



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 Oral Answers

Equal Marriage: Church of England

Ben Bradshaw (Labour): To ask the Second Church Estates Commissioner if he will make a statement on the outcome of the meeting of Church of England bishops on equal marriage in the Church of England.

The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Andrew Selous): ... Last Friday, the bishops of the Church of England published a pastoral letter and draft resources that will enable same-sex couples to come to a Church of England church to give thanks for their civil marriage or civil partnership, and to have a service in which there would be prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and blessing for the couple. The bishops also apologised for the rejection, exclusion and hostility that LGBTQI+ people have faced in some of our churches. The bishops are united in condemning homophobia, and urged churches to welcome same-sex couples “unreservedly and joyfully”. I am pleased to speak for a Church that has the humility to apologise and admit when it has behaved badly.

The bishops recognise that for some—including many in the Chamber today—these proposals do not go far enough, and that for others they will have gone too far. In order to change canon law on the doctrine of holy matrimony, there has to be a two-thirds majority in the House of Bishops, the House of Clergy and the House of Laity of the General Synod, which is itself a devolved body of this Parliament, and the vast majority of whose members are elected. There is not currently a two-thirds majority in the General Synod to change canon law on the doctrine of holy matrimony. Should the General Synod take a different view at some point in the future, it will bring forward legislation to this Parliament in the usual way, in the form of Church Measures. Parliament would not need to initiate legislation to change the Church’s practice on marriage.

It is also important to remember that this House approved measures in the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 to ensure that conscience and freedom of religion

were protected for all faiths, including the Church of England. Freedom of religion and belief must apply here in the United Kingdom as well as around the world. We do not want to be in a position where churches are forced to follow the directives of Government or Parliament on matters of doctrine. The General Synod will consider these proposals next month, from 6 to 9 February, after which the bishops will reflect on the views expressed before commending the prayers of love and faith and agreeing to new pastoral guidance. The Church will also engage further in the areas of singleness, friendship, community and household, and will offer resources to affirm covenanted companionship or friendship, where two people make a commitment to a deep and lasting friendship, which could be in a non-sexual relationship.

I ask the House to understand that different views on these matters are held with great integrity and that, as a Church, it is welcome that we are in a position where many can say, "I totally disagree with you and I love you dearly as you are my sister or brother in Christ."

That is a model we should try to emulate in our Parliament. Our proposals will allow clergy and laity to follow their consciences before God, in their understanding of holy scripture as to whether they use the prayers provided.

Ben Bradshaw: ... Will he explain to Parliament how continuing to discriminate against lesbian and gay Anglicans in England is compatible with the unique duty of the established Church to serve everyone? How sustainable is it when gay Anglicans in Scotland—and soon in Wales—may marry in church, but our constituents in England may not? What consideration was given to the suggestion by his predecessor, Sir Tony Baldry, that those parishes that wish to conduct same-sex weddings should be able to do so but no parish should be compelled to do so, and why was that suggestion rejected?

How does the bishops' statement sit with the Church's mission to appeal more to minorities and young people, given that most young people find the position of the Church incomprehensible? How meaningful is an apology for historical homophobia and discrimination when that discrimination continues? Will the hon. Gentleman explain the status of these prayers for blessing being proposed? As I understand it, they will bless the individuals but not their relationship—why not?

What will happen to clergy in same-sex relationships, because that is not at all clear from the bishops' statement? What would be the consequences for a gay Anglican priest married in Scotland who then applied for a job in England? What about the celibacy rule as it affects the clergy? There is nothing about the physical expression of love or intimacy in this statement. What consideration has been given to potential complexities involving the monarch, as head of the Church of England, when teaching and practice varies across the UK and Church rules in England diverge from the law.

Finally, what can the hon. Gentleman say to reassure Parliament that the bishops are not allowing policy to be dictated by a minority of very vocal Anglicans in England and in some overseas provinces, while neglecting their primary duty to serve all of God's people in England?

Andrew Selous: ... It is the case that there has been a distinction in civil law and Church law about marriage for some time, so that is nothing new.

With regard to the different constituent parts of the United Kingdom, the right hon. Gentleman is correct that in the Episcopal Church in Scotland it is possible for same-sex couples to be married. The Church of England is now moving to the same position as the Church in Wales, in offering blessings. My understanding is that the Church of Ireland does not actually allow either of those two possibilities. ...

