



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Israel](#)

[Other Relevant Information](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Consultations](#)

[Back issues](#)

Home Affairs

House of Lords Written Answer

David Miller

Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated) [HL13646] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statements by Professor David Miller about Jewish students; and what discussions they have had with (1) the University of Bristol, and (2) the police, about the steps being taken to ensure the safety of such students.

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government abhors antisemitism in all its forms and has for several years pushed for greater action from higher education providers in addressing it. This has included encouraging them to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, in order to have universal clarity of what constitutes antisemitic behaviour.

The government expects universities and other higher education providers to comply with their legal duties on discrimination and harassment, as well as their legal duties to protect free speech. Universities must balance the exercise of their legal duties, including on a case-by-case basis.

We expect higher education providers to be at the forefront of tackling antisemitism, making sure that higher education is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

All higher education providers should discharge their responsibilities fully and have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, to investigate and swiftly address hate crime, including any antisemitic incidents that are reported. We expect higher education providers to have robust policies and procedures in place to address staff disciplinary issues.

All higher education providers have procedures for handling student complaints and, if students are unhappy with their experience, they should use the processes in place to complain formally to their provider outlining their concerns. Where a student complaint cannot be resolved through the institution's complaint processes, a student at a provider in England and Wales can ask for his or her complaint to be reviewed by an independent body, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Students also can and should inform the police if they believe

the law has been broken.

With regards to the case of Professor David Miller, universities are independent and autonomous organisations which are responsible for the management of their own affairs and for meeting their duties under the law. Accordingly, the government has not intervened directly in this case. It is the responsibility of the University of Bristol to determine whether or not Professor Miller's remarks constitute lawful free speech. In doing so, the government's view is that they may wish to consider, in particular, his remarks about current students at the University of Bristol. It is important to distinguish between lawful, if deeply offensive, views on the one hand, and unacceptable acts of abuse, intimidation, and violence on the other.

Regardless of whether or not it is found that Professor Miller's conduct constitutes lawful free speech, the government considers that the University of Bristol could do more to make its condemnation of that conduct clear to current and future students and to show its commitment to creating a welcoming environment for Jewish students. The government considers Professor Miller's views to be ill-founded and wholly reprehensible, and wholeheartedly rejects them.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-24/hl13646>

Welsh Parliament Oral Answers

Universities: Antisemitism

114 Darren Millar (Conservative): ... The Welsh Government and many public bodies across Wales have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, but it's of great regret, I think, that some Welsh universities are yet to adopt that definition. As you will be aware, the UK Government has actively encouraged universities in England to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and I think that it would be very good for the people of Wales to know whether the Welsh Government is taking some similar action to tackle the scourge of antisemitism in some parts of our higher education sector here in Wales. ...

116 Rebecca Evans (Minister for Finance and Trefnydd): ... Clearly, there's absolutely no place for antisemitism anywhere in Wales, and I'd be pleased to ask the Minister for Education to write to you on that specific issue that you raised, regarding the adoption of the IHRA definition. ...

123 Suzy Davies (Conservative): Can I just add my support to the request made by Darren Millar regarding a statement on antisemitism within our universities? ...

116 Rebecca Evans: I'll ensure that the correspondence to which I referred in my answer to Darren Millar is also sent to you as well. ...

128 Jenny Rathbone (Labour): Just in relation to the call by Darren Millar and Suzy Davies for a statement on how we combat antisemitism in our universities, could that statement clarify that, whether or not universities are signatories to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, all universities must abide by the Equality Act 2010, which, obviously, protects Jewish people as people of protected characteristics? ...

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/11185#C365891>

TOP

Westminster Hall Debate

UN Human Rights Council: UK Voting Record on Israel

col 186WH **Scott Benton (Conservative):** ... The landmark peace agreements signed between Israel and her Arab neighbours in recent months are an extremely welcome development after years of stagnation, but it is an unavoidable reality that the unrelenting attacks on Israel at the United Nations make regional peace harder to achieve.

It is no secret that the UN and its associated bodies have a long history of singling out Israel far more than any other nation in the world. Past UN Secretaries-General have publicly raised concerns about the UN's fixation with Israel, with Ban Ki-moon stating in 2016 that "decades of political manoeuvring have created a disproportionate number of resolutions, reports and committees against Israel."

