



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Social Security Benefits

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [7121] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the two-child limit on BAME communities.

Social Security Benefits: Wales

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [7122] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to undertake an impact assessment of the two-child limit on faith groups in Wales.

Will Quince: The Government's view is that providing support for a maximum of two children or qualifying young persons in Universal Credit and Child Tax Credits, ensures fairness between claimants on the one hand and, on the other, those taxpayers who support themselves solely through work.

We recognise that some claimants are not able to make the same choices about the number of children in their family, which is why exceptions have been put in place to protect certain groups. On migration to Universal Credit, families' existing entitlement will be protected.

The Department has published an Impact Assessment which noted ethnic minority households may be more affected by the policy. This is because on average, they are more likely to have larger families and be in receipt of Child Tax Credits and Universal Credit. However, the Department does not collect sufficiently robust data on our claimants' ethnic or religious backgrounds to facilitate a more detailed assessment of the policy's impact on specific ethnic or religious groups.

The Government has assessed the impact of the policy from an equality and human rights perspective, meeting our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and ensuring compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the rights of children.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7121/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7122/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Hate Crime

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative) [HL384] To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the Law Commission review into hate crime to be completed.

Lord Keen of Elie: The Law Commission were invited to review the law on hate crime and to make recommendations for its reform. The review began in March 2019 and will also consider which characteristics (for example gender, age, disability) deserve enhanced protection by the criminal law and on what basis.

The Law Commission plan to issue a consultation on this matter in early 2020.

Further information on the review can be found on the Law Commission webpage at: <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-14/HL384/>

Racial Discrimination: Football

Lord Bassam of Brighton (Labour) [HL377] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 30 October 2019 (HL181), how many of the police reported football-related racist incidents have led to people being charged; and what range of penalties was applied.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office does not hold this information, although individual police forces may have this information for their force area.

As mentioned in my previous response, racist chanting or abuse may be an offence under section 3 of the Football (Offences) Act 1991 or sections 4, 4A or 5 of the Public Order Act 1986. Offences under sections 4 and 4A of the 1986 Act carry a maximum penalty of six months' imprisonment and are capable of being charged as a racially or religiously aggravated offence.

In addition, the court must impose a preventative Football Banning Order following conviction for a relevant offence it reasonably believes that making an order would help to prevent violence or disorder at, or in, connection with any regulated football matches. Football Banning Orders prohibit the subject from attending regulated football matches for a period of two to ten years, depending on the nature of the offence.

The Law Commission is carrying out a full review of the coverage and approach of current hate crime legislative provisions, including in the context of football.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-14/HL377/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-17/HL181/>

Information about the review referred to above can be read at

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

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

New funding to help universities tackle antisemitism announced on Holocaust Memorial Day

... Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced £500,000 of new funding for a programme supporting universities in tackling antisemitism on campus over 3 years.

Announced on the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the money will support the Holocaust Education Trust (HET) to help educate the next generation about the horrors of the holocaust and the importance of stamping out antisemitism and intolerance.

Each year, 150 university student leaders, student journalists and academics from around the country will hear from Holocaust survivors and visit the former Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where they will learn about the importance of stamping out antisemitism.

Upon their return, students will participate in a seminar which will deal explicitly with campus-specific issues and how to identify and tackle antisemitism.

To drive engagement amongst the student population, the programme will work with influential student publications and media, as well as student leaders and networks to disseminate the messages they have heard first hand to tens of thousands of students across the country.

The Communities Secretary has also insisted that all universities and Local Authorities must adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

He has written to all local authorities asking them to adopt the internationally-recognised definition and will shortly publish a list of those who have taken this forward and urged others to follow.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said: As we mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, it is our duty to ensure that as the last survivors remain with us, their stories are shared with future generations.

Education is one of the most powerful tools we can use to combat antisemitism. I am proud this government will fund the Holocaust Educational Trust to educate thousands of students and academics in the horrors of the Holocaust.

This additional £500,000 of funding will allow hundreds of university students and academics each year to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau, hear from the last Holocaust survivors and, on return to their campuses, help educate students on the importance of tackling antisemitism.

I have also been clear that all universities and local councils that have not already done so, must adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism. I will shortly publish a list of councils who have adopted the definition and will urge others to follow.

The student programme will be delivered by the Holocaust Educational Trust in partnership with the Union of Jewish Students. It follows the highly successful 2018-19 scheme which identified 30 universities in England where there had been reports of high levels of antisemitism or racism.

Funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the next phase will be a chance for a greater number of universities to get involved and builds on from HET's highly successful 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme for school students. Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust Karen Pollock MBE said:

As we mark 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, we are reminded today of the importance of speaking out against antisemitism, wherever it is found.

Student leaders themselves are at the coalface on campus combatting the antisemitism that blights many students' university experience. We are proud therefore that thanks to new government funding we will be able to offer a unique opportunity for student leaders and Vice-Chancellors for the next three years to visit Auschwitz.

They will see for themselves the site where 1.1 million people were murdered, to understand where hate can ultimately lead and I hope this experience will empower them to stand up to prejudice, hatred and division on campus and in broader society. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-help-universities-tackle-antisemitism-announced-on-holocaust-memorial-day>

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Holocaust

See also the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Statement “New funding to help universities tackle antisemitism announced on Holocaust Memorial Day” in the “Home Affairs” section above.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Holocaust Memorial Day: Foreign Secretary’s speech

Dominic Raab spoke at a joint event with the Israeli embassy to honour the millions who lost their lives in the Holocaust, pay tribute to those who survived, and pledge to never forget.

... Like millions of people around the world, I remember learning about the history and atrocities of the Holocaust from a very early age.

But those stories weren’t just learned from history books. They were learned from my own family, around the dinner table.

My father fled ... Czechoslovakia in ‘38 at the age of six. He didn’t come on the kindertransport – he passed through a refugee camp in Tangiers, and he arrived in the UK in 1940 with his parents, speaking no English. ...

Now, when we were young my father almost never spoke of what he had endured; he passed away when I was 12 years old.

But after dad died, my mother wanted to bring my grandmother Hilda, who we always called Aumie, closer to us, and I would remember regularly going and having dinner with her on a Monday evening and how often she would weep over Czech goulash and strudel about the fact that she’d left her parents and her wider family behind. The anguish of knowing they perished in Auschwitz and some of the other camps. The guilt that came with that, as well as the raw grievance.

And my family’s experience certainly instilled in me first-hand the horrors of antisemitism and, I should say, the wider scourge of racism. ...

The value of education is more important than ever, because – and I never thought I’d say it in twenty-first century Britain – but antisemitism is not simply a problem of the past.