The bishops will also be getting together in a smaller group to bring forward new pastoral guidance to replace the old "Issues in Human Sexuality", which is now about 30 years out of date. I understand that that work will happen at pace. ...

Peter Bottomley (Conservative): ... this House will not put up with being held up by one

third of one part of the General Synod ...

Members may wish to look at the Library briefing from 11 August 2022 to see that the enabling Act of 1919, which established a General Synod as a way to stop Bills having to go through all the formal stages in the House of Commons, can be amended and that some recent legislation wrongly gave permission for flying bishops and people under them to refuse to recognise women ordained in the Church of England.

... the Church of England needs to wake up. ... Does it want to solve [this dilemma], or will it leave it to us to do that for it? ...

Andrew Selous: ... Today I commit to the Father of the House, and to all right hon. and hon. Members here, to feed back to the General Synod fully and frankly not only the views of the House, as have been set out here, but the strength of feeling on these issues. ...

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... Does he not acknowledge that protection for those who hold biblical beliefs regarding the definition of marriage is enshrined in legislation, and in particular that there would never be a case where Government instructed the Church on what to believe or how to express those beliefs unless they contravened the law? That being an absolute fact, does he agree that how the Church of England approaches marriage and blessings is a matter entirely for it and not for legislators in this place?

Andrew Selous: As I said in my opening statement, there is a range of views within the Church. We have seen just now that there is clearly a range of views within this House. ... There will be very many who rejoice at what the Church did last week and who will be providing these prayers, but there will be some ... who will not feel able in their conscience and understanding of Holy Scripture to go forward.

It is also worth briefly reflecting on the point the hon. Gentleman made about the relationship between Parliament and the Church. If we look back at our history and perhaps at the founding of the United States of America, we can see that at times when Parliament has been over-involved in the life of the Church, it has led to some Christians feeling quite strongly about it. ...

Chris Bryant (Labour): ... I think that there is still a cruelty in what the bishops have brought forward. There is a sort of hypocrisy. I know that they are trying to square everything off, but in the end there is a hypocrisy that we will bless the individuals but not the relationship. You can have a sort of blessing of your relationship—a celebration—but you cannot be married; you cannot refer to the other person as your husband. ... Is there any biblical teaching that says this is wrong? ... Did Jesus say a single word about same-sex relationships or marriage? I do not think he did. He said a great deal about love ... St Paul said that, in Christ, there was neither male nor female, neither Jew nor Greek, and I think he would probably also have said, neither gay nor straight. ...

Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat): I have grown up with a deep respect for the Church, but ... we cannot understand how a Church, and a faith so rooted in the belief of love and goodness, can still accept that it can make some of its own parishioners and its own clergy feel that they are somehow less worthy. ... it sends the wrong message to an awful lot of people in this country about what the Church actually stands for and risks separating the Church from a great many people who might otherwise be part of it. ...

Andrew Selous: ... the Archbishop of York said... the Church expresses its “deep sorrow and grief at the way LGBTQI+ and those they love have been treated by the Church which, most of all, ought to recognise everyone as precious and created in the image of God. We are deeply sorry and ashamed and want to take this opportunity to begin again in the spirit of repentance which our faith teaches us.” ...

Cat Smith (Labour): ... I am a member of the Methodist Church ... but it does strike me that, because we have an established Church in this country, it falls on all of us to take an interest in and to speak out on the issues of the Church. As a Christian, I know that God sent his own son to die on the cross for my sins and for the sins of all of us. That love is huge and incomprehensible. Love is such a beautiful thing and should be celebrated ... in

all its forms, and ... our diversity in terms of human sexuality is not an accident—it is not a design fault by God—but something designed by God and therefore beautiful ...

Andrew Selous: The Church of England recognises the huge privilege that it has in being the established Church and it does see it as its role to speak for all Christian denominations and, in a sense, to hold the ring for all faiths within this country ...

Wes Streeting (Labour): ... I would never cast my vote in a way that compelled any place of worship to perform same-sex marriage, because I believe in freedom of religious belief, but surely permissive legislation that enables places of worship, churches and priests to make that choice for themselves would be a different matter. ...

Peter Gibson (Conservative): ... is it not time that the Church of England celebrated every relationship and ended the two-tier system that labels gay people as second-class citizens?

