/Online_Harms_White_Paper.pdf)

*Information about the reviews referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-to-undertake-phase-2-of-the-abusive-and-offensive-online-communications-project/>

and

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Football: Racial Discrimination

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL428]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with the Football Association to combat racism in football.

**Baroness Barran:** Racism or any form of discrimination has no place in football or society, and we must confront this vile behaviour.

Together with the Minister for Sport, I met with the FA last week and discussed their action on discrimination. Whilst progress has been made, there is still more to do and we will be calling in all the footballing authorities for a further update about their work on this important issue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-14/HL428/>

## Welsh Assembly Petitions Committee Report

### Petition P-04-433 CCTV in Slaughterhouses

*The report does not refer to slaughter for kosher or halal meat, but does refer to the issue of mis-stunning*

<https://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld12979/cr-ld12979%20-e.pdf>

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## Holocaust

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Prime Minister's Questions

**Jeremy Corbyn (Labour):** Next Monday, we will be commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day. It is a time for us all to reflect on the horrors of the past and to remind ourselves of the evils of Nazism, genocide, antisemitism and, indeed, all forms of racism, which we must always be implacably determined to root out wherever it appears. ...

**The Prime Minister:** Let me join the right hon. Gentleman in what he has said about the importance of Holocaust Memorial Day and of stamping out the resurgence of antisemitism in our country. ...

**Ian Blackford (SNP):** I associate myself with the remarks about Holocaust Memorial Day on Monday. We should always stand up against antisemitism and any form of racism. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-22/debates/6B6FAD67-CA8C-4AF2-9CC9-07F6175ABC4C/Engagements>

### UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Kirsten Oswald (SNP) (98) Holocaust Memorial Day 2020** – That this House notes that on 27 January 2020 the UK will observe the 15th International Holocaust Remembrance Day since its adoption by the United Nations General Assembly; further notes that

International Holocaust Remembrance Day takes place on 27 January to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, which took place 75 years ago, on 27 January 1945; expresses support for the commemorative event taking place at the Auschwitz Memorial on 27 January which will be attended not only by heads of state and other national and international representatives but also by some of the remaining Auschwitz Survivors; recognises the hugely valuable work done by survivors and others in helping us all to learn lessons from the holocaust, and pays tribute to the work of Ingrid Wuga of East Renfrewshire, who escaped from Hitler's Germany at the age of 15 thanks to the Kindertransport, and who was recently awarded the British Empire Medal for services to Holocaust Education and Awareness, having provided testimony in the last five years alone to more than 5,000 adults and children through the Holocaust Educational Trust's Outreach Programme.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/53553/holocaust-memorial-day-2020>

## European Commission

### **Joint Statement by President von der Leyen, President Michel, President Sassoli ahead of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau**

*"To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."* — Elie Wiesel, *Night*

Seventy-five years ago, Allied Forces liberated the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. They ended the most abhorrent crime in European history, the planned annihilation of the Jews in Europe. Six million Jewish children, women and men were murdered as well as millions of innocent people among them hundreds of thousands of Roma, persecuted due to their ethnicity. The price was unspeakably high, but there could hardly be a more symbolic and greater triumph over the Nazis than to commemorate this victory in Israel.

Revisionism and lack of education are threatening the common understanding of the uniqueness of the Shoah that is necessary to translate "Never Again" into concrete action now. By joining today's meeting of Heads of State and Government in Jerusalem, we add our voices to those who are determined to not let extremists and populists go unchallenged when they are trying to cross boundaries and question – once again – human dignity and equality of all human beings.

The Holocaust was a European tragedy, it was a turning point in our history and its legacy is woven into the DNA of the European Union. Remembering the Shoah is not an end in itself. It is one cornerstone of European values. A Europe that places humanity at its centre, protected by the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights.

We are at a crossroads. As the numbers of survivors is dwindling, we will have to find new ways to remember, embracing the testimonies of the descendants of survivors. They remind us to be vigilant about the rising tide of antisemitism that is threatening the values we hold dear — pluralism, diversity, and the freedoms of religion and expression. Values that cherish minorities: all minorities, and always. Jewish communities have contributed to shaping the European identity and will always be part of it. All parts of our society, new and old, must embrace these lessons from the Shoah.

We have a duty to stand shoulder to shoulder with Jewish communities as they feel again threatened across Europe - most recently in Halle, Germany. All EU Member States stand united in the determination that any form of racism, antisemitism and hatred have no place in Europe and we will do whatever it takes to counter them. State authorities, as well as actors from across all sectors of civil society should unite to reaffirm Europe's unfaltering vigilance whenever and wherever democratic values are threatened.

We cannot change history, but the lessons of history can change us.

