



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Debate

#### **UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

*col 99 Faisal Rashid (Labour):* ... Sadly, we know that not all ethnic minorities are as fortunate as I have been to live in such a hospitable, tolerant environment. ...

As it is, many forms of racism and discrimination are on the rise. Disturbing, violent trends of antisemitism and Islamophobia have become more and more frequent. I have already mentioned the horrendous attack on the Muslim community in New Zealand last month. A Jewish place of worship in Pittsburgh was subject to a similar attack five months earlier—the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in US history. Both killers were clear in their hatred of both Jews and Muslims. Both subscribed to the far-right “great replacement” theory, which casts Muslims and other minorities as invaders of western societies and a threat to white, Christian majorities. It seems appropriate that the specific theme to mark this year’s UN international day for the elimination of racial discrimination is mitigating and countering rising national populism and extreme supremacist ideologies. ...

*col 100* Those are not just sporadic attacks in far-flung corners of the world; they represent part of a wider trend and their impact has been felt much closer to home. Just two weeks ago, the trial of a neo-Nazi who had plotted to kill a Member of this House was concluded. The plotter had been a member of the fascist National Action group. During the trial, the prosecution told the court that National Action had engaged in a campaign of “racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic propaganda through which it sought to stir up a violent ‘race war’ against ethnic minorities and others it perceived as ‘race traitors.’” ...

In the face of such vile hatred, it is all too easy to give in to despair, but I recall the words of Jo Cox, who from these Benches insisted that “we are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us.” —[\[Official Report, 3 June 2015; Vol. 596, c. 675.\]](#) ...

We saw Jo’s ethos in action even in the immediate aftermath of both the Christchurch and the Pittsburgh shootings. Muslim groups raised more than \$200,000 for bereaved families at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh is now raising money for the victims of the New Zealand mosque attacks. ...

If we are to counter this threat, we must seek to understand its origins and the conditions that allow it to flourish, for there can be no doubt that white nationalist, far-right violence is

firmly on the rise. In the US in 2018, every single one of the 50 extremist-related murders were linked to the far right, according to the Anti-Defamation League. In the UK between 2017 and 2018, the number of white suspects arrested for terror offences outstripped those of any other ethnic group for the first time in more than a decade. In Germany, official figures suggest that nine in 10 antisemitic crimes in 2017 were carried out by members of far-right or neo-Nazi groups. ...

*col 101* In recent years, we have seen the rise of far-right social media personalities who now have the ability to reach unprecedented numbers of people online. Not only are these individuals allowed to peddle their hatred to huge audiences, but they are able to profit from doing so. ...

Racism in the workplace also continues to be a major problem in the UK. A recent survey by Prospect, the trade union, found that nearly half of ethnic minority workers have witnessed racism in their workplace, with a quarter of black and ethnic minority employees reporting that they have been racially abused. ...

*col 102* We need to systematically eradicate all forms of racist abuse from public life. There should be an absolute zero-tolerance policy towards racism, yet governing bodies like UEFA dole out minor fines and partial stadium closures when teams are subjected to racist abuse. ...

Many young people are adopting extreme and racist views as a result of the content they see online, day in and day out. We can do more to combat this in our schools. Young people must be better equipped to identify new forms of misinformation and bigotry if we are to prevent these poisonous ideas from taking hold of future generations. The fight against bigotry and racism begins in the classroom. ...

I say to far-right racists: ethnic minorities are not going anywhere. We deserve to live, work and raise our families in peace in our own country. The fight against racism and all forms of discrimination is a mainstay of peace and social cohesion, especially in our increasingly diverse society. ...

*col 102* **Richard Graham (Conservative):** ... the difficulty with hate abuse, racial abuse and intolerance in general is that comes not just from the far right, as disgusting and abhorrent as that is, but from the far left and across the spectrum ...

**Stephen Kerr (Conservative):** ... Yesterday's lead story in *The Sunday Times* was a shocking catalogue of antisemitism inside the Labour party, which I am sure all decent Labour Members feel is as abhorrent as my hon. Friends and I do. The reality is that we live in a time when antisemitism and Islamophobic behaviour are increasing. ...