Andrew Selous: ... Last week marked a major change for the Church of England: the Church has apologised for the way it has behaved in the past in making people of same-sex orientation not feel welcome within church and said that it welcomes them unreservedly and joyfully. ...

To read this lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-24/debates/46921D78-FB26-44A3-81F1-013530CC7C6D/EqualMarriageChurchOfEngland>

The pastoral letter referred to above can be read at

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/FINAL%20Bishops%27%20Response%20to%20LLF%2020%20Jan%2023_0.pdf

“Issues in Human Sexuality”, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/issues%20in%20human%20sexuality.pdf>

The August 2022 House of Commons Briefing referred to above is no longer available online, but an updated Briefing which also discusses the Enabling Act of 1919 can be read at

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8886/CBP-8886.pdf>

House of Commons Written Answer

Social Media: Artificial Intelligence

Chi Onwurah (Labour) [125342] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will take steps to help prevent the coding of social media algorithms which create and increase racially prejudiced stereotypes.

Paul Scully: Under the Online Safety Bill, all platforms will need to undertake risk assessments for illegal content and content that is harmful to children. This will ensure they understand the risks associated with their services, including in relation to their algorithms. They will then need to put in place proportionate systems and processes to mitigate these risks.

Platforms will need to put in place systems and processes to prevent their users from encountering priority illegal content. This includes offences relating to racial hatred. Platforms that are likely to be accessed by children will also need to fulfil these duties in relation to harmful content and activity, including online abuse and harassment. Where content does not meet the criminal threshold, Category 1 platforms will be required to provide all adult users with tools which provide them with greater control over the content that they see, if it is likely that users will encounter it on their service. These tools will specifically apply to content that is abusive, or incites hate, on the basis of race and religion. Should users decide to utilise these tools, they will either reduce the likelihood that they encounter such content, or will alert them to the nature of it.

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Committee urges Government not to proceed with the Bill of Rights Bill

The Government's proposals to replace the Human Rights Act and change how human rights are protected in the UK would create large scale uncertainty and seriously damage people's ability to enforce their rights, the Joint Committee on Human rights has warned. In its report, the committee calls on the Government to reconsider the majority of the Bill of Rights Bill, calling into question the wisdom of proceeding with the legislation at all. ...

The Bill of Rights Bill is likely to seriously weaken the ability of individuals to seek redress for human rights breaches. Under the reforms, new barriers would be created that would make it harder for people to enforce their rights inside and outside of court.

It would also undermine the universality of human rights by making it more difficult for certain groups to bring cases. Attempts in the Bill to change how the courts of our domestic legal systems interpret rights, read legislation and award damages are also likely to act as barriers that prevent individuals from enforcing their rights. ...

The Committee is concerned that the Bill would require courts to ignore important safeguards that currently protect individuals in urgent situations, for example where there is a credible risk to life, or of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment. ...

Rather than creating a strong new framework for governing how human rights are protected in the UK, the Bill appears to be designed to 'tip the balance' in favour of the state when facing allegations of human rights violations. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/175586/committee-urges-government-not-to-proceed-with-the-bill-of-rights-bill/>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/33649/documents/183913/default/>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

Schools: Holocaust Memorial Day

Damien Moore (Conservative) [125482] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day in schools.

Nick Gibb: Schools are free to decide which events to commemorate and what activities to put in place to support pupils' understanding of significant events and particular months or days dedicated to specific communities. Schools decide how they mark Holocaust Memorial Day, which commemorates the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered by the Nazis, along with all other victims of Nazi persecution and victims of subsequent genocides.

Schools can call on the support of organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, the Holocaust Educational Trust and University College London's Centre for Holocaust Education and others to help with their activities for the day.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-17/125482>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [748A1] Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 – Line 10, leave out from 'Centre' to 'pays' and insert 'in a place and manner consistent with the features and facilities listed by the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation' 'Search for a Central London site' in September 2015 on page 6 and in the area illustrated and considered to be sufficiently central to meet the visions set out by the Holocaust Commission on page 10'.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60521>

The text of the EDM that this proposes to amend is:

