



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

Hate Crime

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [19846] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the guidance on the investigation of non-crime hate incidents.

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [19847] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of non-crime hate incidents in each of the last five years; and how much police time was recorded in the investigation of those incidents; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse: The College of Policing has recently consulted on draft revised operational guidance on hate crime, which included clarity on responding to non-crime hate incidents. The College plans to publish this in due course to support forces dealing with hate crimes and hate incidents.

The College of Policing is independent from Government and its role is clear: setting high professional standards; sharing what works best; acting as the national voice of policing; and ensuring police training and ethics is of the highest possible quality. The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Information is not collected on non-crime hate incidents or the investigative resource allocated to them.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/19846/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/19847/>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Hate Crime

Christopher Chope (Conservative) [20378] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the definition of a hate

incident set out on the College of Policing's website; and if she will make a statement.

Christopher Chope (Conservative) [20379] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the annual cost to the public purse of the police responding to non-crime hate incidents in England.

Kit Malthouse: The College of Policing is independent from Government and its role is clear: setting high professional standards; sharing what works best; acting as the national voice of policing; and ensuring police training and ethics is of the highest possible quality.

The College of Policing has revised its operational guidance on hate crime to help provide clarity on responding to non-crime hate incidents, among other things. The College has consulted on this draft revised operational guidance and plans to publish this in due course to support forces dealing with hate crimes and hate incidents.

The Home Office collects and publishes information on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Information is not collected on non-crime hate incidents or the investigative resource allocated to them.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-25/20378/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-25/20379/>

Hate Crime

Tom Hunt (Conservative) [20582] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will take steps to ensure that the College of Policing's Hate Crime Operational Guidance is amended to remove the requirement that police forces record non-crime hate incidents.

Kit Malthouse: The College of Policing has revised its operational guidance on hate crime to help provide clarity on responding to non-crime hate incidents, among other things. The College has consulted on this draft revised operational guidance and plans to publish this in due course to support forces dealing with hate crimes and hate incidents.

The College of Policing is independent from Government and its role is clear: setting high professional standards; sharing what works best; acting as the national voice of policing; and ensuring police training and ethics is of the highest possible quality.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-25/20582/>

Religious Hatred: Islam

Naz Shah (Labour) [20509] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release of 23 July 2019, when the additional independent adviser on Islamophobia will be appointed; and whether terms of reference will be provided for those advisers.

Luke Hall: This Government remains committed to stamping out anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of hate crime. It is unacceptable for anyone to feel unsafe while practising their religion and we continue to take a zero-tolerance approach to Islamophobia.

The definition of Islamophobia proposed by the APPG is not in line with the Equality Act 2010 and could have consequences for freedom of speech. We recognise the importance of this matter and will interrogate it in further detail.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-25/20509/>

The press release referred to above can be read at
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-expert-appointed-to-tackle-islamophobia>

Information about the APPG definition referred to above can be read at
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf>

Faith Schools: Gender

Alicia Kearns (Conservative) [19998] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on ensuring that faith schools encourage equal opportunities and aspirations regardless of a pupil's gender.

Elizabeth Truss: I meet Cabinet colleagues, including my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education, to discuss equalities issues as appropriate.

It is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a pupil by treating them less favourably in a number of respects because of their sex. This applies to all schools, including maintained and independent faith schools.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/19998/>

The following four questions all received the same answer

Census: Sikhs

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [19842] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to ensure a Sikh ethnic tick box in the forthcoming Census Order.

Census: Ethnic Groups

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [21893] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to ensure that the ethnic groups (a) Welsh Asian and (b) Welsh Black, Caribbean or African are identified under specific sub-headings on the form in the forthcoming Census Order.

Census: Languages

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [21894] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans he has to include a question on Welsh language proficiency in the 2021 Census; and what discussions he has had with the (a) Scottish Government and (b) Northern Ireland Executive on the inclusion of that question in censuses in those nations.

Census

Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru) [21895] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with representatives of the (a) UK Statistics Authority and (b) Office for National Statistics on the future of the Census after 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Chloe Smith: The draft Census (England and Wales) Order 2020 was laid in Parliament on 2 March. It sets the date of the Census and the topics on which census questions are to be asked.