*col 105* **Imran Hussain (Labour):** ... Nowhere is this alarming racial discrimination and the disturbing lack of action to tackle it seen more clearly than in the rise of the far right in this country. We are seeing the resurgence of fascist ideologies and extremist groups that we fought off decades ago. They are now returning with the same hatred for other races, ideologies, backgrounds and religions. ...

Just last month, the Security Service and the Met police identified far-right terrorism as a key threat to the safety of our country, with the police having stopped a number of far-right terror attacks over the past few years. The Hope Not Hate "State of Hate 2019" report echoes that, finding not only a continued rising trend in traffic to far-right websites and in followers of far-right social media accounts, but that the far right is getting younger and more extreme. I will not mince my words: we are witnessing a dangerous resurgence of Nazi ideology. ...

We also cannot avoid the fact that racial discrimination has been encouraged and the far right emboldened, normalised and even legitimised by the media and others who must share the blame. ...

Right now, they are doing nowhere near what is necessary to tackle the resurgence of fascism, with a dangerous over-reliance on tip-offs or mistakes by extremists. ...

*col 106* **Julian Knight (Conservative):** ... Solihull is a fantastic embodiment of diversity

in the west midlands, and of success in that diversity, but we face our challenges. Of late, those challenges have been writ large in our town. Quite recently, we had the horror of pigs heads being left outside the Hub, a Muslim community and education centre ... We also have worries and concerns about antisemitism. Some in my Jewish community have spoken to me, often confidentially, about their fears right now about the rising tide of antisemitism. ...

**col 108 Ian Austin (Independent):** ... This is also the anniversary, almost to the day, of when Britain's Jewish community came together in the square across the street to protest against racism in the Labour party. I am afraid that we have to address that. We lose our legitimacy in complaining about other people's racism if we are not prepared to deal with the problems in our own parties. I want to tell the House about Susan Pollock. She was born in 1930 in Hungary and was imprisoned as a teenager in Auschwitz. She now spends her time travelling the country telling young people about the evils of racism and prejudice. I first met her when she came to Dudley to talk at our annual holocaust commemoration. The second time I met her—an Auschwitz survivor in her late 80s—was in the demonstration across the road. It was the first political demonstration she had been on in her life. I have left the Labour party, but I spent 35 years in it, and I found that deeply shocking and shameful.

It is terrible that a culture of extremism and antisemitism has resulted in the Labour party's being investigated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission. I think that is really shocking. In *The Sunday Times* this weekend, we heard about a failure to take proper disciplinary action against hundreds of members accused of antisemitism—people who said things like “Heil Hitler”, ‘F\*\*\* the Jews’ and ‘Jews are the problem’”.

They have not been expelled—it is absolutely shocking—even though complaints had been received a year ago. A councillor in Lancashire has been let back into the party after fuming about Jewish media attacks and the Rothschild family.

If I complained about everybody who said that sort of stuff to me, I would have no time to do anything else, but I complained about one member last year, because he also threatened violence at my office, which is in a building that also contains a women's aid centre. This guy questioned the numbers killed in the holocaust and said that 6 million was the magic number. He told the Jewish community to “Put up or shut up.” He talked about “Zionist scum”, and used really obscene remarks that I will not repeat. I complained about him last August. Despite repeated emails and requests, eventually—unbelievably—he was finally suspended in February. He is still a member, as far as I am aware. I really hope that the party is listening and will deal with that.

I think that the chair of the Jewish Leadership Council, Jonathan Goldstein, was completely right this weekend to condemn what he called “corruption” within Labour. He said that those who covered it up should be “relieved of their duties”. He said:

“Last July, I called the Labour Party institutionally racist against Jews. Today's revelations in the Sunday Times make clear for all to see just how accurate that statement was.”

Even the Deputy Speaker—sorry, I mean the deputy leader, the hon. Member for West Bromwich East (Tom Watson). Actually, I am sure you are just as appalled as I am by all this, Mr Deputy Speaker. The deputy leader of the Labour party said yesterday:

“This makes for deeply shocking and depressing reading. Labour members and the Jewish community will not understand how, many years on from the first concerns about anti-semitism being raised, we have not got to grips with it.”

It is profoundly shocking to me that a political party that I joined as a teenager to fight racism has become embroiled in a scandal like this. It has be dealt with much more seriously. The Labour party must respond properly to the reasonable requests made by the Jewish community more than a year ago, and must boot out the racists for good. As Jonathan Goldstein said this weekend, “Enough is enough.” ...