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT\\_20\\_90](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_20_90)

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **International Holocaust Remembrance Day 27 January 2020: Commemorating 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz, UN experts call for urgent action to combat antisemitism**

States must take urgent and effective steps to monitor antisemitic incidents, ensure accountability for perpetrators of violence, and protect Jewish individuals, communities and sites as part of their effort to combat antisemitism, said UN human rights experts. In a statement marking the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January 2020, they expressed concerns about the dramatic – and often unchecked - increase in antisemitic rhetoric and violence around the world, and online. Their full statement is as follows:

"With profound sadness and outrage, we, as United Nations human rights experts, mark 75 years since the liberation of the notorious Nazi death camp, Auschwitz, with alarm. On this solemn commemoration, designated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, States around the world are failing to sufficiently counter antisemitic violence, discrimination, and hostility within their societies or to ensure that their populations are appropriately educated about the Holocaust.

"Driven by recognition of the need to repudiate the "disregard and contempt for human rights" that occurred during the Holocaust, "We the peoples" demanded and the young United Nations itself proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Since then, all Member States have committed themselves to ensure that all members of society are able to enjoy their human rights, including by protecting members of minority communities against hate crimes and discrimination.

"The legal framework affirming and protecting the human rights of all is a key legacy of the Holocaust's victims -- including the 6 million Jews who, alongside members of other targeted groups, were murdered in a uniquely brutal, systematic and state-sanctioned campaign of antisemitic dehumanization and persecution.

"Toulouse, Pittsburg, Brussels, Poway and Jersey City are just some of the places where Jews have been murdered in recent years. The reports of the [Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief](#) and the [Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism](#) presented to the UN General Assembly last year outline the dramatic and persistent increase in antisemitic rhetoric and incidents that has been reported in many countries, and online. We urge all concerned persons, all leaders to read them, study them and implement their recommendations as a matter of urgency.

"We are also alarmed at reports documenting extensive Holocaust denial, particularly online, as well as surveys reflecting that significant proportions of the population are ignorant of key facts about the Holocaust, or even unaware that it occurred at all. We are deeply concerned by the misuse of social media to spread Holocaust denial and perpetuate antisemitic stereotypes and prejudice.

"Around the world, violence, discrimination and expressions of hostility motivated by antisemitism have created a climate of fear among a substantial number of Jews, impairing their ability to enjoy their fundamental rights to liberty and security, equality and non-discrimination, and to freedom of religion.

"We call on all States to respond to these trends by taking urgent action to uphold their human rights obligations, including by more effectively monitoring and recording antisemitic incidents; ensuring accountability for perpetrators of violence; and providing effective protection to Jewish individuals, communities and sites. We call on states to respond more effectively to incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence against Jews and members of other targeted groups.

"States must also ensure that effective education, training and awareness-raising to combat antisemitic stereotypes and prejudices is being undertaken at all levels of society. Educational programs – for students, teachers, government officials, law enforcement, and

others – must identify antisemitism in all its various forms. Educational programs should also include accurate, substantive information about the Holocaust. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights have produced guidelines for teacher training on addressing antisemitism in schools. These can serve as valuable resources as have the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Program and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

"Among the most important lessons of the Holocaust is that antisemitism, fueled by political leaders and left unchecked, threatens not only Jews, but also other minority and vulnerable communities, and indeed the very foundations of democratic societies. Now, 75 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we mourn the victims of the Holocaust and solemnly call on States to redouble their commitment to fight this unacceptable yet recurring threat." ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25492&LangID=E>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Jerusalem: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL357] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel that large amounts of Palestinian children have been arrested since the launch of regular Israeli police raids in Isawiyeh, East Jerusalem, and that Israeli police are violating the rights of minor suspects in that area.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK has strong concerns about continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in the country. We welcomed progress made with recent Israeli policy amendments. This includes a reduction in the number of detainees aged 12 to 14 years old, the increase in the age of maturity from 16 to 18 years old, the establishment of separate juvenile courts and the enactment of a special statute of limitations for minors. Initial detention periods have also been shortened. However, we continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities on the treatment of Palestinian children in detention. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv did so most recently on 17 December. We continue to monitor the situation in Isawiyeh closely.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-13/HL357/>

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL358] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli forces shot live rounds at Palestinian children in Al-Jalazun refugee camp, injuring two, on 17 November 2019.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are aware of reports that two Palestinian children were shot by Israeli forces' live fire during clashes that broke out in al-Jalazun refugee camp on 17 November 2019. The UK is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians killed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the West Bank and Gaza. We have expressed our concerns about the use of live ammunition and

excessive force by the IDF with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out transparent investigations into whether the use of live fire had been appropriate. We will continue to raise our concerns at all levels.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-13/HL358/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL360] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made the government of Israel about Palestinian tax revenues being withheld.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have repeatedly raised with the Government of Israel our concerns about Israel's decision to withhold tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv did so most recently on 17 December 2019. We expect economic and fiscal agreements between Israel and the PA to continue to be fully implemented.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-13/HL360/>

## **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

### **Peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue**

Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East.