Once made, the Order will be followed by Census Regulations for England and for Wales. The Regulations for England will be laid before Parliament. The Regulations for Wales are the responsibility of Welsh Ministers and will be laid before the National Assembly for Wales. The Regulations to be made by the Welsh Ministers will contain the final wording of the questions on Welsh language skills and ethnic group to be asked in the Wales census.

As part of the Census Data Collection and Transformation Programme, the ONS is exploring how to produce census-type statistics more frequently than the decennial census, using other sources of data. The ONS will make a recommendation to the Government in 2023 on the future of the census.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/19842/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-27/21893/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-27/21894/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-27/21895/>

House of Commons Library

Briefing: Marriage venues

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN02842/SN02842.pdf>

Welsh Assembly Debate

Progress On Tackling Hate Crime

453 **Jane Hutt (Deputy Minister and Chief Whip):** ... Prevention, of course, is key to tackling hate crime in Wales, and therefore the focus of much of our work. Our community cohesion programme forms an integral part of our prevention work, delivering projects focused on creating a diverse and united nation by fostering environments where we can learn from each other, as well as live and work together in Wales. ...

457 We recognise that promoting positive communications has a crucial role in hate crime prevention work, in particular reinforcing the message that hate is not welcome in Wales. We are on course to launch a multi-media, pan-Wales, anti-hate crime campaign this autumn, engaging with partners, including victims. This is progressing well, and we've got good feedback that supports the creation of this campaign, which encourages the reporting of hate crime and increases the public understanding of hate crime. ...

459 We funded the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to deliver activities and awareness raising in Wales, and this included the development of the Stand Together website and participation in the 75 Memorial Flames art project currently on display on the Hayes in Cardiff. ...

462 We don't hold all the levers to address the wider issues, and we're aware of the frustrations in regard to hate crime legislation in the UK. Hate crime laws in the UK have developed in several phases over recent decades, and this has led to the situation where the five protected characteristics in hate crime legislation—race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and disability—are not dealt with in a consistent way. ...

466 **Mark Isherwood (Conservative):** ... As the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales states, hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation or transgender identity. This could be committed against a person or property. They say a victim does not have to be a member of the group at which the hostility is targeted; in fact, anyone could be a victim of hate crime. ...

467 The statistics show a 17 per cent increase in recorded hate crimes across Wales compared to 2017-18 ...

468 We therefore need to better understand why this differential exists, especially when the Welsh Government states that the statistics reflect the hard work being done across Wales by police forces, third sector, and the national hate crime report and support centre, run by Victim Support Cymru, to increase the confidence of victims and encourage them

to report these incidents. Some 76 per cent of the hate crimes recorded by police in England and Wales were race related—falling to 68 per cent of the 3,932 recorded hate crimes across the four Welsh police force areas—with 19 per cent related to sexual orientation, 11 per cent to disability, 5 per cent to religion, and 3 per cent to transgender. ...

470 The crime survey of England and Wales is considered to be a more reliable indicator of long-term crime trends than the police recorded crime series. Experience of hate crime captured in the crime survey has gone down steadily over the last 10 years. Ironically, it's higher overall than the police figures, but is showing a decline rather an increase. So, according to the crime survey, hate crime incidents averaged 184,000 annually, between 2015 and 2018, representing around 3 per cent of all crime recorded in the survey, compared with only 2 per cent of police-recorded crime. And between 2015 and 2018, 53 per cent of the hate crime incidents recorded by the crime survey were reported, so 47 per cent went unreported. ...

489 **Leanne Wood (Plaid Cymru):** ... As many of us are acutely aware, the far right are emboldened in the present time. Although all minorities are at risk, there are certain groups of people who are particularly vulnerable from their attacks. Muslim women, and particularly women of a Muslim faith who choose to cover or wear a veil, and trans people, especially trans women, seem to me to be on the front line of the so-called culture wars. ...

491 The domino effect of this widespread hatred is clear, and rights thought to be well-enshrined are endangered; rights such as abortion rights, citizenship rights. It's critical that we recognise that hate crime against some of us is a hate crime against all of us; it cannot be tolerated at any cost. ...

