



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

See also the House of Commons written answers “Antisemitism: Education” and “Educational Visits” in the “Holocaust” section below.

House of Commons Written Answer

Antisemitism: North West

Scott Benton (Conservative) [9155] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the North West in each of the last 10 years.

Luke Hall: Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we are taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms.

We recognise that there has been an increase in antisemitic incidents across the country. Home Office Official Statistics for hate crime, which report police recorded data, show that 18% of religiously motivated hatred was directed towards Jews, compared with 12 per cent in 2017/18. [‘Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018 to 2019’ (Oct, 2019)].

We are also aware that Greater Manchester had the highest number of antisemitic incidents outside Greater London over last 10 years (2008-2018) according to the Community Security Trust, who are one of our key partners in tackling antisemitism and the main body reporting on the number of incidents each year.

That is why we became the first country in the world to adopt the working definition of antisemitism as set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. We are making sure the police record hate crimes disaggregated by faith and our refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan reaffirms our commitment to combating antisemitism. We are working with partner organisations across England to make sure Jewish communities feel safe and are pressing for public sector institutions to adopt the IHRA definition.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-28/9155/>

The Home Office statistics referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839172/hate-crime-1819-hosb2419.pdf

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

The IHRA working definition of antisemitism, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answers

Antisemitism: Education

Royston Smith (Conservative) [9085] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to educate young people on the Holocaust.

Nick Gibb: The Department is fully committed to Holocaust education. Every young person should learn about the Holocaust and the lessons it teaches us today, which is why it is unique in being the only subject named as a compulsory part of the history curriculum. The Department further supports pupils' and teachers' understanding of the Holocaust by providing funding for the Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz project - £2,126,437 in 2019-20 and £2,193,675 in 2020-21 and to the UCL Institute of Education's Centre for Holocaust Education - £500,000 in both 2019-20 and 2020-21, match funded by the Pears Foundation. Additionally, £1.7 million for the 2019-20 financial year is being provided for the Bergen-Belsen Commemoration Programme to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-28/9085/>

Educational Visits

Scott Benton (Conservative) [9156] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department records the number of young people who (a) visit Auschwitz on educational visits and (b) take part in other educational visits to remember the Holocaust and its victims.

Nick Gibb: The Department funds the Holocaust Educational Trust's 'Lessons from Auschwitz' which provides for two students, aged 16-18, and a teacher from every state funded school/sixth form college in England to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. £2,126,437 is being provided in 2019-20 and £2,193,675 in 2020-21. We expect a minimum of 1,968 students to undertake visits through this programme in 2019-20. Additionally, £1.7 million for the 2019-20 financial year is being provided for the Bergen-Belsen Commemoration Programme. The programme provides for pupils and teachers from state funded secondary schools in England to visit Bergen-Belsen to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp. We expect a minimum of 1,290 pupils to undertake visits through this programme in 2019-20.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-28/9156/>

TOP

Israel

House of Lords Written Answer

NHS: Drugs

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL882] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that drugs used by the NHS which have been developed by companies based in Israel have not been tested on Palestinian prisoners or schoolchildren.

Baroness Blackwood of North Oxford: NHS England and NHS Improvement's Commercial Medicines Unit (CMU) puts in place framework agreements for the supply of medicines for use in National Health Service secondary care organisations i.e. hospitals, although it is not responsible for any aspects of medicines supply in primary care.

All relevant CMU procurements use the Cabinet Office's standard supplier qualification questions. Suppliers are automatically excluded from bidding if they have convictions for child labour and other forms of trafficking in human beings; discretionary exclusion grounds include breach of labour law obligations.

The CMU have contract monitoring arrangements in place which follow standard Government best practice. These are designed to identify supplier underperformance and any grave misconduct.

Under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, since 1 October 2015, commercial organisations that carry on a business or part of business in the United Kingdom, supply goods or services and have an annual turnover of £36 million or more have been required under Section 54 of the Act to prepare a slavery and human trafficking statement as defined by section 54 of the Act. The CMU also typically require potential suppliers to declare whether they are compliant with this.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-28/HL882/>

Welsh Assembly Oral Answers

State Of Palestine and Israel Peace Plan

Bethan Sayed (Plaid Cymru): 2. What representations has the Minister made on behalf of the Welsh Government in relation to the peace plan for the state of Palestine and Israel recently advocated by the United States of America? OAQ55045