That this House notes that, on 27 January 2023, the UK will observe Holocaust Memorial Day, marking the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, where more than 1.1 million people died, including nearly one million Jewish men, women and children; commemorates the six million victims of the Holocaust and the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution; further notes that the House pays tribute to the commitment of Holocaust survivors and Kindertransport refugees who share their experiences with young people across the country; acknowledges the importance of the Holocaust Educational Trust's work in schools across the UK and in particular the Lessons from Auschwitz Project, which has so far given tens of thousands of students and teachers the opportunity to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau; welcomes the establishment of a permanent National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre adjacent to Parliament; pays tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for organising the national Holocaust Memorial Day event; and urges all Right hon. and hon. Members to observe this day so that the appalling events of the Holocaust are always understood by future generations.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60468>

The document referred to in the above amendment can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/459046/National_Memorial_and_Learning_Centre.pdf

House of Commons Library

Briefing: General debate on Holocaust Memorial Day

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2023-0017/CDP-2023-0017.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Time for Reflection

Holly Cameron (Holocaust Educational Trust Ambassador): ... we are ambassadors for the Holocaust Educational Trust. We took part in the trust's lessons from Auschwitz project as students from Cumbernauld academy in November 2022. ...

As part of the project, we were privileged to hear from Holocaust survivor Eva Clarke BEM. Hearing her testimony—the story of her mother's survival and Eva's birth in Mauthausen concentration camp—was incredibly powerful. I am inspired by her dedication to keeping those memories alive when so many people cannot do so.

The visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau was extremely impactful, and I continued to learn about those who lost their lives as more than just a statistic—as individual people. I found visiting Birkenau particularly shocking. It was so vast and seemed never ending. I do not think that I will ever be able to forget that.

Aidan Coleman (Holocaust Educational Trust Ambassador): For our next steps project, we plan to deliver a presentation to the secondary 3, 4 and 5 history classes, in

which we will pass on what we have learned about the Holocaust and the importance of preserving both its history and the memory of those who were murdered. It is so important that, as young people—and especially as the trust’s ambassadors—we continue to encourage our peers and the wider community to learn about and remember the Holocaust, because it is a reminder of the destruction that mankind is capable of. It is crucial that the Holocaust is never forgotten so that it can never be repeated. ... <https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=14109&i=127784&c=2461080#ScotParlOR>

Senedd Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Holocaust Memorial Day 2023

Minister for Social Justice (Jane Hutt): ...This Friday, we remember the millions of people who were persecuted and killed during the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 is 'Ordinary People'. During the Holocaust and the genocides that have followed, it was ordinary people who found themselves persecuted and murdered because they belonged to a community of people. It was ordinary people who took action and helped those being targeted. It was ordinary people who did nothing and accepted hateful propaganda. The theme highlights a stark reality of genocide: in many cases, these atrocities were facilitated by ordinary people.

In their introduction to this year's theme, the trust underlines how ordinary people have enabled horrific actions:

'Ordinary people were policemen involved in rounding up victims, secretaries typing the records of genocide, dentists and doctors carrying out selections, ordinary people were neighbours wielding machetes in Rwanda, schoolteachers turned concentration-camp guards in Bosnia.'

The theme has a powerful message that is relevant to us all. We are all 'ordinary people' who have the power to make a difference with our actions, for good or ill. We, as individuals, have a choice to stand up to hate and prejudice. We can all challenge divisive narratives that aim to fragment our communities and demonise certain groups of people. For 2023, the Welsh Government has funded the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to employ a support worker in Wales to inspire involvement across the nation. ...

The Welsh Government also continues to fund the Holocaust Educational Trust to deliver the Lessons from Auschwitz programme in Wales. Since 2008, the programme has provided students across Wales with the opportunity to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau and to hear from Holocaust survivors. After two years of virtual delivery, I am pleased that the students will once again take part in person this year. All participants become young ambassadors and are asked to continue to share their knowledge and encourage others to remember the Holocaust. ...

We welcome Lord Mann's recent report on tackling antisemitism in the UK. The Welsh Government contributed to the development of the review, and we look forward to continuing to work with him on this important issue. As Lord Mann highlighted in his report, tackling antisemitism goes beyond education about the Holocaust.

It is important that our education system equips our young people to understand and respect their own and each other's histories, cultures and traditions. Our new curriculum reflects the true diversity of our population and that learners understand how diversity has shaped modern Wales, through mandatory teaching of black, Asian and minority ethnic histories, contributions and experiences. ...

The Holocaust is an extremely painful and distressing part of history, but it is a part of history that we and future generations cannot forget. It happened because of divisive narratives and abuse of power. We must never lower our guard to these same toxic narratives that remain present today. ...