504 **Jenny Rathbone (Labour):** ... there's no room for complacency in Wales. We know that the highest number of antisemitic searches on the internet was in Wales. It highlights that there's often a cross-over between those who are looking to confirm their antisemitic prejudice, along with their racist prejudice as well as misogyny, because it is a fact that Jewish female politicians have been far more bombarded by hate messages than Jewish male politicians. So, there's a rich cocktail of hatred that we need to be combating, and it's very important that we don't become paralysed by this hatred.

506 René Cassin was a French-Jewish lawyer, professor and judge, who co-drafted the universal declaration of human rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work. ...

508 His work inspired the creation of a UK Jewish organisation in his name, and I was delighted to read that next week, René Cassin is hosting a women's Seder to commemorate International Women's Day. One of the speakers is Laura Marks, a founder member of Nisa-Nashim, the Jewish Muslim women's network set up two years ago to combat ignorance and misconceptions about women in both communities. ...

510 ... we need to be constantly combating the fear that people feel when they are threatened, and we need to remember that Holocaust survivor Dr Martin Stern, who spoke at the Holocaust memorial event in Cardiff on 27 January, reminded us that it is simply not enough to commemorate the appalling crimes of the Nazis, but to reflect on the ordinariness of the people who did that, and the fact that there have been 50 Holocausts since the end of the second world war, including Rwanda and Srebrenica. There is no room for complacency. ...

518 **Jane Hutt:** ... Some of the key policy levers that relate to tackling hate crime aren't devolved, such as policing and justice ...

519 An example is the UK Government's places of worship protective security funding scheme. I've written to all Members about this. I'm aware that we haven't actually had that much of that Home Office money yet in Wales. We're working with faith communities to identify and address barriers, and we hope we'll see some successful applicants. ...

524 We, of course, the Welsh Government, have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism in full and without qualification,

and we do encourage community members to report any incidents. If anyone in the community witnesses or are made aware of suspicious or threatening behaviour or hate crime incidents, they must report them, contact the police or the national hate crime report and support centre, which is run by Victim Support. And I do encourage people to look at the 75 Memorial Flames project. Eight Welsh community groups have created pieces of artwork—and many of us joined in with this—to remember all those who lost their lives during the Holocaust. ...

526 The prevention of hate crime is a key goal for this Welsh Government, and it will remain a key goal as we seek to develop and deliver changes to our justice system to put right the problems identified by the Commission on Justice in Wales, and the Welsh Government's position is clear: we think justice should be devolved and we are pleased that the commission has stated this case so convincingly.

527 There's no room for complacency. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/6260#A56778>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

Roma Holocaust Memorial Day: Education

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [22050] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve teaching of the Roma Holocaust in schools.

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. The curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom to decide how to teach the subject and what resources to use to support an understanding of the history of the Holocaust and the experiences of the non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

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.

A wide array of resources are available to help teachers teach about the persecution by the Nazis of different groups of people, including Roma victims.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-27/22050/>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Schools

Alicia Kearns (Conservative) [19999] To ask the Secretary of State for International

Development, what progress her Department has made with the Georg Eckert Institute on the review of the textbooks included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum; and if she will make a statement.

James Cleverly: Following the UK's calls for international action, an EU sponsored independent review of Palestinian textbooks is currently underway. The EU has contracted the Georg Eckert Institute, a specialist textbook analysis centre, to lead this review.

To ensure the review could begin immediately on the signing of the contract, the UK commissioned the Georg Eckert Institute to produce an inception report to establish its methodology in advance.

We understand from the EU that an interim report covering grade 8 – 10 books will be completed in Spring 2020, with the full report covering all the books due later in the year. DFID is part of the steering committee for this review, and we will continue to engage with the EU to press for this timetable to be met.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/19999/>

Israeli Settlements: UN Resolutions

James Murray (Labour Co-op) [2006] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the Israeli Government (a) implements and (b) adheres to UN Security Council Resolution 2334.