He rightly said that this bias does not help the Palestinian issue but instead foils "the ability of the UN to fulfil its role effectively".

His predecessor, Kofi Annan, said that while Israel faces "intense scrutiny", "other situations fail to elicit the world's outrage and condemnations."

The current UN Secretary-General has said that Israel "needs to be treated as any other state".

col 187WH **Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... Does he agree that the targeted, sustained and passionate bias against Israel displayed at the UN is a stain on every bit of good that the UN seeks to do? Our Government and our Minister need to take firmer steps to highlight that the Israel-Palestine issue will never be resolved by continuing to peddle the false narrative perpetuated by the UN, by painting an awful picture of the victimisation of innocent Palestinians at the hands of so-called evil Israel. Will he join me in saying that this is simply false and needs to end now, if there is to be a lasting peace in the middle east that we can all subscribe to?

Scott Benton: ... I believe that the UK has a historic responsibility to help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to stand up for our friend, Israel, when it is singled out for such unfair criticism in international forums. The Foreign Secretary recently said that we have "stood up for Israel when it has faced bias, and frankly, politicised attacks in the UN and other forums." —[\[Official Report, 2 March 2021; Vol. 690, c. 111.\]](#)

Our voting pattern at the UN now needs to match these warm words. ...

Consider that in the 15 years since its inception, the Council has passed 171 condemnations, of which more than half have targeted Israel. It is simply unjustifiable that 90 condemnations have been passed against Israel, while a mere 10 have been adopted on the world's worst human rights abuser, Iran.

Astonishingly, no condemnations have been adopted on China, Russia, Pakistan, Venezuela or other serial human rights abusers. Instead, many of those serial violators are Council members, which of course makes a mockery of the UN's highest human rights body. ...

Permanent agenda item 7 is reserved for criticism of Israel, showing how deeply embedded this anti-Israel obsession has become. Motions adopted under item 7 have accused Israel of serious breaches of international law, while ignoring Palestinian rejectionism and terrorism. It is of course legitimate to highlight the plight of the Palestinian people, just as the national claims of other groups should also be given due attention. But when the blame is solely placed on Israel for the plight of the Palestinian people, with not even a superficial recognition of the numerous security challenges Israel faces, the failure of Palestinian leadership to prepare its people for a future peace agreement, and the countless peace deals rejected by the Palestinian leadership, it is clear that something has gone seriously wrong.

col 188WH There is no mention of Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which terrorise Israeli civilians with rocket fire. Those terror groups use Palestinian civilians as human shields, investing in weaponry rather than welfare. Just last month a Hamas-run court ruled that women required the explicit permission of a male guardian to travel. Where was the international condemnation?

The violations of Palestinian rights in Lebanon are also conveniently forgotten by the Human Rights Council and other UN bodies, despite hundreds of thousands of Palestinians being denied the most basic freedoms, including the right to work. At each and every session of the Council, the likes of the Palestinian Authority, Syria and North Korea accuse Israel of human rights abuses, while escaping scrutiny of their own violations. ...

It is worth reflecting that such disproportionate singling out of Israel is one of the clearest examples of contemporary antisemitism, according to the world-leading definition. Such blatant bias will not change unless it is tackled head-on and rooted out. The UK's decision in 2017 to put the Council on notice, stating that "If things do not change, in future we will adopt a policy of voting against all resolutions concerning Israel's conduct..." was a hugely welcome first step.

Our Prime Minister was right, during his time as Foreign Secretary several years ago, to describe the Council's "disproportionate" focus on Israel as "damaging to the cause of peace".

In 2019, the UK said that item 7 amounted to "systemic institutional bias" and voted against all item 7 resolutions. That was another welcome step, but when an anti-Israel resolution previously adopted under item 7 was proposed under item 2 in the same session, the UK abstained rather than voting against it.