**col 111 Angela Crawley (SNP):** ... The theme for this year's International Day for the

Elimination of Racial Discrimination is “mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies.”

That is one of the biggest flashpoints of racial discrimination. ...

We often value the virtue of freedom of speech. ... there are too many opportunities for the far right to gain a platform and, worryingly, it has gained an even greater platform through the Brexit process. ...

**col 112 Yasmin Qureshi (Labour):** ... Does the hon. Lady agree that the rhetoric used by the media and, sadly, sometimes by politicians—including the man who occupies the White House—is built on racial superiority? As the footballer John Barnes said recently, the basis of racial discrimination is the hundreds of years of—I hope people will forgive me for saying this —European white superiority.

**Angela Crawley:** I wholeheartedly agree ...

... in Scotland we do not want to see any EU nationals living in our country leave. As a party, the SNP has recognised the valuable contribution of EU nationals to Scotland and to our public services. Ultimately, those public services could collapse and we could lose the rich cultural contributions made by our friends and neighbours, who have come to be a part of our lives and our world, and part of the UK. ...

**col 113 Dawn Butler (Labour):** ... the theme for today is mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies. We all have to work harder, through our actions and our words, if we are to combat that. Do we say things that are inclusive or dismissive when we speak? Is the environment that we create embracing or hostile? Why is that important? It is important because if we create a hostile environment, we fuel hate and right-wing ideologies. We have to underscore the dangers of populism on both the left and the right. National populism must keep sight of the ways in which multiple intersecting identities transform the experience of racial discrimination. ...

Both here and in the US we have sadly witnessed a surge of intolerance, a growth of the far right and increasing hate crime towards minority communities. We must not become complacent in the fight for equality or allow any of our hard-fought rights to be rolled back. ...

**col 116 the Minister for Africa (Harriett Baldwin):** ... The Prime Minister made clear her determination to tackle racial discrimination from the very first day she took office. The racial disparities audit has revealed racial disparities in our country, and its work in highlighting them will help to end the inequalities and injustices that members of ethnic minorities can face when they access public services and the jobs market. Every individual should be able to fulfil their potential through their enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities. ...

I reassure all colleagues of the Government’s absolute commitment to the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. We will continue to tackle these issues both domestically and internationally. We are fully committed to building safe, strong and united communities. ...

**Faisal Rashid:** ... It is heartening to see Members from both sides of the House joining in recommitting Parliament to the fight against racism. I thank ... the Minister for her contribution and for reiterating the Government’s commitment to fighting racism, although I am a little confused about why the Government felt this issue was within the Foreign Office’s remit. Surely it is a matter for the Home Office.

We need to remember that our voices and contributions matter. If our institutions and policies are not doing enough to stem the tide of a resurgence in racism, we need to end complacency. If we in our hearts can imagine a better world, let us keep on fighting for it and eliminate racism from our society forever.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-04-08/debates/947067E5-8BAC-4FFA-BE7C-EB63CA702088/UNInternationalDayForTheEliminationOfRacialDiscrimination>

The Sunday Times article referred to above can be read at <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/labour-s-hate-files-expose-corbyn-s-anti-semite-army-9zzl0gxpv>

The Racial Disparity Audit, referred to above, can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/686071/Revised\\_RDA\\_report\\_March\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.pdf)

## House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

### House of Commons: Online Harms White Paper

**col 55 The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Jeremy Wright):**

... The Government have today published a White Paper setting out our proposals for making the internet a safer place. For so many people, the internet is an integral part of daily life; nearly 90% of UK adults are online, and for 12 to 15-year-olds the figure is 99%. As the internet continues to grow and transform our lives, we need to think carefully about how we want it to develop. In many ways, the internet is a powerful force for good; it can be used to forge connections, share knowledge and spread opportunity across the world. But it can also be used to circulate terrorist material, undermine civil discourse, spread disinformation, and to bully or abuse.

Our challenge as a society is to help shape an internet that is open and vibrant, but that also protects its users from harm. There is clear evidence that we are not succeeding. Over 8,000 sexual offences against children with an online element were reported to the police in 2017, and that figure is continuing to rise. Up to 20% of young people in the UK have experienced bullying online. The White Paper sets out many more examples of harms suffered. People are closing their social media accounts following unacceptable online abuse. For the vulnerable, online experiences can mean cyber-bullying and the risk of grooming and exploitation. We cannot allow such behaviour to undermine the very real benefits that the digital revolution can bring. If we surrender our online spaces to those who spread hate, abuse and fear, we will all lose. ...

