



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Commons Debate

Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill: Consideration of Bill as amended in the Public Bill Committee

Amendments under consideration

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0241/amend/public_day_rep_0222.pdf

col 210 Robert Jenrick (Conservative): I rise to speak to new clause 1 ... The new clause empowers the Secretary of State to issue guidance to authorities that administer public sector pensions schemes that they may not make investments that conflict with the United Kingdom's foreign and defence policy.

The new clause will resolve a long-standing issue ... whether the Secretary of State had, under their general power to issue guidance provided under the 2013 Act, the ability to guide those who administer pension schemes, particularly local government pension schemes, away from making investment decisions that were contrary to the United Kingdom's foreign and defence policy.

In 2020, the Supreme Court found by a split decision that the 2013 Act did not confer on the Secretary of State the necessary power to issue that guidance. The purpose of the new clause is to change that by explicitly laying out in law the Secretary of State's power to offer the guidance to administrators of pension schemes within the public sector, including the local government pension schemes, that investment decisions—by which I mean both investments into a position and divestments from a position—should not conflict with UK foreign and defence policy. ...

col 211 The argument that I wish to advance is that, for too long, we have seen public pension schemes pursue pseudo foreign policies. ...

All too often, the foreign policy of these public pension schemes is, I am afraid, exclusively focused on re-writing the UK's relationship with the world's only Jewish state, Israel. ...

col 212 The politicisation of public sector pension schemes ... is also to the detriment of the UK Government's relations with states abroad. Supreme Court Justices Lord Arden and Lord Sales established in their judgments that, because the schemes are managed

by councils that are part of the machinery of the state, receive taxpayer funding and are underwritten by state regulation outlined in the 2013 Act, they are liable to be identified with the British state. It is perfectly reasonable for an individual, an organisation or a nation abroad to look to these decisions and believe that they are the British state's intentions. It would be wrong that, owing to a minority of an extreme and well-organised clique, the UK Government's relationship with an ally has the potential to be undermined. ...

Andy Slaughter (Labour): The right hon. Gentleman ... will be aware that the Supreme Court, in making a judgment on the previous guidance, specifically said that it is not public money when it is employee or employer contributions ... Why does he think that his new clause is different from that? As he has gone on to the specifics, while I am not talking about BDS here, does he think there is a possibility that decisions on investments, say, in illegal settlements, which the Government advise against on economic grounds, could also be caught by his new clause?

Robert Jenrick: ... The Supreme Court raised two central arguments. One was whether the 2013 Act explicitly gave the Secretary of State the power to issue guidance with respect to investment decisions that conflicted with UK foreign and defence policy. The second point that some Supreme Court Justices raised was whether it was within the remit of the Secretary of State to speak to all public service pension schemes ...

col 213 This new clause explicitly provides the Secretary of State with the power to issue that guidance. ...

The new clause does nothing to stop private individuals making individual choices about their consumer habits. They remain at liberty to invest in or divest from, purchase from or boycott whichever companies they wish and for whatever reason they so choose. It does, however, make a distinction between the liberties of the private individual and the obligations of public bodies in receipt of public money ...

Christian Wakeford (Labour): ... One of the issues that is often feared, particularly by smaller Jewish communities, is that, rather than focusing on community cohesion, it is about bringing in foreign policy matters that often bring division, when they really want to be settled and to be able to progress and thrive within their local community. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the worst thing that could happen would be for the BDS movement to have a say within pension boards and pension funds, and that the best thing we could do is to accept this new clause and bring stability to Jewish communities across the country?

Robert Jenrick: ... Let me be clear: it should not be assumed that someone expressing their support for Palestine is antisemitic. Of course that is not the case. Many are genuinely moved by the cause of Palestinian statehood and are concerned at Israeli settlements and the actions of the Israeli Government. It is the policy of this Government to pursue a two-state solution. However, one does not have to look very hard to find a pattern of antisemitic behaviour in connection with campaigns promoting a boycott of Israel.

Successive studies have shown that the single best statistical predictor of anti-Jewish hostility is the amount of BDS activity, which comes as no surprise when one inspects the ethical inconsistency within the movement. Why does its concern for humanity, and for the welfare of Muslims in particular, expire at the Jordan river? The BDS movement is mute on neighbouring Jordan or Lebanon, where the Palestinian minority really are second-class citizens, and fell silent when thousands of Palestinians were killed at the hands of the murderous Assad regime.

There has been no call for a boycott of ICICI Bank in response to the egregious human rights abuses being committed against Muslims in India, or for divestments from Huawei following the verdict by an independent tribunal in London that a genocide is being committed against the Uyghur Muslims. That selective concern for humanity, and specifically for the welfare of Palestinians, poses some alarming questions. Why is Israel held to a higher standard than every other country in the world? ...

col 214 **Stephen Crabb (Conservative):** ... does he agree that it is a pernicious movement that singles out Israel time and again, to undermine the UK-Israel bilateral relationship and the very notion of the integrity of the Israeli Jewish state? I very much hope the Government will accept his new clause, but does he also accept that there is a need for a broader piece of work by the Government to address the BDS movement in its entirety when it comes to public sector choices?