And today, we look no further than the headlines to see anti-Semitic sentiment is still with us today, in our politics and if we’re willing to be honest about it, in our society.

Last December, more than one hundred Jewish graves were vandalised with swastikas.

And while Jewish families around the world kindled the Hanukkah lights, five victims were stabbed in Monsey, New York, during celebrations at a rabbi’s house. On the same day, in north London, synagogues and shops were targeted with anti-Semitic graffiti.

This cannot be ignored. And it cannot be tolerated. Not in 21st century Britain. ...

And I would like to reassure the Jewish community in the UK and abroad that the UK is committed to protecting you. ...

... the government is continuing its important work with the Cross Government Working Group to Tackle Antisemitism, so we can respond quickly to the concerns of Jewish communities wherever they may be.

We're providing £14m this year for a Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and Jewish communities. ...

Under Lord Pickles' leadership as the UK's Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, we've continued our work to strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance worldwide. ...

... the worst response to atrocity is indifference. And the greatest, is justice.

So today, we honour the millions who lost their lives in the Holocaust. We pay tribute to those who survived.

We pledge never to forget, but also never to end the fight against the scourge of antisemitism. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/holocaust-memorial-day-foreign-secretarys-speech>

Scottish Parliament Debate

Holocaust Memorial Day

14.56 The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (Aileen Campbell): ... This is an important anniversary. Of course, it marks the significant passage of time that has elapsed since that moment of liberation. However, it also reminds us that the numbers of those around the world with direct lived experience of that hellish extermination camp are fewer. The opportunity for survivors to bear witness—as they did when the world united yesterday to mark Holocaust memorial day—is crucial, because the message of suffering, pain, trauma and human cruelty must never, ever be forgotten. ...

We must also remember the dark void of the untold stories—stories that will never be told and the darkness that we do not know about. ...

In so many ways, the numbers associated with the Holocaust are unimaginable. Some 17 million people were executed—6 million of them simply because of their Jewish faith. That unspeakable persecution by the Nazis also included gay, disabled, Gypsy and Roma people—and anyone else who was viewed as being different. ...

Such massive numbers give us a sense of the scale of the cynical mass murder that was carried out, but they require to be remembered alongside the personal testimonies and stories so that we never remain unconnected to that dark moment of history.

As the years go by, as new anniversaries of the Holocaust are marked and as lived memory of it fades, the work to know, understand and connect to the past becomes all the more vital. In that process, we must ensure that we educate our young people about compassion and respect, so that they can emerge into adulthood as responsible and compassionate individuals who are able to contribute positively to our society.

It is for that reason that the Scottish Government continues to support the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust and its lessons from Auschwitz project, which is an incredibly powerful way for young people to gain an insight into the horrors of the Holocaust and, just as important, to learn about why it happened. ...

In November last year, I had the privilege of joining the Holocaust Educational Trust on one of its trips. ... It is an intense trip that begins with a description of what life was like in Europe and in Poland at that time. Communities were made up of people of different faiths who lived together as neighbours, customers, friends and colleagues. The destruction of that way of life, which was caused by vilifying, othering, stigmatising and blaming social ills on those of Jewish faith or on those who were simply different, was the deliberate build-up to the strategic effort to exterminate a race. Although what went on in the extermination camps should never be forgotten, the context and systematic racism that led to the Holocaust must also be remembered. ...

However, the sad truth is that the Holocaust did not spell the end of suffering caused by prejudice, and the lessons of the past have not been globally heeded. Last year marked

the 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide and the 40th anniversary of the end of genocide in Cambodia. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the start of the atrocities in northern Bosnia. Just 25 years ago, rebel Bosnian-Serb forces carried out an act of genocide that claimed the lives of more than 8,000 Bosniaks, and tortured and raped many more because of their ethnicity. ...

In 2018, an ordinary day of worship was turned into a day of fear that was felt across the world following the attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, and again last year, when hundreds of innocent people were massacred in Christchurch, New Zealand, and in Sri Lanka. ...

Although Scotland is an open and inclusive nation, we are not, unfortunately, immune to hatred or prejudicial attitudes. We must not permit the creep of complacency and we must remain vigilant in calling out discrimination, racism and hatred when we see it—here and globally. The theme of Holocaust memorial day, “Stand together”, is so important in that regard because it highlights that we need to work together if we are to build safe, resilient and inclusive communities. We cannot tackle hatred and prejudice alone; we must do so together—united.

Tackling hate crime and prejudice remains a priority for this Government. In June 2017, we published an ambitious programme of work to tackle hate crime and build community cohesion. As part of that, we adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of antisemitism, which reflects the value that we place on tackling antisemitism and sends a strong message that we believe antisemitism to be entirely unacceptable in Scotland. We also recently consulted on adopting a definition of Islamophobia, and we are considering the responses to that.

There is absolutely no place in Scotland for any form of hatred that makes our communities feel insecure or threatened in their daily lives, and we will continue to work tirelessly to tackle hatred and prejudice in any way that we can. ...

15.08 Ruth Davidson (Conservative): ... Every year, we mark Holocaust memorial day and every year, by definition, the holocaust slips further into history. ...

... numbers have thinned and their voices grow fewer, but for all the passing of time, it seems to me that there has seldom been a year in my lifetime when the lessons of the Holocaust have felt this fresh, prescient and urgent.

The rise of hate crime, politics of identity, culture wars and out-and-out antisemitism that we see across the world is a reminder that progress is not irreversible and that things do not just get better. Injustice and prejudice must be fought, gains are hard won and ground will never be held if complacency and indifference are allowed to take hold.

Recent anti-Jewish attacks in major European cities and the mainstreaming of antisemitic hate speech at home have left our Jewish population wary and even frightened. A couple of years ago, I spoke at an event for the Board of Deputies of British Jews in London and I asked about the groups of men that were in clusters of four at every corner and entrance to the venue. I was told that they were volunteer security—men who were taken from the ranks of a community who feel the urgent need to protect their places of worship around the clock from attack and debasement, and their congregations from intimidation and threat. Such things are happening now, in our country, to a community still scarred by the events of 75 years ago, when 6 million of the Jewish people were systematically annihilated. ...

We have asked too much of those who escaped death at Auschwitz, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Ravensbruck, Treblinka and a dozen other camps and who, through luck, guile, fate or timing avoided the gas chambers, firing squads, punishment beatings or rampant disease that claimed the lives of so many. Yet, after they walked out of hell, we asked them to relive it.

