



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Topical Questions: Home Department

Christian Wakeford (Labour): Reports in today's edition of *The Times* about the extreme activities of those promoted by the Islamic Centre of England, a UK-registered charity funded by the Iranian authorities and under the direction of the UK representative of the Iranian supreme leader, are just the latest evidence of the threat that Iran poses in the UK. The Security Minister has already told the House about the very real threat that Iran has made to UK-based individuals, including the Jewish community. Does the Minister agree that it is finally the time to proscribe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps? (904186)

The Minister for Security (Tom Tugendhat): The hon. Member will well know that the work we have been doing against the Iranian threat in the United Kingdom has not diminished—in fact, it has increased in recent months. He is right to talk about cultural centres. Sadly, the Islamic Centre of England is not alone. Indeed, the work of the IRGC is not limited to those Iranian proxy organisations. We have to ensure that we have the resources and the attitude, and that is exactly what this Government are pulling together and exactly what we are deploying against this vile threat that has taken over a country and is now threatening ours.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-20/debates/FDA85DA7-8393-4C7C-98E3-0A96483D5883/TopicalQuestions#contribution-3AE3B46F-7B1A-4691-96D0-FE7E2AFAEFB4>

The Times reports referred to above can be read at

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/academic-jihad-and-anti-west-rhetoric-of-uk-islamic-hub-speakers-q3q3nsskp2>

Topical Questions: Home Department

Simon Lightwood (Labour Co-op): Far-right Islamophobic Danish politician Rasmus Paludan has said he is going to travel from Denmark to Wakefield for the sole purpose of burning a Koran in a public place. Mr Paludan was previously jailed in Denmark for his

hateful and racist statements. He is a dangerous man who should not be allowed into this country. Can the Home Secretary assure me and my community that the Government are taking action to prevent this?

Tom Tugendhat: I inform the House that Mr Paludan has been added to the warnings index. Therefore, his travel to the United Kingdom would not be conducive to the public good, and he will not be allowed access.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-03-20/debates/FDA85DA7-8393-4C7C-98E3-0A96483D5883/TopicalQuestions#contribution-5F6AE0F1-C357-42AC-B2E7-2CA815BF6F22>

Casey Review

Final Report: Baroness Casey Review – An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service

<https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/baroness-casey-review/update-march-2023/baroness-casey-review-march-2023.pdf>

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Israel

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UK and Israel to sign landmark agreement deepening tech, trade and security ties

... Foreign Secretary James Cleverly will host his Israeli counterpart Foreign Minister Eli Cohen in London today (21 March) to sign a landmark agreement that will define bilateral relations between their 2 countries until 2030.

The UK and Israel are committed to a modern, innovative and forward-looking relationship that continues to focus on mutual priorities for mutual benefit. The 2030 Roadmap for Israel-UK Bilateral Relations is an ambitious agreement that will ensure the partnership remains modern and continues to innovate to address shared challenges. Adopting a thematic approach, the Roadmap contains detailed commitments for deepening cooperation across the breadth of the Israel-UK relationship, including on trade, cyber, science and tech, research and development, security, health, climate and gender.

New multi-million-pound programmes announced in the Roadmap, including around £20 million of joint funding commitments on technology and innovation, will enable both countries to remain at the forefront of the technological revolution. The UK is also committed to working closely with Israel to tackle the scourge of antisemitism. As [chair for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in 2024](#), the UK will promote fact-based knowledge of the Holocaust and strengthen media and information literacy.

The Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, said ahead of the visit: The UK-Israel Bilateral Roadmap is a testament to the strength of our close and historic relationship.

As we approach the 75th anniversary of UK-Israel relations, our Roadmap will allow us to fully take advantage of the opportunities in areas of mutual interest, including tech, trade and security.

The UK and Israel also stand together, defiant in the face of the malign influence of Iran in the region, and against the wider scourge of antisemitism. ...

The Roadmap is the culmination of efforts that began with the signing of a [Memorandum of Understanding in November 2021](#) to work more closely over the next decade on cyber, technology, trade and defence, which formally elevated the UK's relationship with Israel to a 'strategic partnership'. Last year, the UK and Israel launched negotiations for a new free

trade agreement, with a focus on innovation and the aim of upgrading the trading relationship. The new trade deal, by lowering barriers and championing free trade, is a key priority for both governments.

During the visit, the Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary will also discuss areas of shared concern including countering the current threat from Iran and tackling Iran's destabilising and malign activity in the Middle East, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the UK's ongoing support for the Abraham Accords.

The Foreign Secretary will also raise the UK's concerns about the recent spike in violence in the Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the need for all parties to take steps to deescalate and end the cycle of violence.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-israel-to-sign-landmark-agreement-deepening-tech-trade-and-security-ties>

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UK sanctions top Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps financiers

... The UK has imposed sanctions on senior officials of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, it announced today.

The IRGC, the branch of the Iranian Armed Forces responsible for the internal and external security of Iran, has been at the forefront of the repression of protest in Iran which has seen more than 500 killed and tens of thousands imprisoned.

The UK has sanctions in place on the IRGC in its entirety. ...

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said: Today we are taking action on the senior leaders within the IRGC who are responsible for funnelling money into the regime's brutal repression. ...

Established initially to support IRGC service members, the Foundation has broadened out its remit to funding the IRGC's repressive activities in Iran and abroad.

The Foundation is also responsible for funding militant groups associated with the IRGC's external operations arm, the IRGC-Quds Force. The Quds force is responsible for carrying out lethal activities outside of Iran by, for example, providing training, funding and weapons to groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-sanctions-top-iranian-revolutionary-guard-corps-financiers>

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Other Relevant Information

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: statement by the High Commissioner

... still today no country can claim to be free of racism.

Across the globe, xenophobia and related intolerance are on the rise. People of African

descent, national, ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, indigenous peoples and Roma and Sinti communities are stereotyped, stigmatised and marginalised, facing systemic discrimination across all areas of their lives. Migrants and refugees are vilified and attacked.

All too often, leaders and politicians endorse or even promote these messages of hate.

Racism, and all forms of discrimination, destroy the fabric of our societies.

Racism sows division and fuels inequalities, hate crime and violence.

It undermines development, peace, democracy, and the rule of law.

And it is an affront to human dignity.

Governments have an obligation to combat racism and racial discrimination under international human rights law, in particular the [International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#).

As part of the Human Rights 75 Initiative this year, I have called on States to take a number of specific and urgent actions, including adopting comprehensive laws and policies and strengthening human rights institutions.

Political will is essential to confront past legacies of racial discrimination and to deliver reparatory justice. ...

As individuals, we can and must also be part of the solution.

Together, we *can* push back against the forces of discrimination, hatred, bigotry and violence, and we can build instead societies that rest on equality, respect and justice.

With dialogue, with education, with understanding of what we have in common and with deep appreciation for the richness of our differences. ...

I am inspired by the courage and determination of people and communities who, despite the risks they may face, stand up against racism.

Their fight is our fight.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/03/international-day-elimination-racial-discrimination-statement-high>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

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

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

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

**** Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50387/documents/3162>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

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>

Stage 1 evidence session, Social Justice and Social Security Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/SJSS-16-03-2023?meeting=15211&iob=129731>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** Prospective Scheme of Delegation for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (closing date 15 May 2023)**

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-prospective-scheme-delegation-charity-commission-northern-ireland>

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