Robert Jenrick: ... I agree that, were this new clause to pass, it should merely be the beginning of a wider effort to tackle BDS within the public sector and that we as the Government should make good on our manifesto commitment to a full BDS Bill, which I hope will be in the forthcoming Queen's Speech.

Andrew Percy (Conservative): ... The founder of the BDS movement is, of course, somebody who denies the right of Israel to exist—an antisemitic act in and of itself, given that Israel exists in international law. My right hon. Friend says that BDS is the biggest single indicator of antisemitism in this country; I take him back to last year, where we saw the highest number of incidents of antisemitism ever recorded in the UK. The biggest month for those was May last year, following the flare-up of the Israel-Gaza issues. That is a worrying trend, and one that is in part promoted by those who do exactly as he says: single out Israel for treatment they do not apply to other countries and support the BDS movement. That is why we must see this new clause passed and why the Government must move forward quickly on those other issues.

Robert Jenrick: ... He is absolutely right that we cannot stand idly by and see levels of antisemitism in this country continue to rise. We must take every opportunity to tackle the issue, and this is one way that we can do so—there are many others. None of us wants to see month after month pass with the Community Security Trust reporting ever higher numbers of egregious antisemitic attacks in this country.

I will make two final points. First, the BDS movement does absolutely nothing to advance the cause of peace. It is because it sees Israel as a colonial endeavour that it views the Israel-Palestine question as an insurmountable framework of conflict between the occupiers—in their eyes—the Israeli Jews, and the occupied—in their eyes—the Palestinian Muslims. That is why it apportions blame for the conflict entirely at Israel's door and denies the agency of other actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah, both of which we as a country have rightly chosen to proscribe. The sad reality is that many who practise BDS have no intention or interest in brokering a two-state solution.

col 215 **Scott Benton (Conservative):** ... Does he agree that the BDS movement has consistently opposed efforts from Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate a peaceful settlement? ... does he agree that it would be entirely inappropriate for a local authority to be judge and jury on such complex matters as where businesses should and should not invest in contested territory in the middle east?

Robert Jenrick: I agree strongly with both my hon. Friend's points. On his second point, the motion before Wirral Council is to ask its pensions officer to be the arbitrator of which business it should or should not be investing in within Israel and within settlements. Pity this poor individual, who, instead of going about his normal work as a respectable, hard-working local government officer, must suddenly spend hours, days, weeks or months attempting to understand the intricacies of the Israel-Palestine question and provide advice to a committee of local councillors. It is frankly an absurdity and an abuse of that individual. ...

BDS is ultimately yesterday's war. In the middle east today things are rapidly changing, and thank goodness for that. As a result of the Abraham accords, we see Arab nations—Gulf states—coming forward to recognise the state of Israel and work with it through science, technology, education and commerce. If Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt and other nations can do this—even those countries, such as Saudi Arabia, that have not explicitly recognised the state of Israel but are none the less working with it

on security matters and other issues—then we as a country should not be tolerating this kind of activity, and certainly not within the public sector. I urge hon. and right hon. Members across the House to support the new clause. I am grateful to the Government for indicating their support. I hope that in the Queen's Speech later in the spring we will see a wider BDS Bill that makes the UK one of the first countries in the world to really grapple with this issue.

col 217 **Peter Grant (SNP):** ... the SNP is minded to oppose [new clause 1]. ... I will not get into an argument now about the BDS movement. If the Government genuinely think that that organisation is a threat to peace and stability in the middle east or elsewhere, they could bring forward legislation to address it—they have had over two years of this Parliament to do so, and they still have time—but this is not the Bill for that. ...

If the new clause was intended purely to limit the activities of the BDS movement as a precursor to possible further restrictions later on, a very different new clause would have been tabled, and it might have been possible to word it in a way that we would not have significant problems with, but this new clause is far too wide. It could give the Secretary of State—any Secretary of State—the power to prevent any public pension fund from considering any kind of ethical, sustainability or other factors simply because they decide that they are contrary to UK foreign or defence policy.

col 218 I do not want to get into a big argument about the best way to ensure peace and stability in the middle east, and I note a number of the points made about the activities of BDS. I caution strongly against assuming that those characteristics apply to anything more than a tiny minority of the people in these islands who have genuine concerns about the illegal activities of the state of Israel, who genuinely believe that the United Kingdom needs first to make clear to the state of Israel that breaches of international law are not accepted and who believe that the British Government are not taking nearly enough steps to help Palestine get into a position where it can be recognised as a sovereign independent state. We should all be contributing to a two-state solution in the middle east. ...

col 219 It is as plain as the nose on my or anyone else's face that decisions on foreign policy can easily have a disproportionate impact on residents in some parts of these islands. Certainly, decisions on defence policy can have a significantly greater impact on some places than others. Remember that councils are directly democratically elected by local people to represent their views. Are we suggesting that they should not be allowed to debate matters of foreign policy simply because they do not have the right to take the final decision? ...

col 220 **Robert Jenrick:** ... He has been speaking for more than 15 minutes, and it is not clear to me whether the SNP is in favour or against BDS. It is important that he makes clear his position.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Rosie Winterton): ... I am keen that we do not just have a whole debate about BDS. ...