The Holocaust Educational Trust’s work of taking children to the camps and having camp survivors tell their stories again and again in classrooms across the country has been invaluable in teaching generations that are untouched by such horror how hate can

degenerate into evil and that Kristalnacht, the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto or cattle trucks rumbling into factories of death are not events in isolation, not the alpha and omega. Rather they are the destination reached by a journey that starts with intolerance, moves to discrimination, traverses hate, ideology, dehumanisation, persecution and then reaches annihilation. All that is required for that journey to be made is for decent people to avert their eyes, stand back, leave it to someone else and be too afraid to challenge, in case those instruments of hate are turned on them. That is how it was in 1930s Europe, and that is how the world has turned ever since.

We have to take responsibility for the protection of our fellow citizens and for the preservation of the culture of openness, opportunity, diversity and freedom that so many fought so hard to secure. ...

Tackling those forces of evil—prejudice, hate and persecution—along with the handmaidens of indifference, blindness and cowardice that allow them to flourish, is a load that we have left to the survivors of Auschwitz for too long, to the Holocaust Educational Trust for too long: to other people, for too long. If we want history to be remembered and the names of those who died and those who were saved to be written, recorded, seen and to count, then it is time for us all to step forward and help lift the load with them. ...

15.15 Pauline McNeill (Labour): ... Accounts from brave survivors who escaped to tell the world their stories are everything to us because, without them, we could not begin to get our heads around the horror of what happened. How it could happen at all is the imperative question for any person who is interested in truly ensuring that it could never happen again. That is why the Holocaust Memorial Trust is a vital organisation. Its purpose is to remind us not only of the six million Jews who were brutally murdered, but of how that could have been allowed to happen in the first place.

We must educate every child about those sad facts—no generation can be left out. We must have robust policies on tackling hatred of and prejudice against any group in society, and we must translate what those things mean in today's world, whether it is demonising Gypsy Travellers or attacking synagogues, churches, temples or mosques. Tackling antisemitism, Islamophobia and other such hatred must be central to the Government's work ...

15.21 Ross Greer (Green): ... The number of victims is difficult to comprehend—two in every three Jews in Europe were murdered, alongside millions of Slavic people, Roma, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender—LGBT—people, prisoners of war, communists and other political and religious opponents of the Nazis. More Jews—far more—were killed than there are people in Scotland today. ...

The scale of the atrocities is so vast that it makes remembrance harder. The sheer number of deaths carries the danger of depersonalisation—that we remember only the numbers, and not the names, the faces, the people and their stories. As the Holocaust moves out of living memory, we have a duty not to let that happen. ...

The industrial, military and political capacity of a European superpower was for the first time in history directed to the purpose of genocide—to the annihilation of the Jewish people not as a by-product of conflict, or as a means to some other end, but as the end: It was the objective in and of itself.

But evil like that does not emerge unannounced—it festers and grows. The Nazis were in power for nine years before their “final solution” was agreed to. It was the culmination, in their case, of years of antisemitic laws and systematic oppression by all available levers of the state and, before that, not by decades but by centuries of anti-Jewish hatred. That hatred, which often manifested itself in conspiracy theories, was not destroyed alongside the Nazi regime. From one end of Europe to the other, we see it today—whether it is in Viktor Orbán's Hungary, or in the challenges that are faced by our Jewish community in Scotland and across the UK. ...

In the past few years, it certainly feels like the people who voice hatred, whether it is against

Jews, Muslims, Roma or other groups in our society, have become not just more confident, but have regained a level of legitimacy that many people had hoped would never come back. ...

It is not enough for us—especially those of us who are in public life—simply not to be racist. We need to be actively anti-racist and anti-fascist. ...

However, it is also fitting to celebrate those who are with us today—the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of survivors who simply would not exist if Nazism had not been defeated. The horror of what the Nazis did cannot be undone—but they did not win. Our Jewish and Roma friends stand testament to that. The very least that we can do for them—and for those who did not survive—is to never stop telling the story, never stop educating those who come after us of the horror and what led to it, and never stop opposing the forces of hatred, wherever they emerge. ...

15.28 Alex Cole-Hamilton (Liberal Democrat): ... The outrageous regime was made possible only through the total capitulation of thousands of otherwise normal people ... The Nazis were successful in mass murder because they desensitised and normalised it. They inured every level of government and the military to atrocity with endless layers of bureaucracy that reduced millions of lives to lines in a ledger book or in a transport manifest, and to piles of unclaimed belongings. ...

Monsters are real. It is that realisation, that horrific acts can be committed by humdrum men, that represents the most powerful warning of the Holocaust. We must keep reminding ourselves of that. ...

1 in 20 UK adults believes that the Holocaust did not happen, and a full eighth of the population believe that it has been exaggerated. ...

Challenging antisemitism and Holocaust denial falls to all of us. We have seen the grim evidence of its revival in the rise of casual antisemitism in the UK and in the two mass shootings in crowded synagogues last year alone. This is not going away: hate against the Jewish people and many of the others who were persecuted by the Nazis still blooms. ...

15.34 Kenneth Gibson (SNP): ... Sadly, antisemitism remains with us. At last month's general election, here in Scotland, the only European nation never to have imposed laws directly against Jewish people, the Conservatives, Labour and the Scottish National Party each suspended candidates for antisemitic comments. ...

A common misconception is that the Holocaust was perpetrated by a small group of odious political and military fanatics. That could not be further from the truth. Doctors conducted medical experiments, involving surgery, on Jewish children and others without anaesthetic; the legal system helped isolate Jews as a precursor to genocide; railway workers transported them across Europe; and architects designed the death camps. At Auschwitz alone, 6,161 men and 174 women served in the SS garrison. Pre-war Germany, despite its Nazi regime, was seen as one of the most civilised and cultured societies in the world, and yet the Holocaust happened. ...

Jews were often called parasites for living in other societies. Now, they are vilified if they support Zionism and Israel—a nation held to higher standards of behaviour than probably any other, despite the intolerant, undemocratic, sectarian and homophobic nature of the societies that surround it. It is the Jew among nations.

That antisemitism is still an issue 75 years on is indicative of problems in our society today; it must be rooted out.

Last year, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights published a poll of Jewish perceptions and experiences of antisemitism in the EU. It found that 75 per cent of British Jews think that antisemitism is a “very big” or “fairly big” problem in the UK, compared to the 48 per cent who thought so in 2012. Shockingly, 84 per cent said that antisemitism was present in political life—the highest figure in Europe. Sticking our heads in the sand is not an option, when the reality is that not only can antisemitism rise again; it has done so. Awareness does not make it stop, and action is needed. ...

15.40 Jeremy Balfour (Conservative): ... On the day after we visited Auschwitz, we heard different talks from Jewish leaders and rabbis from across western Europe. The message that they wanted me and others to take home to our countries was that we have to remember and keep using the words, "This must never happen again," but beyond that, we have to root out antisemitism in our culture and our countries, whether that be on social media or in conversations with people we come across, or by educating those who will come after us. All of that is our responsibility. We cannot turn our backs and leave it to someone else.