Altaf Hussain (Conservative): ... Friday marks the seventy-eighth anniversary of the day that Auschwitz, the largest Nazi death camp, was liberated by Soviet forces; 1.1 million people were murdered at that camp, nine out of every 10 of whom were Jewish. This is why 27 January is chosen to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Why do we each year remember this Holocaust? It reminds us to learn the lessons of the past, to remember the stories of 6 million murdered Jews and those millions of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, LGBT people, disabled people and black people who were also murdered in Nazi death camps. The world said, 'Never again', yet genocide has continued to take place since those terrible atrocities committed by Nazi Germany.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust also teaches us to remember those executed in the genocides of Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, but even after all these terrible events, we fail to learn. Tragically, in the twenty-first century genocide is still being perpetrated around the globe. We have Rohingya Muslims being slaughtered in Myanmar, Uighur Muslims in the Chinese province of Xinjiang being placed in concentration camps at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party, and perhaps saddest of all, we see the sons and grandsons of the heroic troops that liberated Auschwitz in 1945 carrying out war crimes and, quite possibly, genocide in Ukraine. The world cannot sit idly by and allow these atrocities to happen.

I would like to thank the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust as well as the Holocaust Educational Trust for their invaluable work in educating future generations about the Holocaust and, more recently, crimes against humanity. Sadly, not everyone heeds these lessons, and we have seen a tragic rise in antisemitism in recent years. It was deeply disturbing to read the independent report into the NUS, which found that the National Union of Students has failed to sufficiently challenge antisemitism and hostility towards the Jews in our own structures. Minister, what discussions have you and Cabinet member colleagues held with the NUS here in Wales about the steps they are taking to stamp out antisemitism in our university campuses? ...

Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. Watching the trial of Adolf Eichmann, Holocaust survivor Hannah Arendt coined the phrase 'the banality of evil', meaning that evil acts are not necessarily perpetrated by evil people. Rather, they are the result of ordinary people obeying orders. Minister, how do we get this message across to people that everyone has a responsibility to stand up to hatred, that all of us have a duty to call out inequality? ...

Jane Hutt: ... The Minister for Education and Welsh Language met the previous NUS Wales president last year. He had an introductory meeting with the new NUS Wales president in October. But he also met Lord Mann—you've mentioned, of course, the report on antisemitism—the UK Government's adviser on antisemitism. He met him last year to discuss the work and to raise awareness of antisemitism. He also met with representatives of the Union of Jewish Students in February, and he discussed the experience of Jewish students in higher education. And also recognising that we expect, from the NUS—. We continue regular engagement with this, but we expect, in terms of the investigation and subsequent report into antisemitism, an open and transparent engagement with them. ...

Sioned Williams (Plaid Cymru): ... Holocaust Memorial Day is dedicated to remembering those who were persecuted and killed because they were marginalised and othered by those in power. ... while Holocaust Memorial Day ensures we remember people, ordinary people, who are victims of atrocity, who were witnesses to such inhumanity, it also demands, while doing so, that we remember the fact that ordinary people inflicted those atrocities, were bystanders to bigotry, lies, hatred and obscene acts of violence. It forces us to confront what leads to such hatred, what facilitates such atrocities then and now. ... How are we ensuring that those questions are always asked in Wales? In her report on the war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann, the philosopher Hannah Arendt famously called Eichmann, one of the functionaries of the Nazi machine, 'terrifyingly normal'. She concluded in her subsequent celebrated study, 'Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the

Banality of Evil', that his evil stemmed from 'an inability to think from the standpoint of somebody else'.

Thus, she suggested, an individual, and therefore those who serve a Government or operate on behalf of a state, can do evil without being inherently monstrously evil. That lack of empathy, that ability to see others as less, to detach from shared humanity, is what we must constantly guard against ...

Jane Hutt: ... As you say, the Holocaust didn't happen overnight; it began with a gradual erosion of human rights and divisive rhetoric against people who were different, who were perceived to be different to others. This is about the commitment again that we give as the Welsh Government—and it should be driven and expressed across this Chamber—that we want to drive out stigma and hatred and ensure people feel safe. ...

Jenny Rathbone (Labour): ... I agree with the words of Lord Mann that tackling antisemitism goes beyond education about the Holocaust. However, it would be a mistake for us to think that there is not still an enormous job of work to be done to describe exactly what happened during the Holocaust and the things that were then subsequently suppressed. There was a deliberate policy after the second world war of drawing a veil over the Nazi terror in western Germany. ... We really have so much work to do to look at our own role. What did we know about the concentration camps and what could we have done to bomb the railroads that were taking people to their murderous end? ...