Peter Grant: I made the point much earlier that the amendment is not about BDS; BDS is not mentioned anywhere in it. ...

col 221 **John McDonnell (Labour):** ... I have argued against investments going into Colombia because of the murder of trade unionists, and I have also argued against investments going into Israel because I do believe—according to the Amnesty human rights report, and many Jewish institutions—that it is an apartheid state in the way it treats the Palestinians. ...

col 222 **Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op):** Is there not a problem with this, in that it leaves the Secretary of State to decide what the foreign or defence policy might be in an arbitrary way, rather than requiring pension funds to set an ethical policy in which they can say that they do not want to invest in countries where there are human rights abuses? ...

col 227 **Zarah Sultana (Labour):** ... The year was 1985. After a campaign lasting decades, 123 councils answered the call for solidarity with the South African anti-apartheid

movement and adopted policies opposing that injustice, including 39 councils that had divested from companies operating in South Africa and Namibia. While the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, was calling the African National Congress and Nelson Mandela terrorists and Young Conservatives were proudly wearing badges calling for him to be hanged, local authorities were on the right side of history, standing up to the horror of apartheid. ... Looking back, it is crystal clear who was on the right side of history and who was on the wrong side.

The new clause, in the name of the right hon. Member for Newark (Robert Jenrick), would ban local councils from taking such a stand. ...

col 228 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: The Israeli Labor and Meretz parties, our sister parties in Israel, have both written to the leaders of the Labour party and to all of us to say that they want divestment from companies that invest in the occupied territories. Israeli Members of Parliament are asking us to do this. New clause 1 goes against what they are asking us to do, does it not?

Zarah Sultana: Yes, it does, and I was proud to stand on a Labour manifesto committed to that policy, too. ...

col 232 The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Simon Clarke): ... My right hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Robert Jenrick) raised the important issue of guidance for the local government pension scheme which will, in effect, prevent bodies from engaging in boycotts, divestment and sanctions activities. In our manifesto, we committed ourselves to stopping public bodies running their own direct or indirect boycotts, and the wider BDS movement. ...

The BDS movement has nothing to do with pensions and everything to do with politics. It has had the chilling effect of legitimising antisemitism among the hard left, leading to kosher food being taken from supermarket shelves, Jewish films being censored, and the disgusting spectacle of Jewish university student societies being threatened with bans. ...

col 233 Paula Barker (Labour): ... Can he confirm that new clause 1 has nothing to do with BDS ...

Simon Clarke: On the contrary, it has everything to do with BDS, because, rather than promoting co-existence, debate and dialogue, it sows hatred and alienation. There is evidence of divisive BDS campaigns in public bodies, including too many Labour-led local authorities attempting to declare boycotts. Only this week we saw concerning, but sadly unsurprising, reports of a councillor in Wirral leading demands for Wirral's pension committee to pass a BDS motion. Even under the leadership of the new Leader of the Opposition, Labour politicians continue to endorse the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and call for boycotts of Israel.

Andrew Percy: I thank the Minister for confirming that the new clause does indeed have everything to do with BDS—as it should, because it is an important contribution to making Jewish people in this country feel safe. ... As the Minister says, we see Labour activists and Labour councillors endorsing what is a fundamentally antisemitic campaign. I thank him for his words today, and I hope the Government will accept the new clause, because it is so important to fighting the scourge of antisemitism.

Simon Clarke: ... I can confirm that we will be accepting the new clause. ...

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-22/debates/0C0D91C2-713E-4C58-8E8A-91FB91FB2386/PublicServicePensionsAndJudicialOfficesBill\(Lords\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-22/debates/0C0D91C2-713E-4C58-8E8A-91FB91FB2386/PublicServicePensionsAndJudicialOfficesBill(Lords))

House of Commons Point of Order

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Labour Co-op): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. I want to correct the record. Yesterday, I said that the Israeli Labor party and Meretz party—Labour's two

equal sister parties in Israel—had written to our current leadership in support of a boycott of goods and companies in the occupied territories. The letter, sent in July 2020, in fact came from the former Speaker of the Knesset, the former party chair, the former interim President of Israel, and other former and current MPs from the respective parties. Although that might be the view of the Meretz party—the larger of the two sister parties at the time—it has been expressed clearly to me that that was not the view of the Israeli Labor party, and it did not say that in the letter. I wish to correct that for the record clearly today.