It is clear that across our world, our continent and even, sadly, our nation, antisemitism is on the rise. ... there are cameras and security guards in most synagogues across our country because of a fear of what might happen. We need to not only challenge antisemitism but root it out and say that it is unacceptable in 21st century Scotland. ...

15.45 Tom Arthur (SNP): ... The theme of Holocaust memorial day 2020 is "stand together". However, another theme is emerging—that of a renewed urgency among survivors of the Holocaust to communicate its lessons. It is not enough to acknowledge, to reflect, and to remember. We must learn, in the deepest and most profound sense of the word.

That learning cannot be limited to understanding the Holocaust as an historical event. It has to be more than demonstrating an understanding of the causes of the Holocaust. The learning required needs to be like an inoculation, or of the visceral or reflexive kind that we develop as children in response to danger. ...

15.51 Iain Gray (Labour): ... Yesterday, I was honoured, with Daniel Johnson, to host Scotland's national Holocaust memorial day event here, with the First Minister speaking for us all. We heard from Janine Webber, a Holocaust survivor, and Hasan Hasanovic, who survived the death march from Srebrenica but lost his father and twin brother. The burden of bearing witness that we ask of such people is a heavy one. They must remember so that we cannot forget. They must relive their pain so that we cannot plead ignorance. They are condemned to tell and retell their story to make us understand our part in it.

What is the beginning of that story? It is not the gas chambers, the machete gangs of Kigali or the blood-soaked meadows of Srebrenica. For German Jews, Rwandan Tutsis and Bosnian Muslims, it began with their neighbours, with their workmates, with those they thought were friends and even with their in-laws. It began with the language of us and them.

Their story did not end with the genocide, for what followed was denial such as that of the current mayor of Srebrenica, who claims that the genocide never happened and that the 7,000 graves in his town are faked, or that of the Austrian author and Srebrenica genocide denier who was shamefully awarded the Nobel prize just last month.

We must tell and retell the true stories of the Holocaust and other genocides so that the truth prevails, and we must call out the language of hate, division and denial in our own communities, our own parties and even our own families, if need be.

15.57 Joan McAlpine (SNP): ... The Shoah was a crime against Jewish people and the culmination of centuries of antisemitism in Europe. There have been other genocides, and it is absolutely correct that we remember them and learn lessons, but world war two's Holocaust was exceptional in its scale and its approach. It was pre-meditated and meticulously planned by a modern state. It was mechanised mass murder in cold blood, deploying technology that Germany had perfected. ...

The Shoah was not an outbreak of uncontrolled, frenzied violence such as we see in conflict zones across the world when society is brutalised and the rule of law collapses. The concentration camps were planned, built and managed by detached bureaucrats. The entire apparatus of the state, with its courts and legal processes, was designed to support the death factories. ...

16.15 Anas Sarwar (Labour): ... On Holocaust memorial day, or when we commemorate

other tragedies across the world, we often say, “Never forget,” and, “Never again”. However, the reality is that we do forget and that it does happen again. We forget that the politics of hatred are still alive and well and kicking, here in the UK and across the world—indeed, in some places, they are on the rise. We forget that we still create the us-versus-them politics and society that treat others as though they are different. That difference is used to allow prejudice and hatred against communities and the othering of whole communities. We forget, which leads to mass deportations, torture, blood baths and murder. We forget, which leads to injustice that is based purely on someone’s nationality, their faith, the colour of their skin, their sexuality or their gender. We do forget, and it does happen again. ...

Seventy-five years after the Holocaust, we must send a message of solidarity to all members of our Jewish community here in Scotland, across the UK and across the world. Indeed, we must send that message to all communities that lost loved ones or ancestors in that war. However, we cannot be complacent, thinking that the fight against antisemitism has been won or that what happened then could never happen again.

We still have people from communities in our own country who fear getting on public transport to go to work or who fear being abused as they take their child to school in the morning. There are people in our society who have been racially abused. At home and abroad, places of worship—whether synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, mandirs or churches—which are supposed to be the symbols of peace, unity and togetherness, have been attacked. Such acts promote hatred and prejudice. That is why I welcome the Government’s announcement this week on the safety and security at places of worship fund, which is long overdue. I am sure that we wish that we did not have to have such a fund, but we need it to ensure that everyone feels safe as they visit their places of worship and go about their everyday lives. ...

We say, “Never again”, but it happens again. My fear is that the world in which my children will grow up will be even more divided and hate filled than the one in which I grew up. ...

... silence is not an option. We should not pick and choose condemnation or solidarity based on the identity or politics of the perceived perpetrator or victim. We should call out hatred, wherever it exists—no matter the political party it comes from, even if it is our own; no matter which institution it comes from, even if we want to defend it; and no matter which group in society it comes from. It is only when we recognise together that it is not for individual communities to take on the fight against prejudice or hatred alone and that it is a fight for all of us that we make sure that we challenge antisemitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, bigotry, sexism and every other prejudice.

I say a special thank you to the Holocaust Educational Trust and all the people who are involved in making sure that we never forget the tragedies of the past and that we keep the stories of the Holocaust survivors alive. ...

16.33 Annabelle Ewing (SNP): ... as has been said by Scotland’s First Minister and others, the industrial killing machine that Germany became did not start at the end of that train track in Birkenau. It started with the othering of the Jews, with the incremental denuding of Jews of their rights, with the normalisation of antisemitism and bigotry and hatred, and—it has to be said—with non-Jews and the international community failing, in the main, to speak out when all that was happening.

That is why it is vital that we all remain vigilant, that we challenge antisemitism, that we challenge bigotry and that we challenge hatred, wherever they are promoted. ...

16.38 Daniel Johnson (Labour): ... The Holocaust did not happen to them in a single action or event. There were a number of small, sometimes subtle, steps. There were municipal edicts, regulatory changes, Government requirements and mandated actions. Those were enabled not by initial overriding hatred, but by casual prejudice, careless othering and the self-interested inaction of people who chose to look the other way. That is how it starts and how it takes hold, and that is why we must be so wary of the insidious

rise of antisemitism that we are currently experiencing.

I feel that I must, as a Labour Party member and elected representative, say that that is a particularly important point for me to state. The Labour Party is supposed to be the party of equality, of social justice and of human rights. However, in recent months and years, we have failed. In particular, we have failed the Jewish people. Following recent events, I made a personal point of reaching out to talk with, and to listen to, the Jewish community in Edinburgh. I felt that I needed to take direct personal steps, and have been struck by the pain, the hurt, and the fear that our actions, and inactions, have caused. They include our failure to deal with complaints, our re-admission of members who have been guilty of antisemitism and our reluctance to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism.