Eluned Morgan (Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language): Although international relations is a reserved competence, I have written to the foreign Secretary to make clear our position on this middle east peace plan. Wales stands firmly behind a rules-based international system, and firmly behind a truly equitable search for a resolution to one of the longest-running conflicts. If there are to be negotiations, this should be done in accordance with international law, established parameters, and existing UN resolutions. And it's far from clear that this is the starting point of this plan set out by President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Bethan Sayed: Thank you for that. It's more comprehensive than what I thought I was going to hear today. We all know that Israel and Palestine, the conflict and the dispute, is the longest-running geopolitical problem in the world, and the inability to solve this problem has led to a broad and deeply damaging effect on the relations between the Muslim world and western countries. As you have indicated, the position of the United States with its new peace plan means that it has now abandoned even the pretence of being a neutral arbiter. The so-called peace plan outlined recently would legitimise land theft on a huge

scale and mean decades of work done by the international community to try to reach a consensus on a two-state solution may get thrown away.

I understand that you've written on this particular plan, but I want to understand what further representations you will seek to make to the Prime Minister and foreign Secretary to make it clear that you will not support any further encroachment by the Israeli Government in terms of the settlements. Many of them are already illegal, as we know, and—[*Interruption.*] I'm sorry, I'm being heckled by Neil Hamilton. I'm trying to ask a question, which is legitimate. ...

My question, to finish, is: what are we going to do to be able to accommodate the people of Palestine and Israel so that they can live in harmony together in the future, and so that we can try to reach a peaceful solution for all that does not reflect in this plan?

Eluned Morgan: Thank you. So, we have written to the foreign Secretary. I think it's really important that, whatever happens in future, it's based on international law and on equality and on ensuring that both sides have an understanding that this has got to be a mutual agreement. I think the real problem with this plan is that the Palestinians weren't in the room when it was being discussed. I think any efforts towards promoting peace in the middle east should be grabbed, but obviously we need to make sure that it's equitable and that it conforms with freedom and justice. It's amazing that even Prince Charles, who was in the Palestinian territories in recent weeks, concurred that that exactly should be the basis on which any future negotiations should take place.

Darren Millar (Conservative): As a frequent visitor to Israel and the West Bank in recent years, I know just what a difficult conflict this is going to be to resolve, but I think we all need to be honest with ourselves in acknowledging that our ability to resolve this particular conflict is very limited. So, I ask the international relations Minister: what action can the Welsh Government take, in addition to that which it's already taken in writing to the UK Government, regarding this particular peace plan? What work could you do on the ground in order to get people talking to one another and working with one another so that we can build peace from the ground up, in many respects?

You will know that we as a party have said that we need a Wales to the world programme. That could include some work in terms of civic dialogue taking place between Wales and friends in the middle east, in both Israel and in the Palestinian territories. I think that that would be a great opportunity for us to have an even greater influence in that particular part of the world. You referred, very briefly, to the Prince of Wales's recent visit. Will you agree with me that it's visits like that that do a lot, actually, to promote the interests of the people of Wales overseas and the opportunities that that brings?

Eluned Morgan: Thank you. I think we have got to understand that it is the UK Government that leads in relation to foreign affairs, but also it is important that people understand the values on which we think agreements like this should be made. I do think that there is a role for us in the Welsh Government to be supportive of any steps that are going to get us closer to seeing a resolution to the middle east peace problem. I'm not sure whether starting off the way that this has started off is going to be the right path on which we are likely to get some kind of advancement in this area. But, certainly, I agree that Prince Charles going to the Palestinian Authority was probably something that was really constructive, and I think his message was very clear when he was there.

<https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/6080#C265345>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Written Answer

Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief

The Lord Bishop of Leeds [HL749] Her Majesty's Government what (1) human, and (2) financial, resources have been made available to support the Office of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Promoting Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) globally is a key priority of this Government. The office of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief is supported by a Chief of Staff, and we are recruiting an Assistant Private Secretary. In addition, we also have a FoRB team whose work includes providing policy advice and support to the Special Envoy and other Ministers. For this financial year, we have agreed the Special Envoy's office will receive £73,453 to cover travel and administration costs. Future funding will be decided at a later stage.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-23/HL749/>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

Community Security Trust (CST)

Antisemitic Incidents Report 2019

CST has today published our 2019 Antisemitic Incidents Report, which shows that CST received a record high total of 1,805 antisemitic incidents in the UK last year. 2019 was the fourth year in a row to see a record incident total and continues an ongoing trend of rising numbers of antisemitic hate incidents in this country. ...