Mr Speaker: I thank Lloyd Russell-Moyle for the correction.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2022-02-23/debates/29FAE504-E5B2-4BDB-A937-63A3006F2F0E/PointsOfOrder#contribution-2FB6C49C-5582-4B09-B329-B33E01B91B12>

Westminster Hall Debate

Muslim Community in Wales

col 151WH Ruth Jones (Labour): ... In 2019, the Muslim population in Wales was estimated to be 55,400. That compares with the 2011 census estimate of 45,950. Welsh Muslims accounted for roughly 1.8% of the population of Wales in 2019, compared with 1.5% in 2011. ... In terms of ethnicity, the 2011 census showed that the majority of Muslims in Wales were from families of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Arab origin; those three groups made up 62% of the Muslim population in Wales. ...

The data shows that 74% of Welsh Muslims reside in the three local authorities of Newport, Cardiff and Swansea. ...

col 152WH Jim Shannon (DUP): ... Does she agree that the key to true integration is the need for understanding—for communities to understand that strength is found in diversity—and that programmes ... must be funded in the long term to raise a generation that sees that it is only community, and not differences in lifestyle or opinions, that is important? ...

Ruth Jones: ... Muslims are ethnically diverse; the level of segregation is starting to fall as Muslims move to all parts of the country to start a life and raise a family; a third of British Muslims are aged under 15, which is a higher proportion than for the population as a whole; and levels of educational attainment and ability are growing. ...

Nearly half of Muslims live in the most deprived 10% of areas, while only 1.7% live in the wealthiest areas. Unemployment among Muslims is higher, health problems among elderly Muslims are more pronounced, and Muslim women face a challenge in balancing their work aspirations with the expectations of others. ...

col 153WH Islamophobia affects Muslims in Wales and across the United Kingdom, and we in this place have a particular and real responsibility to call it out. ...

It is vital that this House acknowledges that Islamophobia is on the rise in Britain. Year after year, British Muslims are victims of the highest proportion of religiously motivated hate crimes ...

col 154WH ... the Conservative party is the only major political party that continues to refuse to adopt the APPG's definition of Islamophobia. Even the Scottish Conservatives have done so. ...

The charity Tell MAMA, which does excellent work, reported a 40% increase in online Islamophobia last year after the far right peddled false narratives blaming British Muslims for spreading coronavirus. That is why this debate is so important; the abuse is not just verbal or physical but structural, and in many ways it is entrenched in our society. ...

We know that elected officials of the Muslim faith are targets for online bullying and Islamophobia. ...

col 157WH Afzal Khan (Labour): ... I also recognise the invaluable work and contribution of the Muslim community in Wales ... indeed, of all our faith communities across the UK. ...

col 158WH To my great sadness and regret, however, Islamophobia is rampant in our society and beyond. It manifests in violent hate crimes, targeted discrimination and lost opportunities for many Muslims. The Government's own figures reveal once again that Muslims have been victims of the highest proportion of all hate crimes committed in the last year in England and Wales. ...

The Labour party was one of the first to adopt the definition of Islamophobia by the APPG on British Muslims. That definition has the confidence of more than 800 organisations, and has also been adopted by the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, the Scottish National party, the Green party and even, as has been said, the Scottish Conservatives, as well as the Mayor of London, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, and hundreds of councils across the country. ...

All that stands in stark contrast to the Conservative party, which has repeatedly shown that it is in denial about Islamophobia through its failure to accept the definition proposed by the APPG; its failure to conduct a truly independent investigation; its failure to implement the recommendations of the Singh review; and its failure to appoint Government advisers for this issue. ... In light of the shocking accounts that the hon. Member for Wealden (Ms Ghani) gave of her own experience of Islamophobia within the Conservative party, those institutional failings are clear for all to see. When a Muslim woman raises a direct experience of Islamophobia and discrimination at the heart of Government and her party, those allegations must be treated with the utmost seriousness and investigated immediately. ...

col 159WH **Geraint Davies (Labour Co-op):** ... the pandemic disproportionately hit certain groups who perhaps had less money or more forward-facing jobs, or were more congested in accommodation. We therefore saw a differential outcome in terms of infections ... We also saw a differential impact in terms of educational opportunities, because people from Muslim backgrounds often may not have English as a first language: there is a digital divide there. ... It should be said that the Muslim community do better than the average in terms of educational outcomes, both in higher and lower education, but they start from a position of less economic strength. ...

I chair the all-party parliamentary group on speech and language difficulties, which obviously looks at all groups, and we found that people with difficulties with speech and language—those from poorer backgrounds in particular but also those who have English as a second language—have differentially suffered from the lockdowns. There needs to be focused support on catch-up in that respect. ...

col 160WH I have found, from engagement with the programme with Muslim imams and others, that its intrinsic problem is that there is a preconception in Prevent that if someone has too much Islam—like drinking and so on—they become too Islamic and then they become a fundamentalist. That is not the truth. The truth is that people who become fundamentalists and ultimately cause damage in various ways do it through a corruption of the Scriptures of Islam. ...