Jane Hutt: ... Some Members may have had the opportunity—if you haven't, I do recommend it—to watch *How the Holocaust Began*, which was a film broadcast last night presented by James Bulgin. ... it's unravelling the history that led to the Holocaust—the poisonous ideology that was being developed of ordinary people betraying their neighbours. All of this led up to the establishment of the camps as a result of mass shootings becoming unsustainable—Jewish people just being murdered. ...

I can assure you that we're taking Lord Mann's report very seriously, but it is about what can we do in terms of that history. ...

Jane Dodds (Liberal Democrat): ... One thing I will never forget is standing in Kigali in Rwanda, on the site where 125,000 people were buried. It's hard to imagine that ordinary people in Rwanda, in a period of only 100 days, we found that Hutus were murdered by Tutsis—800,000 were murdered, and the world stood by and did absolutely nothing. ...

Samuel Kurtz (Conservative): ... As a school pupil, I was able to join a trip with my peers to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and death camps—an experience that will live with me for the rest of my life. To see for ourselves the site where so many ordinary people had suffered and died due to their race, sexual orientation or religious backgrounds can never be replicated by watching a film or reading a book. That trip made such an impression on me that I think it's imperative that others visit and learn exactly what happened, because, as each year passes, those who survived the Holocaust are sadly lost to us as they die.

Therefore, I would like to ask you, Minister, if you are willing to work with me, and organisations such as the Holocaust Educational Trust, to set up a cross-party visit to Auschwitz-Birkenhau before the end of the sixth Senedd ...

Jane Hutt: ... I've already highlighted the fact that this is really moving forward in 2023, in terms of our visits, back in-person, in terms of the the Lessons from Auschwitz Wales project. ... I certainly would be very happy to look at that proposal. ...

Delyth Jewell (Plaid Cymru): On Holocaust Memorial Day, as so often, I'll be thinking about Zigi Shipper, an Auschwitz survivor, who died last week, on his ninety-third birthday. I had the honour of meeting Zigi in Westminster, and I heard him speak, not only about the horrors he faced during that period, when man's hatred of other human beings was allowed to conquer all sense of humanity, but also about the wonderful life he'd lived in the years

since, because chance allowed him to survive. His story overwhelmed me, and when I was leaving the room, he grabbed my hand, and he said, 'I saw that you were crying. Why do you cry? I'm so happy'. Minister, I worry that, as more survivors pass away, the immediacy of their testimony could be lost, that that direct link that reminds us of the consequences of unchecked hatred could be loosened. What is the Welsh Government doing, please, to capture that testimony, working with the Holocaust Educational Trust and others, to teach not only schoolchildren but grown adults too about how easy it was for human beings to slip into that ugliness, and how easily it could happen again?

Alun Davies (Labour): ... it is an important aspect for us to understand—the way that ordinary people were both the victims and the perpetrators of the Holocaust. ...

Minister, we are losing the generation that bore witness to the Holocaust and the second world war; we're losing the human contact, the human link with the death camps in the second world war; and we're losing the testimony of those people, their voices speaking to us directly. And what I would like to ask you this afternoon is: how can we, in Wales today, ensure that young people growing up, particularly, understand the profound nature of what happened over 70 years ago? I would like to see us exploring ways in which young people can visit Auschwitz to understand the enormity of what happened there, but also that the Holocaust is a part of a curriculum, where people understand not simply the technicality and the numbers, but the human impact of a genocide against the Jewish and other peoples of Europe, so that we can hope that the people who are being educated today in Wales, although they will have lost the human connection, will have that human understanding of genocide and of what the Holocaust did to all of us today.

Jane Hutt: ... this is about what we teach our children, what they learn ... And I will share with the Minister for Education and Welsh Language the fact that I think this is really important learning, and the points you make for the diversity and anti-racism professional learning project. ...

Rhianon Passmore (Labour Co-op): ... The sheer extent of the evil of the Holocaust remains unfathomable to comprehension. I have also had the honour and privilege of speaking to a number of Holocaust survivors now: children, people, human beings, and it was and is evil in its purest. ...