In my 25 years of being a Labour Party member, the party has done things that I have disagreed with, and it has done things that have made me angry. However, in all those years, those events and conversations were the first times when I have ever felt ashamed to be a Labour Party member. ...

The events have also convinced me that we must take personal responsibility to carry on the lessons of the Holocaust and to tackle antisemitism and prejudice. We cannot allow the actions of the Nazis to be something that happened to other people. They are things that happened to people—people like me, people like you, people like all of us. They were crimes against humanity—crimes against us all.

We must strive not only to memorise the facts of the Holocaust, but to share and pass on the feelings and human experience of those who survived, and of those who fell victim. To truly learn the lessons, it is not enough simply to say the right things; we must also take the right actions. We must call out intolerant behaviours, we must challenge casual prejudice and we must take action against the powerful when they seek to oppress the minority. ...

16.44 Adam Tomkins (Conservative): ... The Holocaust happened because, not very long ago, in the heart of Europe, it was the policy of the Government of what had been a leading European civilisation to eliminate the Jewish people from the face of the earth. The Nazis were not angry with the Jews: the brutality, the beatings, the murder and the killing did not happen because anyone had cause to be angry; they happened because of cold, calculated hatred—"baseless hatred" ...

16.52 Aileen Campbell: ... Commemorations should not only be about remembering the past, but should act as a lesson for generations to come about the need to confront prejudice and hatred. We must work together in our communities nationally and internationally to promote understanding, recognise diversity and challenge discrimination, to ensure that the burden of bearing witness ... which is often demanded of survivors who have to relive their horror, is heeded and brings about the positive change that we seek. That is the very least that survivors should expect and deserve. ...

Much of what we remember this week is not just the actions of political leaders or troops but the banality of that evil. ... Kenneth Gibson reminded us that architects—educated people—designed the death camps. The education that we often cherish as being a protective factor against racism and hatred was not so in that case. ...

We remain committed to supporting learning about the Holocaust, in line with the values of the curriculum for excellence, which has compassion at its core. We continue to support the Holocaust Educational Trust's lessons from Auschwitz programme, as we have done for the past 10 years.

The Holocaust Educational Trust does excellent work and has been rightly singled out by members during this debate. It is crucial to see the trust's work first hand; its impact and reach are ever-more important. It is not easy work. Working with young people, the trust tackles an issue that is horrifying and distressing, and confrontation with such inhumanity is painful. However, the young people who participate in the programme become

Holocaust ambassadors and share their experience and reflections with fellow pupils. ... Although Scotland is an open and inclusive nation, as too many have described, and as too many colleagues have experienced, unfortunately we are not immune from hateful behaviour or prejudiced attitudes. Although I was glad to announce £500,000 for the places of worship fund with Humza Yousaf the other day, Anas Sarwar is right—that is something that I wish I did not have to do. However, faith communities need to feel that their Government supports them, has listened to them and cherishes them.

We can never be complacent about antisemitism or any form of prejudice or discrimination. We still have much to do to create a truly welcoming and inclusive society that promotes equality and human rights. That is about how can we use the lessons of Auschwitz to guide our approach to how we look after and support refugees, and how we recognise the consequences of global political conflict and the need for us to provide sanctuary to those who are fleeing persecution as a result.

We must keep at the forefront of our minds that hatred and prejudice do not happen in a vacuum, but are driven by people who deliberately turn communities against each other. Holocaust memorial day in Scotland provides an opportunity to learn from the past and encourages us to work together to tackle hatred and prejudice so that we can create a stronger, more inclusive future for everyone. ...

To read the full transcript see

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12485&i=112859#ScotParlOR>

Welsh Assembly Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Holocaust Memorial Day

Jane Hutt (Deputy Minister and Chief Whip): ... The Holocaust is still living memory and we remain hugely grateful to the survivors who travel around the UK sharing their personal experiences of this dark period of history. ...

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2020 is Stand Together or *Safwn Gyda'n Gilydd*. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has encouraged people to consider what can divide communities. As the trust has stated: 'Now more than ever, we need to stand together with others in our communities in order to stop division and the spread of identity-based hostility in our society.'

The First Minister and I were also honoured to take part in the candle lighting on the eighth night of Hanukkah. ... Regrettably, during the festival of Hanukkah, anti-Semitic graffiti was spray painted on a synagogue and several shops in north London. In early January, it was reported that a 13-year-old boy was physically assaulted and subjected to anti-Semitic abuse while travelling on a bus in London. These incidents in the UK have followed a series of anti-Semitic attacks in New York throughout December.

The Welsh Government stands with Jewish communities and against anti-Semitism in Wales and around the world. Following the horrendous attack on the synagogue in Halle, eastern Germany, on 9 October 2019, which resulted in the death of two people, I wrote to rabbis in Wales to remind communities that they have our full support.

In May 2017, the Welsh Government adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of anti-Semitism in full and without qualification. We've also provided £40,500 of EU transition funding to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to undertake work in Wales as part of this year's commemorations.

The funding went towards three elements: the 75 memorial flames project, where community groups across the UK created their own pieces of artwork to remember all those who lost their lives during the Holocaust. Nine of these memorial flames were developed by groups in Wales ...; the Stand Together website, which generates the name of an individual killed in the Holocaust and encourages website users to share details of

this individual on social media to help raise awareness of the individual stories behind the harrowing genocide; and finally, the employment of a support worker to encourage activity in Wales around Holocaust Memorial Day 2020.

It is vital that children and young people understand the reasons behind the Holocaust and the consequences of dehumanising sections of society. The Welsh Government gives £119,000 to the Holocaust Educational Trust to deliver the Lessons from Auschwitz project in Wales. The programme is open to 16 to 18-year-old students in post-16 education, and gives learners the opportunity to hear the testimony of a Holocaust survivor and also take part in a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Students then become Holocaust Educational Trust ambassadors in their own communities, and use their experiences to spread awareness and challenge racism and prejudice.

Further to our work to combat anti-Semitism and commemorate the Holocaust, we have bolstered our existing programmes that prevent hate, promote inclusion of diverse communities, and improve support for victims. We have expanded our support for the national hate crime report and support centre, operated on our behalf by Victim Support Cymru. The centre now has increased capacity to raise awareness of hate crime, develop partnerships with community support organisations, and ensure all victims of hate crime can be offered support.

We've recently developed the hate crime minority communities grant, which is funding eight third-sector organisations to raise awareness of hate crime and how to report it, seek to promote understanding of diversity in communities, and trial innovative approaches to tackling hate crime and support victims. The Hate Crime in Schools project will deliver critical thinking skills training for children in approximately 100 schools across Wales, equipping our young people with the skills to identify hate and misinformation, to enable them to avoid becoming perpetrators in future and challenge negative behaviour where it occurs.