It is not about saying to people, "You've got too much Islam." It is about having clerics and imams engaging with and talking to people who may, in the extreme, have adopted the corruption of Islam, such as Isis, and say, as has just been pointed out, "Actually, Islam is about peace, equality, fairness and living together in harmony." ...

col 164WH **Gerald Jones (Labour):** ... Islam is the largest non-Christian faith in Wales. Our Welsh-Muslim heritage is rich and vast, with the earliest recorded history dating all the way back to the early 12th century. The first mosque in Wales was built in our capital in 1947, and Wales now proudly houses 40 mosques, with 18 in Cardiff alone ...

col 166WH I want to mention my constituency, which once had the largest Jewish community in the UK. The Foundation for Jewish Heritage has been working to save a historic grade II-listed former synagogue in Merthyr Tydfil, which has lain empty since 2006 and become dilapidated. Its vision is to turn it into the Welsh Jewish heritage centre and a

cultural venue. That work is progressing well and represents a huge opportunity to celebrate the history of the Jewish community in Merthyr Tydfil and across Wales. ...

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (David TC Davies): ... thanks to, and support for, the Muslim community in Wales, because they really are a very important part of our culture. Islam is the second largest non-Christian faith in Wales, with approximately 46,000 adherents, according to the census data from 2011. As we have already heard, the first purpose-built mosque in Wales was constructed in Cardiff in 1947 and I believe that there are now over 40 mosques in Wales. ...

col 167WH I am also proud of the magnificent work being done by my colleagues in the Senedd to combat Islamophobia. ...

It is very important that we do not just say the right words, which we can all do very easily, but demonstrate our commitment to tackling racism and Islamophobia by making sure that we reach out to all communities and offer all communities the same opportunities. Britain has a proud tradition of religious tolerance within the law and the Government are committed to creating a strong and integrated society in which hatred and prejudice are not tolerated, and within which all people are free to express their religious identity without fearing harassment or crime because of it. ...

col 168WH The UK Government are committed to protecting freedom of religion and belief. Freedom of religion and the ability of all people to worship where and how they wish—or not to worship at all—is part of what makes Britain the vibrant and resilient country it is today.

A number of Members have asked about the definition of Islamophobia. I think the law needs to be used to crack down on anyone who is abusing people. I have read through the definition of Islamophobia in question, and the problem is that although no one would disagree with parts of it, I fear that if it were fully implemented, other parts of it could be used to stop people having historical debates, or other kinds of debates. A point in the definition states that nobody should be able to say that Islam was spread at the point of a sword. Clearly, it was not, but some historians would say that it could be argued that Christianity was spread at the point of a sword during the crusades. I am not saying that it was, or that it was not—I am not a historian—but historians might want to make that argument in a reasonable way.

col 169WH There is also a point about denying the right of self-determination to Palestine and Kashmir. Personally, I hope that we see a Palestinian state at some point; I know less about Kashmir. The point is that there is a debate to be had about those matters. What amounts to a law on Islamophobia should be there to protect Muslims from any kind of abuse or stereotyping, not to stop people having a debate about the rights and wrongs of foreign policy in Palestine and elsewhere. ...

We already have laws in place to protect people from discrimination or abuse, but people are breaking the law. That does not necessarily mean that the law is wrong or needs to be changed. Perhaps it needs to be enforced more, or perhaps the penalties need to be looked at. We need to be careful about any legislation that will have an impact on freedom of speech. I do not think that we can get to a point of equality and tolerance simply by saying to people that they are not allowed to express a view about something, be it be Palestine, Kashmir, the history of the crusades or whatever. Those are all things that people should be able to discuss. ...

col 170WH All of us, especially those of us in Government, must say that we will never tolerate anti-Muslim hatred in any form, and will seek to stamp it out wherever it occurs.

We have supported Tell MAMA with just over £4 million between 2016 and 2022 to monitor and combat anti-Muslim hatred. We have a proud tradition of religious tolerance in the law, and we have committed to creating a strong and integrated society in which prejudice is not tolerated. People must always be free to express their religious identity and to live without fear of harassment and crime because of it. We launched the places of worship scheme, which is designed to reduce the risk and impact of hate crime at places of worship

and associated faith community centres, and we have provided funding for protective security measures, such as CCTV, fencing and intruder alarms, to places of worship and associated faith community centres that are vulnerable to hate crime. Some 241 grants worth £5 million have been awarded to places of worship across England and Wales, 84 of which were awarded to mosques. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-23/debates/06D8987B-4B0D-4790-A06A-E38A689D124C/MuslimCommunityInWales>

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 31st December 2021

https://www.psnipolice.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/2021-22/q3/hate-motivations_bulletin-dec-21.pdf

TOP

Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Lord Vinson (Conservative) [HL6158] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reconsider their decision to grant planning permission for the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens; and what assessment they made of (1) the appropriateness of this location for such a museum, and (2) the importance of using the area around Parliament to tell the story of democracy rather than totalitarianism.

Museums and Galleries: Victoria Tower Gardens

Lord Vinson (Conservative) [HL6159] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require as a condition of funding that the focus of the proposed museum to be built in Victoria Tower Gardens be broadened to include all acts of persecution and genocide by totalitarian regimes, such as those that took place in Russia and China under communist regimes in the 20th century.