It is too convenient and too comfortable for us to fool ourselves that the Holocaust horror was perpetrated by an extreme and abnormal group of political fanatics, and, as BBC2's compelling documentary by James Bulgin demonstrated, the true horror for humanity was the willingness of ordinary men and women to be complicit in this evil: a process of the dehumanisation of people, the acceptance of hate, the use of language by politicians and the acceptance of propaganda. One of the most shocking scenes presented in the documentary was a German soldier's home movie, which showed men being thrown into a trench in Lithuania before being shot, but all as a large crowd of onlookers gathered, desperate to watch. Observing this, Bulgin stated, 'It's almost as if shooting Jews has become a spectator sport'—so truly horrifying to watch, eight decades later. ...

Jane Hutt: ... We must never forget that. It is about those ordinary people, and we must watch those programmes—we must learn from them. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13189#A77216>

Lord Mann's report, referred to above, can be read at

<https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/PDF-Antisemitism-Report-2023.pdf>

The report into the NUS, referred to above, can be read at

[https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471780/Independent Investigation into Antisemitism Report NUS 12 January 2023.pdf?1673471780](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471780/Independent%20Investigation%20into%20Antisemitism%20Report%20NUS%2012%20January%202023.pdf?1673471780)

An audiobook of the Hannah Arendt report referred to above is available free from amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com/Eichmann-in-Jerusalem-audiobook/dp/B004VNXBVC>

“How the Holocaust Began”, referred to above, is available on iPlayer at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001hj7n/how-the-holocaust-began>

Northern Ireland Executive

Holocaust Memorial Day 2023: We all have a responsibility to stand up to intolerance and discrimination

... The annual event, hosted by The Executive Office in conjunction with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and Belfast City Council, saw around 400 people gather at Belfast City Hall on Tuesday, January 24 to remember the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The theme of HMD 2023, ‘Ordinary People’, highlights the ordinary people who let genocide happen, those who actively perpetrated genocide, those who rescued would-be victims and the ordinary people who were persecuted.

Keynote speaker at the event was Holocaust survivor Eve Kugler, who spoke movingly about how her family was torn apart by the Nazis when they were forced to flee their home in Germany and her parents were sent to concentration camps.

“I hope that those who heard me will remember and talk about it with their friends. I would like them to understand that people are people and there is no reason why one group, because they look different or have a different race or nationality, should be treated badly by anyone. People are people – it sounds trite but that’s essentially what the message is,” Eve said.

Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary of The Executive Office, also spoke at the event.

“Holocaust Memorial Day is a powerful reminder that we all have a responsibility to stand up to prejudice, intolerance and discrimination,” he said.

“This year’s theme, Ordinary People, highlights that every one of us has a role to play in making our society a more inclusive and welcoming place for all. No-one should underestimate their potential to positively impact change; or forget that inaction and complacency fosters the perpetuation of hate. Ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things.” ...

Speaking at the event, Belfast Lord Mayor, Councillor Tina Black, said: “The Holocaust calls on us to reflect on what can happen when prejudice and identity-based hate is left unchallenged. Holocaust Memorial Day reminds us of our ability to interrupt expressions of rage, division and hatred. Each of us has the power to stand against expressions of prejudice. Our actions can help to replace separation with inclusion, change fear to hope and replace hostility with love.” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/news/holocaust-memorial-day-2023-we-all-have-responsibility-stand-intolerance-and-discrimination>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel and Occupied Territories: Human Rights

Caroline Lucas (Green) [119952] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 23 December 2022 to Questions 111540 on Salah Hamouri, 20 December 2022 to Question 111609 on Israel: Palestinians and 22 June 2022 to Question 21080 on Salah Hammouri, what response he

has had to (a) calls upon the Government of Israel to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations, and to allow them to freely operate in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories and (b) representations about the Government of Israel's decision to revoke the permanent residency in Jerusalem of Salah Hammouri for breach of allegiance to the State of Israel; and if he will make a statement.

David Rutley: Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law. We continue to call upon the Government of Israel to fully respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of human rights defenders and organisations, and to allow them to freely operate in Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Minister for the Middle East, Lord Ahmad, made clear the UK's support for a two-state solution, the urgent need to reduce tensions and to avoid any unilateral actions that make peace more difficult during his visit to Israel and the OPTs on 10-13 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-10/119952>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-15/111540>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-15/111609>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-06-20/21080>

Israel: Human Rights

Geraint Davies (Labour Co-op) [123848] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the new Israeli government's commitment to peace and the protection of human rights.