It is also right to recognise that some work is already being done to make the internet a safer place, including by online companies themselves, but it has not been enough and it has been too reactive. It can no longer be right to leave online companies to decide for themselves what action should be taken, as some of them are beginning to recognise. That is why my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I have concluded that the Government must act and that the era of self-regulation of the internet must end.

**col 56** The Government will create a new statutory duty of care, establishing it in law that online companies have a responsibility for the safety of their users. ... Compliance will be overseen and enforced by an independent regulator. ... In the case of the most serious harms, such as child sexual exploitation and abuse and the promotion of terrorism, the Home Secretary will need to approve codes of practice and will also have power to issue directions to the regulator about their content. The Home Office will publish interim codes of practice on these subjects later this year. ...

First, the regulator will adopt a risk-based approach, prioritising regulatory action to tackle harms that have the greatest impact on individuals or wider society. Secondly, the regulator will require companies to take reasonable and proportionate actions to tackle harms on their services, taking account of their size and resources. ...

Some will say that the internet is global so no country can act alone, but I believe that we have both a duty to act to protect UK citizens and an opportunity to lead the world on this. ...

**col 58 Tom Watson (Labour):** ... These companies are making billions extracting and monetising our personal data, and what do we get in return? Harms, hate speech and fake

news filling our timelines and the minds of young and vulnerable people. ...

Labour has already committed to many of the announcements in this White Paper. An independent regulator, a legal duty of care and a tough sanctions regime will support the Government in introducing these measures, but I have no doubt that the industry will fight back. ...

**col 60 Hannah Bardell (SNP):** ... Will the Secretary of State reassure us that any regulator will be properly resourced and have the full weight of the law behind it? ... The reality is that online abuse has a disproportionate impact on women and girls, who face sexism and misogyny, and are readily silenced online. ... In a world designed for men, women and girls are being rendered invisible. That cannot continue. ...

**col 61** I understand ... that a balance needs to be struck with free speech. The tech companies seem to take the issues of terrorism, child abuse and paedophilia a bit more seriously, but the everyday abuse of people in public life and young people, particularly girls in schools, is a serious concern. ...

**col 62 Iain Duncan Smith (Conservative):** ... Making them publishers of their content is the quickest way to achieve our No. 1 purpose ... May I direct the Secretary of State, as he looks at the legal constraints, to the idea that such businesses should be responsible, as publishers are, for the content on their websites? ...

**Jeremy Wright:** ... The argument about whether such businesses are publishers or platforms takes up a great deal of time, and not necessarily to great purpose. It is better to ask how we can keep the focus on ensuring that online platforms take responsibility for what they do. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-04-08/debates/0B8572FF-E3B5-4585-9497-4AE6611D434D/OnlineHarmsWhitePaper>

*The Online harms White Paper, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/793360/Online\\_Harms\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793360/Online_Harms_White_Paper.pdf)

## House of Lords Ministerial Statement and Q&A

### House of Lords: Online Harms

*The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Lord Ashton of Hyde) repeated the statement made by the Minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in the House of Commons (copied above)*

**col 430 Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Labour):** ... The duty of care has been spoken to already and we must emphasise it; after all, we are all aware of those who are harmed by the abuse of the internet. ...

We want to protect people from harms, and we will no doubt want to discuss what we think constitutes harms in the proper sense. There are indeed in this White Paper, rather conveniently, tabulated harms: those that are illegal, that are dangerous; that deserve attention. These are indicative lists, and no doubt we will want to move things from here to there ... but it is a pretty good starting point to show us the range of conducts and activities that we will need to give attention to.

It is a bold White Paper. ...

Statutory measures are mentioned, and I am delighted about that, of course, because these proposals and this way forward need to be underpinned by the full force of the law, and the regulator will be endowed with powers that are appropriate to the importance of the job. ...