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government is fully committed to the construction of the new national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre at Victoria Tower Gardens. The new Holocaust Memorial will be the national focal point to honour the 6 million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust, and other victims of Nazi persecution, including Roma, gay and disabled people. The co-located Learning Centre will also focus on subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-09/hl6158>
and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-09/hl6159>

History: Education

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench) [HL6110] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to adopt the Council of Europe's recommendation to "include the history of Roma and Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials", published in their list of recommendations on 1 July 2020; and what plans they have to make the teaching

mandatory and educate those unaware of the genocide of the Roma population in the Holocaust.

Baroness Barran: The history curriculum gives teachers and schools the freedom to use specific examples from history to teach pupils about the history of Britain and the wider world.

Gypsy, Roma and Travellers' history can already be taught as part of schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum. Resources are available from experts in the communities themselves and bodies such as the Historical Association.

As part of Holocaust education, which is the only compulsory topic in the history curriculum at key stage 3, a wide array of resources are available to help teachers explain the persecution by the Nazis of different groups of people. The Holocaust Educational Trust's Lessons from Auschwitz programme and the knowledge and training provided by University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education include information and resources to support an understanding of the Holocaust and the Nazis' persecution of other non-Jewish groups, including the genocide of the Roma.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-09/hl6110>

The recommendations referred to above can be read at

https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016809ee48c

TOP

Israel

See also the House of Commons debate on the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill, and associated Point of Order, included in the Home Affairs section above

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Bedouin

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL6083] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they (1) have had, and (2) intend to have, with the government of Israel regarding the displacement of Bedouins from Negev land.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We continue to follow the debate around the issue of unresolved Bedouin land claims, unrecognised Bedouin villages in the Negev and lack of basic services. We continue to encourage the Israeli authorities and Bedouin communities to engage in dialogue to agree a satisfactory solution to the issue, respecting the rights of the people affected.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-08/hl6083>

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL6129] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the booklet by the Balfour Project Israel/Palestine: in search of the rule of law, published in May 2021; and what assessment they have made of the content of that booklet in helping them develop their policy for that region.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-09/hl6129>

The booklet referred to above can be read at

<https://balfourproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Israel-Palestine-Rule-of-Law-Essays-Booklet-Balfour-Project.pdf>

Middle East: Christianity

Lord Patten (Conservative) [HL6135] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current threats, if any, to the Christian presence in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. The UK condemns all attacks on the right to freedom of religion or belief. Israel is a thriving democracy, and has made clear its commitment to freedom of religion. We encourage the Israeli Government to do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all enshrined in its laws. The UK regularly engages with Christian leaders in Israel and OPTs and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-09/hl6135>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Crucial that all parties avoid exacerbating tensions in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Statement by Fergus Eckersley, UK Political Coordinator at the UN, at the Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

... let me start by welcoming Israeli Prime Minister Bennett's recent visit to Bahrain. ... The UK actively supports the pursuit of regional stability through normalised relations. We are committed to ensuring that normalisation is an enduring success, and we will continue to support efforts that bring us closer to this goal.

The UK is however concerned by the negative trends on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including an increasing level of violence and incitement to violence. The UK condemns the firing of missiles by Palestinian militants in Gaza at the start of February. We are resolute in our commitment to Israeli security. We continue to call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their inflammatory action against Israel.

... violence in the West Bank, including settler attacks against Palestinian people and property, is rising. It is the Government of Israel's responsibility to provide protection to Palestinian civilians, to ensure all such incidents are thoroughly investigated, and to bring those responsible to justice. ...

We have witnessed tensions in Sheikh Jarrah, where scheduled evictions have led to violent clashes in the neighbourhood. We call once again for the halting of forced evictions and demolitions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Such practices fuel tensions on the ground. And we urge a permanent end to settlement activity, which threatens the two-state solution. The UK opposes the authorisation to legalise the outpost Evyatar in the West Bank. We recall that Evyatar has been a source of instability since May, and that such outposts are illegal under Israeli and International Humanitarian Law.

... the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis is worsening. Rapid action is needed to improve the situation, and we continue to call on the PA to implement necessary reforms. The UK wants to see continued cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, including on economic initiatives, to help boost the Palestinian economy and improve the lives of all in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. ...

Finally, Mr President, as we approach a convergence of Muslim, Jewish and Christian religious holidays in April, it is crucial that all parties commit to respect the historic Status

Quo and take steps to avoid exacerbating tensions, in order to prevent escalation.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/crucial-that-all-parties-avoid-exacerbating-tensions-in-israel-and-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Updated Guidance: Overseas business risk: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-palestinian-territories/overseas-business-risk-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

United Nations

Security Council Delegates Urge Israel to End Evictions of Palestinians, as Chief Mediator Calls for Political Leadership, ‘Firm’ Actions That Enable Dialogue

... **Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process**, said daily violence continued throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory ... In the occupied West Bank, six Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israel’s security forces during demonstrations, clashes, search-and-arrest operations, attacks and alleged attacks against Israelis, and other incidents, and 205 Palestinians, including 25 children, were injured. Israeli settlers or other civilians perpetrated 55 attacks against Palestinians, resulting in 18 injuries and damage to Palestinian property. In all, nine Israeli civilians, including at least one woman and two children, and eight Israeli security personnel were injured by Palestinians in clashes, shooting, stabbing and ramming attacks, the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails, attacks and alleged attacks against Palestinians, and other incidents. In total, Palestinians perpetrated 108 attacks against Israeli civilians resulting in injuries and damage to Israeli property.