Stephen Crabb (Conservative): ... Does he agree that the key issue right now ... is that the kind of biased text that has traditionally appeared under item 7, and which we as a Government have rightly committed to voting against every time, is now quietly making its way into another agenda item, sometimes with cosmetic changes, and when it appears there, we do not appear to be showing exactly the same level of commitment to voting against it? ...

col 189WH **Scott Benton:** ... As a direct result of growing international opposition to item 7, proponents of these one-sided motions have been working to move them into other agenda items ... In 2018, instead of challenging this procedural sleight of hand, we undermined our principled stance by abstaining. Surely, if the UK deems resolutions within item 7 to be biased, it is ultimately irrelevant where they end up on the agenda. Biased one-sided motions are biased one-sided motions, irrespective of the agenda item number attached to them. Can the Minister explain this step backwards from the previously stated pledge to vote against all anti-Israel resolutions? Will he confirm that at the current session of the Human Rights Council, with votes expected next week, the UK will call for a vote on item 7? He will know that if no country calls for a vote, the resolution passes uncontested by consensus. Given our principled and outspoken criticism of item 7, we cannot afford to rely on others.

Reports of some of the language that has been considered for inclusion in an item 2 resolution next week are deeply worrying, including language that we would have voted against had it appeared in item 7 resolutions previously. ... Does the Minister believe that a resolution that condemns violence, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, but does not even mention Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad, is justified and proportionate? Does he agree that there should never be any implied equivalence between Israel's defensive actions and indiscriminate attacks by terrorist groups?

The text also reportedly seeks to restrict arms sales to Israel, despite article 51 of the UN charter stating that countries have a right to defend themselves. I hope the Minister can reassure me that the UK will indeed vote against this harmful motion. ...

Another UN body known for its bias against Israel is the UN General Assembly. While the

likes of Iran, North Korea and Syria have only been condemned a handful of times, 112 resolutions condemning Israel have been adopted there since 2005. China has not been condemned once.

It is deeply worrying and regrettable that the UK voted for 12 out of 17 resolutions singling out Israel in December 2020, abstained on four and voted against only one. One of the resolutions we supported only used the term Haram al-Sharif to describe Jerusalem's Temple Mount—Judaism's holiest site—ignoring the Jewish connection to the site altogether.

The Abraham Accords present a momentous opportunity to reinvigorate the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians in order to achieve the two-state solution that we all hope to see. We simply must not allow this process to be derailed by allowing attacks on Israel at the UN to go completely unchallenged. ...

col 190WH The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): ... First, let me state on the record that the UK is a proud friend of Israel. ... the UK Government's position is that we are both happy and proud to stand up when we feel that Israel faces bias and unreasonable criticism from international institutions, or indeed from anywhere else. We agree with my hon. Friend that item 7 is an example of that bias. As he said, item 7 is unique; it is the only item on the council's agenda that singles out an individual country for scrutiny. For many of the reasons that he mentions, we feel that this is wrong; furthermore, we believe it hinders the work of the human rights agenda that the UN seeks to pursue and actually disincentivises full co-operation in pursuit of that agenda. Rather than encouraging Israel to engage with the mechanisms and expertise that the Human Rights Council has to offer, we believe that item 7 alienates Israel. ...

Item 7 damages the efforts to advance dialogue, increase stability, and build mutual trust and understanding between the Israeli and Palestinian people, and therefore damages the prospect of a sustainable, meaningful and peaceful two-state solution. That is why, at the 40th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2019, the UK adopted a principled approach in which we voted against all resolutions tabled under item 7.

Our vote sent a clear signal that the UK stands against the implicit supposition that Israel's conduct deserves a unique focus and greater scrutiny than that of any other country in the world. The UK will continue to push for the abolition of agenda item 7. Let me make it clear that we will continue to support the scrutiny of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the Human Rights Council, as long as that scrutiny is justified, fair and proportionate and is not proposed under agenda item 7, which is why, by definition, agenda item 7 should be abolished.

col 191WH ... the UK is happy to support the scrutiny of countries, including Israel, if it is done fairly and proportionately. That is why that when the Palestinian Authority made the decision in 2019 to move resolution items from item 7 to item 2—bearing in mind that item 2 looks at a range of actions of a range of states—the UK engaged with that resolution in good faith and closely with our international partners. We ultimately chose to abstain, in keeping with the position we took in 2018 when we abstained on a resolution to create a commission of inquiry into Gaza protests. ...