Our equality and inclusion programme supports minority communities to have their voices heard and to challenge inequalities. ... Later this year, we will launch an anti-hate-crime campaign to try to turn the corner in the spread of divisive rhetoric. We are involving stakeholders to make the campaign as effective as possible.

Tragically, other genocides have followed the Holocaust. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust encourages remembrance of all people killed in genocides, such as Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. This year is also the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, which will be marked in July at an event at the Senedd.

We have a duty to carry the memory of those who lost their lives during the Holocaust, and remember victims of all backgrounds: Jewish people, Roma people, disabled people, LGBT people, and many other groups who faced unimaginable persecution during this period, and ultimately lost their lives because hate and prejudice had become acceptable. By marking these days of remembrance, we can ensure that these horrendous crimes against humanity are never forgotten and we move the world to a situation where it is never again repeated.

Mark Isherwood (Conservative): Well, you conclude, as you've just concluded, by saying, 'By marking these days of remembrance we can ensure that these horrendous crimes against humanity are never forgotten and we move the world to a situation where it is never again repeated.' ...

Unfortunately, marking the days of remembrance alone won't ensure that, and we all know when we turn on the television at night and watch the news or documentaries, we see peoples' populations being persecuted across the globe because they're perceived to be different to the Government in power or the dominant belief system or religion in the area they live.

So, how do you believe we can more forcefully—at least at a Wales and UK level—lead global understanding and action on this agenda that goes beyond those critical

remembrance and commemoration events on specific dates each year ... now we have generations, as you know, for whom this appears to be ancient history. ...

How do you feel or respond to the e-mail I've received and I suspect many other Members have today, from the Israel Britain Alliance, which reports a significant rise in the number of antisemitic incidents in the UK, which they say—and I quote—that, sadly, no part of our country, by which they mean the UK, has been immune to the world's oldest hatred?

You say—and we add the Welsh Conservatives to this, and I know everybody in this Chamber—we stand with Jewish communities against antisemitism in Wales and around the world. You talk about it being vital that children and young people understand the reasons and you referred to a programme involving 16 to 18-year-old students. In fact, my children attended Castell Alun High School in Flintshire, and most of them benefited from a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau with their school, and the impression made on them was profound, providing a vital lesson that will remain with them all their lives. They happen to be one of those schools that have recognised how important it is that this is given attention, but there are many others, perhaps, that don't. How can we ensure that this becomes embedded on a more mainstream basis, not just in those schools that are at the forefront of this sort of issue, but those that, perhaps, need to be helped further along the way? ... Again, how would you respond to the e-mail I've received today from Gypsy/Travellers I know living near Conwy, who say, 'We love Jews as God loves them, but we watch the tv, we don't see anything about the Gypsy people exterminated by the Nazis and their allies. Please, people, remember this. ... And they said that, 'Just small of bits of persecution, small bits of prejudice left unchallenged can ignite destruction. ...

Jane Hutt: ... the Holocaust must never be forgotten, and it cannot be just on Holocaust Memorial Day. It's important that this permeates our policy ...

Never again to be repeated—that's part of education. ... And we need to ensure that that is not just through some very excellent projects that we are funding through the Holocaust Educational Trust, but actually taking this further ... where we look at the curriculum ...

It is important that we do fund that Holocaust Educational Trust and we encourage more schools to engage. ...

I think you raise a very important point about Gypsy/Roma/Travellers ... I can ... put again on record today that we must remember that the Nazi genocide included a large number of Gypsy and Roma victims and their suffering mustn't be forgotten. ...

But in terms of how we tackle antisemitism, we stand, the Welsh Government, with the Jewish community in Wales and across the world. We consider antisemitic attacks to be an attack on Welsh values of inclusion, freedom and respect. So, that's why working with faith communities is so important to promote those shared values and understanding in Wales. We will work to ensure that Wales continues to be a country where antisemitism and all forms of hate have no place.

Delyth Jewell (Plaid Cymru): ... Deputy Minister, I'd echo your words in praising the Holocaust Educational Trust and the crucially important work they do in teaching young people about these horrors and the outreach work they do with survivors. ...

The Holocaust didn't happen overnight. It started slowly with a gradual erosion of rights and a narrative set-up of us versus them—the other. Of course, amongst the horrors there were stories of hope, like Sir Nicholas Winton's *kindertransport*, a scheme that ensured that children who might otherwise have died in the Holocaust were brought to the UK. The Government of the time could have done more, but thank God that that initiative born out of human kindness and compassion saved the lives that it did.

I'm sure the Deputy Minister will share my concern that the current UK Government recently refused to accept an amendment in Westminster that would have obliged the UK to continue to allow lone children within the EU to apply for legal family reunion here. I accept that this is not directly to do with the Holocaust. I would not draw a comparison and

say that that is the same as the Holocaust, but we have never regretted moments of kindness in our past, let's continue this proud tradition. ...

But would the Welsh Government reflect on calls for teaching about the Holocaust to be made a compulsory element of the new curriculum? ...

Events like the Holocaust aren't just frozen in time. Their catastrophic effects linger and ripple down the generations. Deputy Minister, do you agree that we owe it to the children of the Holocaust, the Primo Levis, the Zigi Shippers of this world, and to future generations, to ensure that these events are never allowed to fade into the mist of time, that they can never be allowed to become remote, a horror story that happened to a different people in another time, when things were different? ...

Jane Hutt: ... I think there'll be very few schools that won't now engage in national Holocaust Memorial Day ...

I think importantly yesterday, also, the First Minister said: 'Today is a painful day and I thank Dr Stern for using his touching story to remind us all about the power of tolerance... We must stand together. We must celebrate our differences. And we must believe there is more that unites us than drives us apart. It's the only way to make sure these sorry events stay exactly where they belong—in the history books.'

Julie Morgan, the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, and I did write to the Home Secretary about the importance of ensuring that we have got an opportunity to support family reunification for child refugees. ...

David Rowlands (Brexit): ... having attended the Holocaust Educational Trust event in the Senedd on the fourteenth of this month, I was completely and utterly moved by the courage of Mala Tribich in giving her testimony, especially when she described the moment she and her young cousin entered the infamous camp of Belsen. To feel I was in the presence of someone whose eyes had actually gazed on the horrors of that camp brought home to me as nothing had previously the sheer brutality of those times. We must never forget that these appalling crimes were carried out by a supposedly civilised nation. The events that occurred in Cambodia, Rwanda and Darfur, and much closer to home in Bosnia, especially at Srebrenica, remind us of the constant potential for man's inhumanity to man. ...