Turning to settlement activity, he reported that on 24 January, the Jerusalem District Planning Committee advanced plans for some 400 new housing units in place of an existing 80 units in the settlement of Gilo in occupied East Jerusalem. All settlements are illegal under international law and remain a substantial obstacle to peace, he emphasized ... demolitions were carried out due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. He also expressed concern about the potential eviction of many Palestinian families from homes they have lived in for decades in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in occupied East Jerusalem ...

On the Gaza Strip, he said the further easing of access restrictions on materials into Gaza remains a priority. ...

He called for a package of incremental — but significant and durable — steps that reflect a more coherent strategy to strengthen the Palestinian Authority and chart the way towards a two-State reality. ...

Elsewhere in the region, he said that while the ceasefire between Israel and Syria has been generally maintained ...

Richard M. Mills Jr. (United States) welcomed recent steps taken to widen the circle of peace, and build on the Abraham Accords, including the recent encouraging visit to Bahrain by Israel’s Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and the visit of the Emirati Federal National Council to the Knesset. While such good faith engagement can build a path towards security, the situation on the ground in Gaza and elsewhere remains fragile, he said, expressing concern about the violence in Sheikh Jarrah and beyond. All parties must refrain from unilateral actions that undercut prospects for a two-State solution, and all perpetrators must be held accountable. Turning to the humanitarian situation in Gaza, where the need for relief, reconstruction and recovery is acute, he expressed support for regular access for life-saving aid, in which civil society organizations play an important role. ...

Sheraz Gasri (France) stressed that the Council is responsible for preserving the prospect of peace for the Middle East, which requires an end to unilateral actions, such as the eviction of Palestinian families, particularly in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. ... France, with its European partners, will continue to support Palestinian civil society and work to consolidate the rule of law. She voiced particular concern about Israel's designation of six Palestinian non-governmental organizations as terrorist groups, emphasizing that France will continue to provide them with support. ...

Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland) expressed a shock at the killing of a Palestinian teenager by live ammunition on 13 February, noting that it sadly is not an isolated case. She also drew attention to the killing of a 14-year-old boy on 22 February south of Bethlehem and called on Israel to release his body to his family without delay. Israel, as the occupying Power, is responsible to ensure that all incidents of disproportionate use of force are thoroughly investigated, and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. She expressed concern at the disparity in conviction rates between Israeli settlers and Palestinians who have committed acts of violence ...

Fergus Eckersley (United Kingdom) ... [expressed] support for the pursuit of regional stability through normalized relations. Condemning the firing of missiles by Palestinian militants in Gaza in February, he called on Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their inflammatory actions against Israel. ... he called for an end to forced evictions and demolitions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Such practices fuel tensions on the ground, he warned, calling for a permanent end to settlement activity ... [\[see above to read this speech in greater detail\]](#)

Dmitry A. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) said the stagnation and de facto deadlock in resolving the issue have led to a spike in violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, citing the settlement activities, forced evictions, home demolitions, confiscation of land and changing of the status quo of the Aqsa Mosque compound. He expressed concern about the sharp rise in attacks on civilians, noting that the high-profile eviction in Sheikh Jarrah in January led to a wave of protests. He also expressed concern about Tel Aviv's plan to expand settlement activities in the Golan Heights, adding that the Russian Federation does not recognize Israel's sovereignty over that area, which forms an integral part of Syria. ...

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, wearing a mask printed with phrase "End Apartheid", described how the rights of Palestinians have been denied for 75 years, one generation after another, by Israel. Jewish people can return to their land, but Palestinians are uprooted from their homes, displaced and unable to return. "This is apartheid," he said, pointing out that Israelis are entitled to reclaim land, but Palestinians are not. While Israelis have the right to self-determination, they deny that right of Palestinians. Israel also applies different laws to their citizens and Palestinians, he said, citing further examples of "settler colonialism" and apartheid. Palestinians are confined to only 13 per cent of total land in Bethlehem. They see their houses demolished and Israeli settlements expand. Israel builds "national parks" to seize land from Palestinians, while in Gaza, 2 million Palestinians have faced 15 years of blockade.

While Israel proclaims the right to security, it denies that very right of Palestinians, he continued. Israel's authorities are withholding hundreds of bodies of killed Palestinians and have designated human rights defenders in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as terrorists, while they commit terrorist acts. They arrested countless Palestinians "for who they are, not for what they did", he said, whereas if the occupying Power commits crimes, it is found innocent. Apartheid is real. Everyone was against apartheid once it was defeated in South Africa. But history will remember that Israel was the ally of South Africa's apartheid regime. Stressing the need for support from the United Nations, he appealed to Council members to translate words into action in efforts to end Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid.