The Government will continue to vote against all resolutions under item 7. The Palestinian delegation has listened to our concerns and has moved some resolutions from item 7 to item 2, meaning there will now be two Palestinian-tabled resolutions under item 7, rather than the four that were under item 7 back in 2018. ...

col 192WH Stephen Crabb: ... I understand the argument that he is making about engaging with the text that has moved from a permanent item 7 agenda into item 2, but if we voted against text that singles out Israel for criticism without mentioning Hamas or Islamic Jihad when it appears in item 7, surely it is morally right and logically consistent to vote against it when it appears under item 2 or anywhere else. Will he commit to vote against text exactly like that when it appears under item 2? ...

James Cleverly: My right hon. Friend makes a very good point, which it is worth exploring. The UK Government have a principled opposition to agenda item 7 and have therefore voted against it because of its nature. We recognise that moving away from agenda item 7 is a positive step, so our commitment is to engage with the specific text. ...

It should be recognised that the close and strong bilateral relationship between the UK Government and Israel gives us the opportunity to speak out when we feel that Israel's actions warrant it, as we have done on our concerns about annexation and the demolition of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. However, it is also the Government's position that we will continue to support and advocate balanced resolutions in UN bodies. We are committed to making progress toward a two-state solution.

Resolutions that politicise UN bodies or that risk hardening the position of either side do little to advance peace or mutual understanding. We believe that negotiations will succeed only when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians and supported by the international community, and we will continue to work with international bodies, regional bodies, European partners and the United States, and of course with Israel and the Palestinian leadership, to advance dialogue, to encourage joint working and to find a permanent peaceful solution to this conflict, which has gone on for too long.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-17/debates/27F8C4FF-9F68-4A66-A296-28CCCC288286/UNHumanRightsCouncilUKVotingRecordOnIsrael>

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestine: Human Rights

Caroline Lucas (Green) [167180] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how the Government plans to vote at the upcoming 46th UN Human Rights Council on special agenda items motions concerning Palestine.

James Cleverly: The UK has stood up for Israel when it faces bias and unreasonable criticism, and has been clear that the existence of a dedicated agenda item ('Item 7') damages the prospect for a two-state solution and does little to advance dialogue, stability or mutual understanding. As such, at the 40th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2019 we moved to voting against all resolutions under Item 7. The 46th session of the Human Rights Council is currently ongoing. This Government will continue to vote against all Item 7 resolutions. Negotiations on the resolution tabled under Item 2, concerning the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are ongoing. We will decide how to vote based on the merits of the final text that is put before the Council.

However, the UN and its member states have every right to address issues of concern in a measured, balanced and proportionate way. We will continue to support scrutiny of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the Human Rights Council, so long as it is justified, proportionate, and not proposed under Item 7.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-11/167180>

Occupied Territories: Humanitarian Situation

John Howell (Conservative) [167177] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 162544 on Occupied Territories: Humanitarian Situation, if he will take diplomatic steps to seek a vote on Item 7 at sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Nigel Adams: The UK has stood up for Israel when it faces bias and unreasonable criticism, and has been clear that the existence of a dedicated agenda item in the

Human Rights Council ('Item 7') is damaging and does little to advance dialogue, stability or mutual understanding. As such, at the 40th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2019 we moved to voting against all resolutions under Item 7. However, the UN and its member states have every right to address issues of concern in a measured, balanced and proportionate way. We will continue to support scrutiny of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the Human Rights Council, so long as it is justified, proportionate, and not proposed under Item 7.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-11/167177>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-03/162544>

Jerusalem: Palestinians

Julie Elliott (Labour) [167201] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Israeli authorities on the demolition of 100 Palestinian homes in Silwan in East Jerusalem.