The 1,805 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in 2019 was a seven per cent increase from the 1,690 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2018. These 1,805 incidents were spread throughout the year, with over 100 incidents recorded in every month for the second consecutive year; indicating that a general atmosphere of intolerance and prejudice is maintaining the high incident totals, rather than a one-off specific 'trigger' event. However, the highest single monthly totals in 2019 came in February and December, both months when the problem of antisemitism in the Labour Party was the subject of sustained discussion and activity ...

CST recorded 697 antisemitic incidents that occurred online in 2019, comprising 39 per cent of the overall total of 1,805 incidents and a rise of 82 per cent from the 384 online incidents in 2018. ... The totals of online incidents recorded by CST are only indicative and are likely to understate the scale of the problem: targeted campaigns directed at individual victims often involve dozens of social media accounts and hundreds or even thousands of tweets, images or posts, but each campaign of this type is recorded by CST as a single incident. ...

CST recorded 158 violent antisemitic assaults in 2019, an increase of 25 per cent from the 126 incidents of this type recorded in 2018 and the highest number of violent incidents ever recorded by CST in a single year. ... There were 88 incidents of Damage & Desecration of Jewish property in 2019; 98 direct antisemitic threats; 1,443 incidents in the category of Abusive Behaviour ... and 18 incidents of mass-mailed antisemitic leaflets or emails. ...

In 330 of the incidents reported to CST in 2019, the offender or offenders made reference to Hitler, the Nazis, the Holocaust, employed discourse based on the Nazi period, and/or punctuated their abuse with a Nazi salute or the depiction of a swastika. ... There were 505 allusions to Israel, the Middle East or Zionism in antisemitic incidents recorded by CST, of which 63 directly compared or equated Israel with the Nazis. ... Eight incidents recorded by CST in 2019 contained discourse relating to Islam and Muslims, while 19 incidents showed evidence of Islamist ideology. In 39 incidents, another religious ideology was present. A total of eight incidents were related to or ideologically inspired by the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. ...

Home Secretary, Rt Hon Priti Patel MP said: "It's appalling that we have seen another increase of sickening abuse against the Jewish community. We need to do much more to tackle antisemitism and the intolerance this creates across society. As Home Secretary I am pushing for greater collaboration, both across government, policing, the courts and community groups, to remove this shameful stain on our society."

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said: "Who could have imagined that 75 years after the end of the Holocaust, antisemitism would be on the rise in the UK and across Europe. There is no place for antisemitism in our society. It is a scourge on us all and the record high number of recorded incidents in 2019 is completely unacceptable. This Government stands with CST – together we are committed to working with the Jewish community to stamp out anti-Jewish hatred and prejudice. Educating future generations about antisemitism is crucial. Our new funding to tackle antisemitism on campus and plans to combat Online Harms by targeting the appalling rise in antisemitic social media incidents, form a vital part of our commitment to root it out of our society."

Shadow Policing Minister & Vice-Chair All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, Louise Haigh MP, said: "CST's data makes for depressing reading. It is shameful the Jewish community has been subjected to another year of racist abuse. We are beyond a stage of saying that more has to be done. We require immediate action. I will be working with colleagues, and with the CST and partners to identify what more we can be doing to reverse this unacceptable trend."

CST Chief Executive David Delew said: "2019 was another difficult year for British Jews and it is no surprise that recorded antisemitic incidents reached yet another high. It is clear that both social media and mainstream politics are places where antisemitism and racism need to be driven out, if things are to improve in the future."

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2020/02/06/antisemitic-incidents-report-2019>

Antisemitic Incidents Report 2019

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/9/0/IncidentsReport2019.pdf>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

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

**** Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill**

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

Second Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-02-05/debates/81678CD1-63E7-4F5A-A70F-44E3B4A4EBEC/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-02-05/debates/81678CD1-63E7-4F5A-A70F-44E3B4A4EBEC/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill(HL))

Education (Assemblies) Bill

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

**** Genocide Determination Bill**

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

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/58-01/094/5801094.pdf>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-02-05/debates/AC952F4F-E45B-4EAA-A858-EA468551E7D2/GenocideDeterminationBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-02-05/debates/AC952F4F-E45B-4EAA-A858-EA468551E7D2/GenocideDeterminationBill(HL))

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageact1949amendment.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>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

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>

TOP

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