**col 431 Lord Clement-Jones (Liberal Democrat):** ... Proper enforcement of existing laws

is, of course, vital to protect users from harm, but, as the White Paper proposes, social media companies should have a statutory duty of care to their users—above all, to children and young people—and, as I say, we fully support the proposed duty of care. ... We also very much welcome the Government's adherence to the principle of regulating on a basis of risk and proportionality when enforcing the duty of care and drawing up the codes. ...

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** ... We have made a point of saying that we want to work on a cross-party, consensual basis and one of the reasons for having an extensive consultation is to achieve that. ...

We thought a lot about the international aspects of regulating the internet, because there is no point having a regulator or enforcement system that cannot cope with the way the internet works, which is, by definition, international. We will therefore think and consult on some of the further sanctions we could put on internet companies, such as individual liability. We might require representatives in the country in the same way as the GDPR does. Ultimately, we are consulting on whether we should take powers to block websites completely. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-04-08/debates/C01D2C25-DB03-44D1-BFAB-ED268690BFA0/OnlineHarms>

*The Online harms White Paper, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/793360/Online\\_Harms\\_White\\_Paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793360/Online_Harms_White_Paper.pdf)

## House of Commons Oral Answer

**Topical Questions: Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government**  
**The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (James Brokenshire):** Last Wednesday, I joined the New Zealand high commissioner and other hon. Members to remember victims of the Christchurch mosque attack, reaffirming our solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters. As in New Zealand, our diverse communities make us stronger. That is why we will always stand up against hatred, bigotry and extremism. It is also why I have reaffirmed the Government's commitment to the holocaust memorial and learning centre next door to Parliament. I met holocaust survivors last week to set out more details of the plan for that. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-04-08/debates/A10E1242-0E56-4E8C-A1C2-13462A8B850E/TopicalQuestions#contribution-5F1B6194-4E70-4249-A106-4E1C5763E5F1>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Terrorism

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL14864]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the current threat posed by extreme right-wing terrorism to UK national security; and how they define right wing terrorism.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Secretary has been clear: the far right has absolutely no place in Britain. The British people overwhelmingly reject the prejudiced rhetoric of the far right, which is the antithesis of the values that this country represents: decency, tolerance and respect.

Through CONTEST and the Counter-Extremism Strategy, we're dealing with the threat of right-wing terrorism and the wider harms caused by the far right, including community tensions, hate crime and public order issues. This is about keeping our

communities safe and secure. We have also been discussing the risk posed by right wing terrorism with our international partners.

The Government proscribed National Action as a terrorist organisation in December 2016. We've also proscribed Scottish Dawn and NS131 as aliases of National Action.

"Terrorism" is defined in Section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Our counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST, works to reduce the risk of all forms of terrorism, regardless of ideology.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-27/HL14864/>

### **Football: Racial Discrimination**

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL14836] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to work with relevant authorities, such as FIFA, and UEFA, to strengthen sanctions against racist behaviour in international football.

**Lord Ashton of Hyde:** The racist abuse England players were subjected to in Montenegro was completely unacceptable and we supported the Football Association's call for UEFA to take strong and swift action. The FA represents English football's interests at the international level of the sport.

Whilst progress has been made here and abroad in tackling discrimination in football over the years, more needs to be done, and Government is continuing to work with the footballing authorities and other organisations to agree what action must be taken to stamp out all forms of discrimination at football events in this country.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-26/HL14836/>

### **Voluntary Schools: Capital Investment**

**Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town (Labour)** [HL15002] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 28 March (HL14650), what are the (1) names, (2) related local authorities, (3) phases, and (4) religions, of each expression of interest in the new capital funding scheme for voluntary-aided schools they received.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** On 26 March 2019, the department published the list of bids received for the new capital funding scheme for voluntary-aided schools. The link to this list, which is split by school name, local authority, phase and faith ethos or designation, can be found on the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/voluntary-aided-schools-capital-scheme-applicant-information>.

This list can also be found attached.

As registering expressions of interest was not compulsory and not all groups who register their interest go on to submit bids, the department does not publish information about expressions of interest.