James Cleverly: The UK is supporting communities in Area C, whose homes have been demolished, to remain on their land. We continue to engage frequently with the Israeli authorities on issues affecting Palestinians, including demolitions. Our Ambassador in Tel Aviv has raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities, most recently in a meeting alongside like-minded partners on 25 February. I [Cleverly] called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised my concerns about the demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-11/167201>

The Minister's call to stop demolitions referred to above, can be read at

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1357723513940045824>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Israel: Palestinians

Neil Coyle (Labour) [164497] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 3 December 2020 to Question 124857, what representations he has made to the Israeli authorities on the demolition of the home of Hatem Abu Riyala, a disabled Palestinian man, in Issawiya in East Jerusalem for the fourth time on 1 March 2021.

Palestinians: Disability

Neil Coyle (Labour) [164498] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 3 December 2020 to Question 124857, what assessment his Department has made of the specific needs of Palestinians with disabilities whose homes are demolished by Israeli authorities.

James Cleverly: The UK is supporting communities in Area C, whose homes have been demolished, to remain on their land. When material assistance is provided, interventions are prioritised that address the needs of persons with disabilities, women and children including ensuring accessibility for people with mobility impairments. We continue to engage frequently with the Israelis on issues affecting Palestinians, including demolitions. Our Ambassador in Tel Aviv has raised the issue of ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities, most recently in a meeting

alongside like-minded partners on 25 February. I called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised my concerns about demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/164497>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/164498>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-03/124857>

House of Lords Written Answers

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Baroness Masham of Ilton (Crossbench) [HL12440] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel about updated research on the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and its safety recommendations for use by the public.

Lord Bethell: The Government has had no such specific discussions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-21/hl12440>

Occupied Territories: International Criminal Court

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (Liberal Democrat) [HL13795] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the decision by the Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court Prosecution request pursuant to article 19(3) for a ruling on the Court's territorial jurisdiction in Palestine ICC-01/18-143 on 5 February that the "Court's territorial jurisdiction in the Situation in Palestine extends to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem", what plans they have to reaffirm their support for the International Criminal Court and its independence.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We respect the independence of the ICC, and we expect it to exercise due prosecutorial and judicial discipline.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-02/hl13795>

The ruling referred to above can be read at

https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2021_01165.PDF

A partly dissenting decision from Judge Péter Kovács can be read at

https://www.icc-cpi.int/RelatedRecords/CR2021_01167.PDF

A partly separate decision from Judge Perrin de Brichambaut can be read at

https://www.icc-cpi.int/RelatedRecords/CR2021_01166.PDF

Jerusalem: Religious Buildings

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL13841] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of attacks on Christian and Muslim buildings in East Jerusalem; and what steps will they take to ensure that religious buildings are protected from such attacks.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The holy sites of Jerusalem hold particular significance for many groups around the globe, especially the three Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. We condemn all forms of violence, including against places of worship, and raise this with the relevant authorities when necessary. In our meetings with the Israeli authorities we regularly raise the need

to respect the status quo of the holy sites in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-02/hl13841>

Israeli Settlements: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL13842] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of attacks on Palestinian shepherds on their grazing land by armed Israeli settlers.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made representations on these reports, we condemn any incidence of violence by settlers against Palestinian shepherds. We welcome the efforts of the Israeli authorities to address settler violence, and urge them to thoroughly investigate every instance and bring those responsible to justice. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-02/hl13842>

Palestinians: Health Services

Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat) [HL13768] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 15 February (HL12870), what steps they have taken to ensure that Palestinians in territory occupied by Israel are able to access local healthcare facilities.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly engages with both the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) on the matter of access to healthcare and will also continue to raise timely and appropriate access to COVID-19 vaccines. We remain concerned about restrictions on movement and access in Gaza, including the impact on those needing to travel outside of Gaza for medical treatment.

UK aid also plays a role in delivering essential healthcare services to Palestinians. The UK provided £20 million in the financial year 2020/21 to support the PA in delivering essential healthcare services to Palestinians. This funding will help the PA support its health workers who have been on the frontline battling COVID-19 and who deliver life-saving medical services. We also provided £1.25m to the World Health Organization and UNICEF to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline public health personnel and scale up laboratory testing capacity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-01/hl13768>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-01/hl12870>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

2020 highlights: deepened inequalities related to COVID-19, BLM movement, growing religious intolerance, backlash against LGBTI people

The Council of Europe's anti-racism commission (ECRI) in its 2020 annual report ... identified four key challenges Europe was facing last year. These are: mitigating the disproportional impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on vulnerable groups, tackling deep-

rooted racism in public life, combating anti-Muslim racism and antisemitism in the face of terrorism, and addressing the backlash against the protection of human rights of LGBTI people. ...