James Cleverly: We have long supported balanced UN resolutions, including UN Security Council Resolution 2334 that addressed incitement and settlements. We do not hesitate to raise instances of incitement. We have a regular dialogue with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of each other. As I made clear in my statement on 24 February, the UK's position on Israeli settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law and damaging to renewed efforts to launch peace negotiations. I last raised settlements with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 26 February. We urge Israel to halt its settlement expansion immediately.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-13/2006/>

UN Resolution 2334, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/israeli-settlements-february-2020-uk-statement>

Hamas

Andrea Jenkyns (Conservative) [18733] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of recent reports of Hamas-led rocket attacks on Israel.

James Cleverly: We are concerned by the recent escalation in Gaza, including indiscriminate rocket fire which places civilians at risk. We call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their attacks against Israel. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are unacceptable and unjustifiable. The perpetual cycle of violence does not serve anyone's interests, and must end. We urge all parties to adhere to the recent ceasefire arrangement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-21/18733/>

Gaza: Israel

Carla Lockhart (DUP) [20007] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the security situation in that country after the rocket attacks on southern Israel from Gaza on 23 February 2020.

James Cleverly: I discussed the recent escalation in Gaza with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 26 February. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are unacceptable and unjustifiable. The perpetual cycle of violence does not serve anyone's interests, and must end. The UK fully supports Israel's right to self-defence and to defend its citizens from such acts of terror. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. We call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel and urge all parties to adhere to the ceasefire arrangement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/20007/>

Gaza

Jonathan Edwards (Plaid Cymru) [20441] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of recent reports of Israeli airstrikes in Gaza.

James Cleverly: We are concerned by the recent escalation in Gaza, including indiscriminate rocket fire which places civilians at risk. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are unacceptable and unjustifiable. The perpetual cycle of violence does not serve anyone's interests, and must end. Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties. We call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel. We urge all parties to adhere to the ceasefire arrangement.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-25/20441/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN expert “deeply troubled” by Israel’s new settlement building

An independent expert appointed by the Human Rights Council said Israel’s recent announcement that it planned to build more than 8,000 settlement housing units in the occupied Palestinian territory amounts to “a significant breach of international law that must be meaningfully opposed by the international community”.

“I am deeply troubled by this highly disturbing development,” said Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967. “This dramatic increase in new housing units in the illegal Israeli settlements not

only ensures that a two-state solution has become a vanishing mirage, but it also consolidates the territorial basis for Israel, the occupying power, to make a sovereign claim to annex the settlements.

“Annexation violates the Charter of the United Nations, and these trends on the ground will only worsen the human rights and humanitarian crisis in the conflict.”

Israel announced last Wednesday that it plans to build 3,500 housing units in the E1 area east of Jerusalem, which would link the city to the Israeli settlement of Ma’ale Adumim. Building settlements in the E1 area would effectively cut the territorial continuity between the northern and southern West Bank in two.

Israel also announced plans to build 3,000 housing units in the illegal Israeli settlement of Givat Hamatos in East Jerusalem. This would sever the remaining territorial continuity between Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem and Bethlehem. In addition, last Thursday, the Higher Planning Council of the Civil Administration approved 12 plans in 11 settlements, involving 1,739 housing units, most of which will be located deep in the West Bank.

The UN expert has previously [criticised](#) other plans to expand settlements and has [shared](#) these concerns with the Israeli Government.

“All Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory are illegal under international law,” the Special Rapporteur said. “The Security Council in December 2016 stated that they constitute a ‘flagrant violation under international law’. Building more settlement units not only makes the fading possibility of realizing Palestinian self-determination more remote than ever, but it also amounts to a purported war crime under the 1998 Rome Statute.”

The Special Rapporteur also criticised a recent meeting of the US-Israeli joint mapping committee, designed to determine which parts of the Palestinian West Bank will be formally annexed by Israel under the terms of the Trump plan, released in January 2020.

“The work of this mapping committee is entirely unlawful under our international rules-based order,” Lynk said. “Annexation has been outlawed by the international community since 1945 because it instigates political instability, social suffering and economic hardship. The United States Government’s participation in this mapping exercise violates its solemn obligations to uphold international law and to cooperate with other states to isolate perpetrators of illegal acts.”