... it's right that this Council also remains engaged to resolve one of the longest standing conflicts on its agenda, the Israeli Palestinian conflict. We have made clear our concern that the situation on the ground, which, as the Secretary-General noted in his assessment last month, has deteriorated over the last three years. ...

All sides have a responsibility to arrest this deterioration and to create an atmosphere more conducive to peace. For Israel, this means:

(i) An immediate halt to settlement expansion. We condemn the Israeli government's advancement this month of yet more plans, for over 1,900 housing units across the West Bank. It is the UK's longstanding position that settlements are illegal under international law and undermine the viability of the two-state solution.

(ii) The avoidance of any suggestion that parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be annexed. Such a move would be contrary to international law, damaging to peace efforts and could not pass unchallenged.

(iii) An immediate end to the demolition of Palestinian-owned homes and structures, as well as the eviction of Palestinians from their homes. The targeting of donor-funded structures in Area C is of particular concern. We call on the Israeli authorities to provide a clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

Turning to Palestinians' responsibilities:

(i) We unreservedly condemn the indiscriminate attacks against Israeli civilians by groups such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Such attacks are completely unacceptable, a violation of international law, and need to cease immediately.

(ii) There should be renewed efforts toward Palestinian reconciliation. We encourage those involved in the reconciliation process to allow the Palestinian Authority to fully resume its government functions in Gaza, and ensure compliance with the Quartet Principles.

(iii) We call on the Palestinian Authority to set a date for free and fair elections in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Gaza as soon as possible. Genuine democratic national elections for all Palestinians are crucial to the establishment of a viable and sovereign Palestinian State.

Mr President, this Council has a role to play in identifying and containing future flashpoints

in conflicts. The resumption of the Great March of Return protests in March is one such possible flashpoint. Hamas operatives have cynically exploited these protests in the past. Mr President, the United Kingdom's commitment to Israel's security is unwavering. Any protests must adhere to the principle of non-violence. We reiterate our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the IDF police non-violent protests, including the use of live ammunition and excessive force, and call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality. ...

The United Kingdom will provide around \$21million in humanitarian assistance to Gaza in 2019/2020. And to help address the underlying causes we are more than tripling our spend on Economic Development programming ...

... we understand and share the deep frustration on all sides at the lack of progress on the Middle East Peace Process. A just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We remain committed to achieving a two-State solution, and our long standing position is clear. We support a negotiated settlement recognised by all sides, leading to a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as a shared capital of both states and a just fair agreed and realistic settlement for refugees. ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/peace-for-both-israelis-and-palestinians-is-long-overdue>

## United Nations

### **Speakers Decry Israel's Unilateral Actions to Legitimize Presence on Occupied Arab Lands, as Security Council Concludes Middle East Debate**

Speakers in the Security Council ... roundly denounced unilateral moves by Israel to legitimize its presence on occupied Arab lands, with several rejecting such actions — and United States recognition of them — as a blatant trampling of sovereignty and glaring violation of international law. ...

Indeed, Palestinian hopes for resuming negotiations have waned as Israel plans to transform large swaths of Area C into nature reserves, said the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States. Its illegal decisions, recognized by the United States, undermine a two-State solution in attempting to name Al Quds as the capital of Israel and validate its sovereignty over illegal settlements. She pressed the Court to open its investigations, as conditions were met to launch such an inquiry.

In 2019 alone, Israel demolished 617 Palestinian structures and evicted 889 people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, added Sudan's representative on behalf of the Arab Group. He called on Israel to withdraw from the Syrian Golan, in line with Council resolution 338 (1973), and halt actions aimed at changing the demographic character of various territories. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sc14086.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>

House of Lords Library Briefing

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2020-0025/LLN-2020-0025.pdf>

#### **\*\* European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill**

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

Commons consideration of Lords Amendments

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-22/debates/7D35E1A9-CB17-4503-A8AF-8E8E30169A95/EuropeanUnion\(WithdrawalAgreement\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-01-22/debates/7D35E1A9-CB17-4503-A8AF-8E8E30169A95/EuropeanUnion(WithdrawalAgreement)Bill)

Lords consideration of Commons Amendments

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-22/debates/09CDAC60-2C06-47CB-A373-99C52693E758/EuropeanUnion\(WithdrawalAgreement\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-01-22/debates/09CDAC60-2C06-47CB-A373-99C52693E758/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