Gilad Menashe Erdan (Israel), describing the final moments of an Israeli child who was huddled in a room during a Hamas rocket attack, during which he was killed by a stray

piece of shrapnel, stated that the Council has failed to recognize Hamas as a terror organization despite its deliberate targeting of civilians “to advance the destruction of the State of Israel”. Despite such acts, he stressed, the “United Nations continues to do what it does best: demonize the only vibrant democracy in the Middle East, the State of Israel.” Noting that the Human Rights Council established an impartial Commission of Inquiry into the larger context of the incident, surrounding the conflict in Gaza last May, he expressed doubt that such a body can be impartial, as it would defeat the purpose of delegitimizing Israel, which he said is “the most discriminated State in the United Nations”. Israel, therefore, refuses to cooperate with the “distorted investigations” of an “overbudgeted commission”, he said, noting that its budget was double those of investigations into “the worst human rights violators in the world, Syria and Venezuela”. He went on to add that “so-called human rights organizations” like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are waging “a jihad war” against Israel, tarring it with heinous and unfounded accusations — a country where Arab doctors and ministers serve alongside their Jewish counterparts, and where, just this week, a Muslim judge was elected to Israel’s Supreme Court. He said such “delusional reports” ignore these facts, instead echoing the “narrative of lies promoted by terror organizations and the corrupt Palestinian Authority”. While 2 million Arabs are free citizens in Israel, Israeli drivers going into places like Nablus are lynched by “bloodthirsty Palestinian mobs”, he said, calling such incidents “worthy of human rights investigations”. Stating that 500 attacks have been carried out on Israeli citizens over the past two months, and are not the focus of today’s debate, he warned that Iran is the real source of terror and chaos in the Middle East.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14802.doc.htm>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

European Court of Human Rights

Criminal conviction of Alain Soral for racial insults and calling into question crimes against humanity was not incompatible with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights

In its decision in the case of Bonnet v. France (application no. 35364/19) the European Court of Human Rights has unanimously declared the application inadmissible as manifestly ill-founded.

The case concerned the criminal conviction of the applicant Alain Bonnet, known as Alain Soral, by the French courts for the offence of proffering a public insult of a racial nature against an individual or group on account of their origin or of belonging to a given ethnicity, nation, race or religion, and for the offence of questioning the existence of crimes against humanity. Before the Court he had complained of a violation of his freedom of expression protected by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

This conviction followed the publication, on the website “Equality and Reconciliation”, of a page headed “Chutzpah Hebdo”, a parody of the front page of the weekly Charlie Hebdo, containing the caption “historians all at sea” and a drawing representing the face of Charlie Chaplin in front of a Star of David asking the question “Shoah where are you?”, the answer being given in a number of speech bubbles, “here”, “over here” and “here too”, placed next to drawings depicting soap, a lampshade, a shoe without laces and a wig.

The Court took the view that the domestic courts had provided relevant and sufficient reasons for their finding that the various elements of the offending cartoon directly targeted

the Jewish Community. The cartoon and the message it conveyed could not be regarded as contributing to any debate in the public interest and fell within a category which was afforded reduced protection under Article 10 of the Convention.

As to the context, the Court noted that the French authorities had already been called upon to respond to remarks or speech calling into question or denying the existence of the Holocaust, which was a clearly established historical event.

As to the underlying factors, namely the nature, medium and context of the offending cartoon, the domestic courts had examined the case in detail and had weighed in the balance the various interests at stake: the applicant's right to freedom of expression, on the one hand, and the protection of the rights of others, on the other, on the basis of sufficient and relevant reasons.

The Court lastly noted that while a prison sentence could have been handed down, the applicant had been sentenced on appeal to pay 10,000 euros, and that while this was a significant amount it was less than that imposed at first instance.

Even supposing that Article 10 of the Convention was applicable, the Court found that the interference with the applicant's freedom of expression had been necessary in a democratic society and rejected the complaint as manifestly ill-founded. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://tinyurl.com/m3e2dbuj>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

**** Charities Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Third Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-22/debates/C19610B4-11EB-45A1-A144-08A37B85F33D/CharitiesBill\(Lords\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-22/debates/C19610B4-11EB-45A1-A144-08A37B85F33D/CharitiesBill(Lords))

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2025

(closing date 25 February 2022)

<https://www.equalityni.org/CorporatePlanConsultation#gsc.tab=0>

Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights (closing date 8 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>

Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland (closing date 28 March 2022)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-hate-crime-legislation-northern-ireland>

Trade with Israel (closing date 30 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/trade-with-israel-call-for-input>

CPS: Public interest guidance for suicide pact and 'mercy killing' type cases

(closing date 9 April 2022)

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/consultation-public-interest-guidance-suicide-pact-and-mercy-killing-type-cases-0>

TOP