Jane Hutt: ... we have got to work together to face this and to overcome it. So, I hope we will have a positive response to the hate crime debate that I shall be leading in Government time in due course.

Jenny Rathbone (Labour): ... I think that we have to remember that there was huge resistance by the UK Government both to bringing in people in *kindertransport* before the war, and so many of those children died in the concentration camps, but also to bringing in any of these children at all. It was only down to the persistence of this visionary man that he managed to negotiate with both the UK Government and with the Red Cross to persuade them to allow these people to come to the Lake District to have some sort of rehabilitation before they had to reintegrate with normal life. ...

But I just wanted to come back to the way in which we have neglected, up until now, the horror that was suffered by Roma and Sinti by the Nazis. Because it's worth noting that the Jewish people were given reparations by Germany for their Holocaust crimes, but at Nuremberg, nobody ever discussed any reparations for the Roma and Sinti community or anybody else, as far as I'm aware. And I think one of the most important things that I learnt from the event here at the Senedd was that, whilst we know—and I think everybody in this Chamber knows that 6 million Jews were murdered by the Nazis—we do not know how many Roma and Sinti were murdered by the Nazis, even though they were absolutely religious note takers of everything they did. ... Most estimates put it between 220,000 and 500,000, but some scholars put it as high as 1.5 million. And I just wondered whether there was anything that the Welsh Government could do to support the research required to tie down exactly how many Roma and Sinti were murdered by the Nazis because I think it's

an important part of recording the pain and suffering that was suffered by people who mainly had no literacy, and therefore didn't record things in the way that most Jewish people did. ...

Jane Hutt: ... we will look at how we can extend our knowledge, as that will be important for the students and the children, who will benefit. ...

Suzy Davies (Conservative): ... I did go and visit Auschwitz-Birkenau this time last week. I don't propose to talk about that in particular, except from one particular angle, which we've touched on a little bit already, and that is the necessity for our younger people to go there. It's 75 years since the liberation, as we know. Time has passed. The generations before the young people we have today—my generation, at least, born less than 20 years after the second world war—weren't told about the horrors of the Holocaust ...

On the back of my exhortation to get as many young people to go to Auschwitz as soon as possible, I think we have to recognise that, because time has passed, we now have stories coming forward of individuals—and I stress it is individuals—thinking it's entirely appropriate, after having seen some of the awful exhibits, and having seen the ovens where people like them burned people like them, that they can stand in front of the death wall, where people like them were shot by people like them, taking selfies and making—Ridiculous, fun-filled activities, and I wonder: do they see themselves as antisemitic when they're doing that? ... we had a conference ... hosted by the European Jewish Association ... and we were all invited to consider further legislation in our countries ... to combat antisemitism.

... the first one was to ask whether states were prepared to penalise organisations or individuals who engage in antisemitic stereotyping in the public domain. It was suggested to us that the national education bodies of all our countries appoint a special representative mandated to liaise with designated Jewish community representatives with expertise in the field of education to ensure that teaching resources are accurate, that the Holocaust is seen as the bigger picture of the Jewish nation and the Jewish story, and the contribution of Jews to public life can be adequately recognised—particularly important in Wales, where the Jewish population is small, and, as Jenny alluded to, education research on the Holocaust more widely, as far as I can tell, anyway, is not as developed as it is in Scotland and England. ...

Then, thirdly, they called for an outright ban on the trade of Nazi memorabilia for personal profit or macabre interest ...

Jane Hutt: ... you've given us some of the recommendations; I'd like you to write to me and send them to me. ... we've arranged training on antisemitism for Welsh Government officials, and we've also offered that to external stakeholders, including a focus on the IHRA definition of antisemitism. We've organised Holocaust survivors with Welsh connections to give talks, we're working with the Holocaust Educational Trust, and, of course, I've talked about our clear co-ordinated action in terms of tackling hate crime. But also, just to say that we have the hate crime criminal justice board, which has had a full discussion on antisemitic hate crime, and working with Victim Support Cymru in terms of ensuring we have a recording system to flag antisemitic hate crimes and incidents. ...

Huw Irranca-Davies (Labour): ... We cannot afford to live in societies where people fear for their safety and suffer discrimination and a denial of rights on a daily basis, for no other reason than their identity and convictions. ...

Remembrance days are important to pause and reflect, but the fight against hate is a challenge that must be met every day, not once a year. As the number of Holocaust survivors dwindles, we must take up their torch and help keep their memory alive. ...

Jane Hutt: ... we must just conclude by saying that, as you and others have said, the stand-together message is very important for today. It says: 'stand together with others in our communities in order to stop division and the spread of identity-based hostility in our society.' ...

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: West Bank

Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op) [5527] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the statement on 18 Dec 2019 of the UK representative to the United Nations Security Council on increased Israeli demolitions of Palestinian structures in the Occupied West Bank, what steps the Government will take (a) unilaterally and (b) in co-ordination with other EU member states to deter future demolitions of donor-funded structures in Area C by the Israeli authorities.

Andrew Murrison: As we made clear in the UN Security Council, we are deeply concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by the Israeli authorities. Demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; call into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution; and, in all but the most exceptional of cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities, most recently on 17 December 2019, our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. The UK and international partners will continue to call for Israel to abandon demolition plans entirely, and instead provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C. We support Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or eviction through our legal aid programme. The UK has also allocated £1.1 million to support essential infrastructure for vulnerable Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-20/5527/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/renewing-unrwa-and-securing-stability-for-israelis-and-palestinians>

Israel: Palestinians

Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op) [5528] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the statement of 18 Dec 2019 by the UK representative to the United Nations Security Council that any suggestion to annex parts of the of the Occupied Palestinian Territories could not pass unchallenged, what steps the Government will take (a) unilaterally, (b) in co-operation with other EU member states and (c) in co-operation with other members of the Security Council to deter any such annexation.

Andrew Murrison: We have made clear our deep concern about the suggestion that any parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be annexed, including during the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East Peace Process on 21 January. Any declaration of a unilateral border change undermines the rules-based international order and the UN Charter. The UK calls on all parties to refrain from actions in contravention of international law that would imperil the viability of a two-state solution, based on the 1967 lines, and make it harder to achieve a just and lasting peace.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-20/5528/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/renewing-unrwa-and-securing-stability-for-israelis-and-palestinians>

Israel: Palestinians

Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op) [5529] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many instances of which the Government is aware have members of the Israeli (a) Government and (b) Knesset suggested that parts or all of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be annexed by the Israeli Government, since January 2019.