The Special Rapporteur urged the international community to take meaningful steps to oppose the ongoing settlement expansion and the anticipatory steps towards annexation. “More declarations of regret and concern by countries and organizations with the power to make a difference in this perpetual occupation will not suffice. Criticism without consequences guarantees that settlement expansion and annexation will continue,” he said.

“I call upon the international community to review its extensive menu of sanctions and countermeasures to stem this march towards further illegality. Settlement products should not enter the international marketplace. Agreements, existing and proposed, with Israel should be reviewed. The current investigations at the International Criminal Court should be supported.

“There has to be a cost to the defiance of international law,” the Special Rapporteur said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25643&LangID=E>

United Nations

Keep Question of Palestine High on United Nations Agenda, Senior Malaysian Official Urges, as International Conference Concludes

... **Mr. Natsheh [Youth Against Settlements, Palestine]** ... described how Palestinians

face daily violence and human rights violations on the part of Israeli settlers in the West Bank, recalling the killing of 29 Palestinians by a settler who opened fire at the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in the city of Hebron 26 years ago. He went on to say that Israel's expansion of settlements prompted him to join the non-violent popular resistance against the occupation to make the world aware of the segregation in which Palestinians live. ... Having started a campaign to train Palestinians on how to document crimes committed by occupation forces and publish them in the media in order to the denial of violations by soldiers and settlers, he said his organization also teaches how to cultivate olive trees and repair houses. ...

Ms. Chai [United Kingdom-based long-term activist for Palestine] shared her experiences of the past 38 years, from being an orthopaedic surgeon at the Royal London Hospital in England to working with the Palestine Red Crescent Society as an orthopaedic surgeon to help Palestinians in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. ... Emphasizing that the "Deal of the Century" is about cancelling the refugee status of Palestinians, she said that she keeps hope alive by remembering children who lost their parents and homes making victory signs with their hands in front of their destroyed homes and decaying bodies. ... Stressing that just being a doctor was not enough, she explained that she realized her mission was to testify as a witness to brutality. ...

Mr. Akram ... said the division between the two Palestinian factions makes it difficult for civil society organizations to mobilize resources, emphasizing that restoring fundamental rights must be a priority before speaking about a political solution. ...

Ms. Qurie agreed that the internal Palestinian division affects the work of non-governmental organizations. For instance, many organizations have branches in both Gaza and the West Bank, but it is difficult to transfer funds between the two areas. ...

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York, emphasized that the priority goal is first to end the occupation, explaining that Palestinians cannot attain their rights under occupation. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/gapal1431.doc.htm>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UN Human Rights Council 43: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

We remain deeply concerned about global levels of intolerance, discrimination, and persecution of, and violence against, people because of their religion or belief, or for not having a faith. The UK has stepped up its focus on this issue over the last few years and it is a key UK Human Rights priority.

In September last year, the Prime Minister appointed Rehman Chisthi MP as his latest Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment to this agenda.

During the past 9 months, we have been working to implement the recommendations from an independent, global review into Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians. The report, and its recommendations, are centred around improving the lives of all those persecuted because of their faith or belief. 20 of the 22 recommendations apply to all faiths or beliefs.

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief must be defended, and we believe that working together is the best way to achieve real, positive impact in guaranteeing the rights of all faith or belief communities around the world. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-43-uk-statement-for-the-interactive-dialogue-with-the-special-rapporteur-on-freedom-of-religion-or-belief>

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>

Committee Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-03/debates/2599D6D6-26C3-49F6-AB22-6AC5657169F9/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-03/debates/2599D6D6-26C3-49F6-AB22-6AC5657169F9/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill(HL))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-03/debates/956F9015-34C3-4093-947F-01023B70B969/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-03-03/debates/956F9015-34C3-4093-947F-01023B70B969/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>

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>

Hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland: an independent review (closing date 31 March 2020)

<https://www.hatecrimereviewni.org.uk/sites/hcr/files/media-files/Consultation%20Paper%20Feb%202020.pdf>

Amendments to the organ donation regulations (Wales) (closing date 30 April 2020)

<https://gov.wales/amendments-organ-donation-regulations>

Regulating Independent Educational Institutions (closing date 8 May 2020)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/regulating-independent-education-institutions/>

TOP

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