David Rutley: Human Rights is a crucial element underpinning the UK's foreign policy. The UK continues to engage with the Israeli Government on human rights issues where they exist. We call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The UK remains committed to a two-state solution, as the Minister for the Middle East, Lord Ahmad, made clear during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 10-13 January. The UK's Permanent Representative to the UN, Dame Barbara Woodward, urged the parties to demonstrate, through their policies, a genuine commitment to peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians at a UNSC open debate on 17 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-16/123848>

The UNSC speech referred to above was made by Fergus Eckersley, and the debate in question took place on 18 January. The speech can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-opposes-all-unilateral-actions-that-will-make-israeli-palestinian-peace-harder-to-achieve-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL4574] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli officials prevented Palestinian Christians in the occupied territories from accessing Christmas festivals in other occupied territories in December 2022.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious

communities. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of Palestinians as well as the impact on religious harmony. The UK remains committed to a two-state solution, as I made clear during my visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 10-13 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-09/hl4574>

Jerusalem: Religious Buildings

The Lord Bishop of Southwark [HL4593] To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the historic status quo governing Jerusalem's holy sites including Al-Haram al Sharif/Temple Mount.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK recognises that Jerusalem's holy sites hold particular significance for all Christians, Jews and Muslims around the world. As set out to the UN Security Council on 5 January, the UK is committed to working with all parties to maintain calm, avoid provocation and uphold the status quo to ensure the safety and the security of the Al Aqsa Mosque / Al Haram Al Sharif / Temple Mount and all who worship there. I emphasised the UK's unwavering support for Jordanian custodianship during my visit to the Al Aqsa Mosque / Haram al-Sharif / Temple Mount on 12 January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-09/hl4593>

UNRWA

UNRWA appeals for us\$ 1.6 billion for health, education and other basic services

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) appealed today for US\$ 1.6 billion for programmes and operations in 2023.

“Across all the area of operations, UNRWA continues to play an indispensable role in the lives of millions of Palestine refugees. We work to maintain the delivery of basic services in an incredibly difficult financial and political context,” said UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini. “Palestine refugees – one of the most underprivileged communities in the region-face unprecedented challenges and increasingly rely on UNRWA for basic services and in some cases the sheer survival.”

Compounding challenges over the last year including underfunding, competing global crises, inflation, disruption in the supply chain, geopolitical dynamics and skyrocketing levels of poverty and unemployment among Palestine refugees have put immense strain on UNRWA. Most Palestine refugees now live below the poverty line, many depend on humanitarian assistance, including cash and food, from UNRWA. ...

“For more than 70 years, UNRWA has been delivering and responding to the needs of Palestine Refugees against all odds, shouldering a huge responsibility until a just and lasting political solution is found. We cannot and should not be always scrambling to bring in funds to cover our contribution to human rights and stability. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/news-releases/unrwa-appeals-us-16-billion-health-education-and-other-basic-services>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Major EU survey on antisemitism and Jewish life launched

“Antisemitism continues to be a blight on Europe despite repeated efforts to put an end to long-held prejudices,” says FRA Director Michael O’Flaherty. “FRA continues its steadfast support to the EU’s commitment to safeguard Jewish life across Europe. Once again, our survey gives Jews in Europe the opportunity to voice their concerns so that policymakers get the insights they need to effectively tackle antisemitism once and for all.”

The survey will ask Jews in 13 European countries about their perceptions and experiences of antisemitism, and of being Jewish where they live. The countries covered are Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain and Sweden.

The survey is open to those who self-identify as Jewish, are at least 16 years old and currently live in the survey countries. The survey runs from 25 January and is accessible at <https://www.eujews.eu>.

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2023/major-eu-survey-antisemitism-and-jewish-life-launched>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

**** Bill of Rights Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Joint Committee on Human Rights: Legislative Scrutiny: Bill of Rights Bill

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/33649/documents/183913/default/>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 2 days**

NUS UK Antisemitism Action Plan (closing date 27 January 2023)

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471793/NUS_Antisemitism_Action_Plan_Jan2023.pdf

Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Review (closing date 1 March 2023)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-statutory-review>

Draft guidance: charities use of social media (closing date 14 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-guidance-charities-use-of-social-media>

[TOP](#)

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