Andrew Murrison: The British Government does not hold this information. We have made clear our deep concern about the suggestion that any 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.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-20/5529/>

Gaza: Humanitarian Situation

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [7154] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Andrew Murrison: The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains dire. The UN reports that unemployment is at 45 percent, with youth unemployment at over 60 percent. Some 46 percent of the population live below the US\$5.50 poverty line and an estimated 60 percent of households are food insecure. The health service is severely overburdened and reliable access to clean water and electricity remains challenging.

DFID will provide £16m in humanitarian assistance to Gaza in 2019/20. This is supporting the health system, including improved trauma care, and contributing to emergency food aid for around 1.2 million vulnerable people. To help address the underlying causes of the humanitarian situation we are investing to build the capacity of Gaza's water and energy services and to address barriers to trade. Ultimately, Gaza's immense challenges can only be resolved with a political solution that delivers peace, stability and the easing of movement and access restrictions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-23/7154/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Gaza: Travel Restrictions

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL433] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, and intend to make, to the government of Israel about reports that it is not allowing parents to accompany their children and babies who need to leave Gaza for medical treatment in the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the matter of medical permits with the Israeli authorities, most recently on 30 October 2019. My colleague Dr Murrison also raised medical permits, and the importance of parents being allowed to accompany children in need of urgent medical treatment,

with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 22 October 2019. Israeli restrictions severely restrict the movement of medical professionals, patients and families from Gaza, hampering the provision of quality health services, as well as impacting Palestinians in the West Bank. The situation in Gaza is particularly acute, and is compounded by frequent closure by Egypt of the Rafah crossing, preventing urgent medical cases from seeking treatment in Egypt. A lasting resolution to the situation is needed that will ensure that all those who are in need of medical attention and their families have unimpeded access to healthcare provisions.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-14/HL433/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Release of US proposals for Middle East peace: Foreign Secretary's statement

Following the release of US proposals for Middle East peace, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said: We welcome the release of the United States' proposal for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. This is clearly a serious proposal, reflecting extensive time and effort. A peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians that leads to peaceful coexistence could unlock the potential of the entire region, and provide both sides with the opportunity for a brighter future.

Only the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian territories can determine whether these proposals can meet the needs and aspirations of the people they represent.

We encourage them to give these plans genuine and fair consideration, and explore whether they might prove a first step on the road back to negotiations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-release-of-us-proposals-for-middle-east-peace>

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

European Council

Declaration by the High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the EU on the Middle East Peace Process

Today's initiative by the United States provides an occasion to re-launch the urgently needed efforts towards a negotiated and viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The European Union will study and assess the proposals put forward. This will be done on the basis of the EU's established position and its firm and united commitment to a negotiated and viable two-state solution that takes into account the legitimate aspirations of both the Palestinians and the Israelis, respecting all relevant UN resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

The EU reaffirms its readiness to work towards the resumption of meaningful negotiations to resolve all permanent status issues and to achieve a just and lasting peace.

It urges both sides to demonstrate, through policies and actions, a genuine commitment to the two-state solution as the only realistic way to end the conflict.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/01/28/declaration-by-the-high-representative-josep-borrell-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-middle-east-peace-process/>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Committee on the Rights of the Child, in review of the report of the State of Palestine, highlights the protection of children from violence

State of Palestine to the Children's Committee: Peace Proposal by President Trump is the "Theft of our Time", not the "Deal of our Time"

The Committee on the Rights of the Child today concluded its consideration of the initial report of the State of Palestine on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the dialogue, the Experts noted the peculiar and extremely challenging environment that the State of Palestine faced – occupation, settlement construction, blockade and violence. They also raised issues that, despite the challenging circumstances, could be improved: the legal and policy framework, the protection of children from violence, the situation of children with disabilities and the mental health of children, among others.

In the dialogue, the delegation of the State of Palestine said that the Middle East peace proposal that the President of the United States had launched yesterday was the "theft of our time", not the "deal of our time". The first theft was the last century when the Balfour promise created a State for the Jews in Palestine, and today came the second promise where they would give away the rest of Palestine to the occupying State Israel.

The delegation told the Committee that President Trump's proposal flaunted international law and replaced it with United States' policy. The peace proposal denied the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and ignored the two-State solution agreed to by the United Nations Security Council. The proposal would enter the region and the world in a new state of chaos. The State of Palestine was committed to international law and raised its children to believe in and respect international law and human rights.

Committee Experts noted the peculiar and extremely challenging environment that the State of Palestine faced – occupation, settlement construction, blockade and violence. They also raised issues that, despite the challenging circumstances, could be improved, including the legal and policy framework, the protection of children from violence, and the situation of children with disabilities and mental health of children, among others. ...

Due to the Israeli occupation, Palestinian citizens and the Government were denied access to resources for development, the Minister said. Jerusalem and Gaza were not under the control of the State of Palestine, which had been denied access to those areas to organize elections. Israel continued to exercise its racist and discriminatory policies in the occupied territories and Mr. Majdalani urged the Committee to heed the call of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and called upon Israel to review its racist laws and policies that discriminated between Jewish and Arab citizens in Israel. ...

All Palestinian parties and factions had signed a code of conduct that prevented them from involving children in any demonstrations. They continued to maintain a strong commitment to this instrument. There was no need for the State of Palestine to provoke or incite the children to demonstrate or engage in acts of violence against the occupation. The acts of violence by the occupying forces that they witnessed on a daily basis were enough. In the 2008 operation Hot Winter, Israeli forces had killed more than 1,400 Palestinians, including more than 300 children in the Gaza Strip. The killing and injuring of the Palestinian children had not stopped there.

The State of Palestine always acted in the best interest of the child; it worked to harmonize its legislation with international human rights instruments and to provide services to all suffering people. The department for detainees and former detainees worked to collect information on those detained by the occupying force, including children, and to provide them with services after their detention. ...

The Israeli occupation, which controlled the borders, had slowed down the drafting and the adoption of the citizenship law. A fine for late birth registration was very symbolic and was

meant to encourage parents to register their children and avoid that the Israeli occupying authorities denied them an identity document. Occupation authorities also denied identity documents to children whose parents did not have identity cards.

Every Palestinian holding Palestinian identity documents was entitled to a Palestinian passport. The passport was also issued to Palestinian refugees who did not have any other passport to facilitate their freedom of movement. The passport was recognized by every nation except the occupying power. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25508&LanglD=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

**** Assisted Dying Bill**

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

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/58-01/069/5801069.pdf>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-01-28/debates/909616C2-A8C1-406F-BD50-5841A7FE6014/AssistedDyingBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2020-01-28/debates/909616C2-A8C1-406F-BD50-5841A7FE6014/AssistedDyingBill(HL))

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

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

Education (Assemblies) Bill

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

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

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

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 3 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