The year 2020 was equally marked by a wave of world-wide protests against racism. The racial justice movement – Black Lives Matter – unfolded in the United States and resonated in Europe as well. “These events have revealed the extent to which racial profiling and racist police abuse continue to affect vulnerable groups, reinforcing in Europe concerns of what is increasingly referred to as institutional racism,” ECRI Chair suggested. Such racism is covert or overt, and resides in the policies, procedures, operations and cultures of public and private institutions; it erodes trust in society and in the law enforcement. Increasing diversity within the police and adequate training should be at the core of any government action aimed at tackling the problem. ...

At the same time, like in previous years, Jewish people in Europe have also continued to experience antisemitic hatred and violence, with particular threats posed by the Neo-Nazis and Islamists, and police response insufficient. Jewish religious places, such as synagogues and cemeteries, remain the main targets of vandalism. The criticism of the Israeli government policies is still used to stir up hatred against all Jewish people. “Jewish communities and institutions must not be made targets for opposition to Israeli government actions”, ECRI underlines. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/-/2020-highlights-deepened-inequalities-related-to-covid-19-blm-movement-growing-religious-intolerance-backlash-against-lgbti-people>

Annual Report on ECRI’s Activities covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020

<https://rm.coe.int/annual-report-on-ecri-s-activities-for-2020/1680a1cd59>

United Nations

Anti-Muslim Bigotry Accords with Other Emerging Trends, Secretary-General Notes, in Message for International Day to Combat Islamophobia

... Just days ago, a report to the Human Rights Council found that suspicion, discrimination and outright hatred towards Muslims has risen to “epidemic proportions”. The report detailed a host of examples: disproportionate restrictions on the ability of Muslims to manifest their beliefs; the securitization of religious communities; limits on access to citizenship; socioeconomic exclusion and widespread stigmatization of Muslim communities. ...

Anti-Muslim bigotry is sadly in line with other distressing trends we are seeing globally — a resurgence in ethno-nationalism, neo-Nazism, stigma and hate speech targeting vulnerable populations, including Muslims, Jews, some minority Christian communities, as well as others.

Let us also remember that many acts of intolerance and suspicion may not appear in official statistics — but those acts degrade people’s dignity and our common humanity. Discrimination diminishes us all. It prevents people — and societies — from achieving their full potential. ...

We must continue to push for policies that fully respect human rights and religious, cultural and unique human identity. As the Holy Qur’an reminds us: nations and tribes were created to know one another. Diversity is a richness, not a threat. ...

For all these reasons, fighting discrimination, racism and xenophobia is a priority for the United Nations. ...

Let us keep working together to advance the shared values of inclusion, tolerance and

mutual understanding — values that are at the heart of all major faiths and the United Nations Charter. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20630.doc.htm>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session46/Documents/A_HRC_46_30.docx

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2622>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2592>

**** Domestic Abuse Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2709>

Report Stage, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-03-17/debates/8FC29754-12FB-4EEC-BC70-678CA00B9DD3/DomesticAbuseBill>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>

Freedom of Speech (Universities) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2820>

Genocide Determination Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2621>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2608>

Marriage (Approved Organisations) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2537>

Marriage (Authorised Belief Organisations) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2795>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2584>

Scottish Parliament

**** Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill>

Stage 3 consideration of amendments

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13208&i=119605#ScotParlOR>

Stage 3 debate

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13208&i=119606#ScotParlOR>

Bill passed

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13208&i=119613&c=2331244#ScotParlOR>

Bill as passed

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill/stage-3/bill-as-passed.pdf>

Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

The future of the [Welsh Government] Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme
(closing date 30 March 2021)

<https://gov.wales/future-equality-and-inclusion-funding-programme>

Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS): Documenting the Lives of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in a Time of Crisis (closing date 11 May 2021)

bit.ly/evensurvey

Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19
(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

TOP

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