[HL15002\\_Voluntary-aided\\_school\\_applicant\\_info](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-02/HL15002/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-19/HL14650/>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**John Mann (Labour) (2276) Antisemitism** – That this house notes the contribution of 1 million euros made by Borussia Dortmund Football Club towards the expansion of Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Israel; congratulates the club for their commitment to the memory of the Holocaust and their ongoing action against modern day antisemitism; further highlights an example of best practice and leadership shown by Borussia Dortmund; and looks forward to similar significant contributions to tackling anti-racism across the football world.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/52798/antisemitism>

## House of Commons Library

**Briefing: Preparing for the 2021 census (England and Wales)**

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8531/CBP-8531.pdf>

## Home Office

**Home Office awards additional £346,000 to fight hate crime**

The Home Office has today announced that five groups will receive part of a £346,000 pot through the Hate Crime Community Projects Fund (HCCPF). ...

Minister for Countering Extremism Baroness Williams said: This Government is committed to tackling hate crime in all of its forms. No one should be the subject of verbal or physical abuse simply because of their identity or their beliefs. ...

The fund was launched in 2016, as part of the Hate Crime Action Plan. The government committed £900,000 over three years to provide grants for local community organisations to help tackle all forms of the crime. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-awards-additional-346000-to-fight-hate-crime>

## Ministry of Justice

**Reducing family conflict Government response to the consultation on reform of the legal requirements for divorce**

... The Government will also retain the ability under section 10A of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 for either party to a specified religious marriage to ask the court to withhold the making of the decree absolute until the religious authorities have dissolved the marriage. We did not refer to this provision in the consultation paper but spoke to a number of stakeholders during the consultation and are happy to confirm its retention. The provision was introduced through the Divorce (Religious Marriages) Act 2002 with the purpose of offering protection for people who, while legally free to remarry following the court's final decree, would not be religiously free to do so without the approval of the religious authorities. ...

**To read the full response see**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/793642/reducing-family-conflict-consult-response.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793642/reducing-family-conflict-consult-response.pdf)

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## House of Lords Written Answers

### Yasser Fawzi Shweiki

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL14803] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they will make to the government of Israel about the killing of Yasser Fawzi Shweiki and reports that the Palestinian Red Crescent Society's medics were prevented from attending the scene.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. The British Government is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinians killed by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We recognise the Israeli authorities' legitimate need to deploy security measures in some circumstances, but we have encouraged them to avoid excessive use of force and to act in a way which minimises tensions. When there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have urged the Israeli authorities to conduct swift and transparent investigations. We continue to call on the Israeli Government to ease movement and access restrictions for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and to improve access to medical care. We are clear that medical staff should have the protection that allows them to do their jobs in safety.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-25/HL14803/>

### Israel: Golan Heights

**Lord Steel of Aikwood (Non-affiliated)** [HL14833] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recognition by the President of the United States of Israel's sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights; and what discussions they have had, or intend to have, with the government of the United States about that recognition.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** On 26 March officials from our Embassy in Washington raised our concerns with US counterparts about the US Presidential Proclamation recognising that the Golan Heights are part of the State of Israel. We are clear that the UK views the Golan Heights as territory occupied by Israel. Annexation of territory by force is prohibited under international law, including the UN Charter. The UK did not recognise Israel's annexation in 1981 and we have no plans to change our position. On 26 March we reiterated our firm position on this matter at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-26/HL14833/>

*A summary of the UN Security Council meeting referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13745.doc.htm>

### Israel: Golan Heights

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative)** [HL14859] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions, if any, they have had with the United States Administration about the President of the United States' statement on Twitter on 21 March that it is "time for the United States to fully recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights"; and what assessment they have made of the potential implications of that statement for (1) the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and (2) future regional stability.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** On 26 March officials from our Embassy in Washington raised our concerns with US counterparts about the US Presidential Proclamation recognising that the Golan Heights are part of the State of Israel. We are clear that the UK views the Golan Heights as territory occupied by Israel.

Annexation of territory by force is prohibited under international law, including the UN Charter. The UK did not recognise Israel's annexation in 1981 and we have no plans to change our position. On 26 March we joined Belgium, France, Germany and Poland at the UN Security Council in reiterating this position.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-03-27/HL14859/>

A summary of the UN Security Council meeting referred to above can be read at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc13745.doc.htm>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

#### **International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/internationaldevelopmentassistancepalestiniannationalauthoritieschools.html>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Online Forums Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.html>

#### **Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/palestinianstatehoodrecognition.html>

### **Scottish Parliament**

#### **Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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## **Consultations** \*\* new or updated today

**\*\* Online Harms White Paper** (closing date 1 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

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