

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Debate

Definition of Islamophobia

col 411 Wes Streeting (Labour): ... Hatred against Muslims does not begin with the sound of gunfire breaking through the peaceful calm of a place of prayer. It begins with simple prejudice that can go unchecked and unchallenged in our schools, workplaces and communities. It is amplified on the pages of national newspapers. It is legitimised by political leaders who use Muslims as punchlines and bigotry as a vote winner. ...

The all-party parliamentary group on British Muslims ... produced a ground-breaking report proposing a working definition of “Islamophobia” entitled “Islamophobia Defined”. We entered into this with an open mind about whether “Islamophobia” was the correct term. It was clear from the evidence we gathered, including powerful testimony from victims, that the word “Islamophobia” is widely used by Muslim communities, that it is considered to be useful, and that what we are up against goes much wider than anti-Muslim hatred—it is structural, often unconscious bias. ...

It is true that Islam is a religion—a set of beliefs and ideas—and that Muslims are a set of believers from many races. But racism is a social construct. ...

... many Muslims do belong to an ethnic minority in the United Kingdom, and even those who do not—white converts, for example—experience a form of racism. As Tell MAMA, an organisation that does excellent work in recording hate crime against Muslims, told us: “Any definition must consider how racialisation of Muslim identity means, for example, that white converts are verbally abused with racial epithets like ‘P*ki.’” ...

col 412 Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour): ... I want to highlight the hate crime against those who are perceived to be Muslim. An infamous recent example was when a hate-filled individual felt the urge to try to remove the turban of one of my Sikh guests queuing up just outside our Parliament and to shout, “Muslim, go back home.” Does my hon. Friend agree that this needs to be further explored within the “Islamophobia” definition and that it shows how we are all intertwined and need to stand together?

Wes Streeting: I strongly agree. ... I assure him that that kind of attack and that kind of prejudice is very much covered by our definition.

Liam Byrne (Labour): ... Hate crime against Muslims has risen by almost 100% since the Brexit referendum. In my constituency, which has the biggest Muslim population of any constituency in Britain, nearly 90% of my constituents have experienced Islamophobia or know someone who has. ...

col 413 **Wes Streeting:** ... The law already covers discrimination based on race and religion, but what we are dealing with is not just a challenge of changing laws; it is a challenge of changing hearts and minds, changing the everyday lived experiences of people in our community ...

Paula Sherriff (Labour) ... Only this week, I reported to Facebook this comment by somebody following the report of a large Muslim gathering: "A pig's head and a dozen packs of bacon should do it." Facebook replied very quickly, saying that it did not contravene its community standards. If that does not contravene them, what does? ...

Karen Buck (Labour): ... We also know that an excessive level of hatred and abuse is piled on to black and minority ethnic public figures on Facebook, including the Mayor of London, who receives a torrent of Islamophobic abuse on virtually all his pronouncements. I reinforce the point that the social media companies have to be a critical part of this. ...

col 414 **Clive Efford (Labour):** ... The definition is essential. We cannot have different degrees of racism; something is either racist or not. If we start to question the fine detail of a clear, concise definition of Islamophobia, we open the door for companies like the social media platforms to question what is and is not Islamophobic ...

Wes Streeting: ... our definition already has widespread backing from more than 750 British Muslim organisations ...

It is particularly disappointing to hear a noisy chorus of vocal opposition from many of the usual suspects, who are making arguments in bad faith that accuse us of trying to use the term "Islamophobia" to shut down criticism of Islam and introduce blasphemy laws by the back door. In fact, our report makes it crystal clear that our definition does not preclude criticism of Islam or Islamic theology. ...

coll 415 Let me turn to some of the other concerns that have been expressed in good faith and reply in kind. Our definition does not cover sectarianism, which extends from the abuse levelled at our Home Secretary on social media by other Muslims calling him a "coconut", through to the treatment of the Ahmadiyya community ... We recognise that sectarianism is a serious problem that extends beyond one religion and is worthy of separate consideration and action ...

Our definition does not prevent security and law enforcement agencies from recognising and fighting the threat posed to this country and other democracies by those with a warped view of Islam who carry out acts of violence and terrorism. ...

While our definition cannot prevent false-flag accusations of Islamophobia to shut down reasonable debate and discussion, it does not enable such accusations. In fact, it makes it easier to deal with such behaviour. Context is everything. Our definition provides a framework for helping organisations to assess, understand and tackle real hatred, prejudice and discrimination. ...

col 416 Those of us who are on the receiving end of prejudice of one kind or another know exactly what it feels like, and we have a particular responsibility to stand alongside others who experience prejudice. That is why I am proud to lead the APPG on British Muslims as a non-Muslim and the APPG on British Jews as a non-Jew. ...

Theresa May could have followed the lead of the Scottish Conservative leader, Ruth Davidson, in backing this definition and left a powerful legacy to detoxify her party and improve the lives of Muslims across the country. Instead, with a remarkable lack of self-awareness and humility, the party that has so spectacularly failed British Muslims now intends to produce its own description. The party's abject failure to understand and tackle Islamophobia within its own ranks means that it has neither the wisdom nor the credibility to do so. ...

col 417 John Hayes (Conservative): ... Let me start with a quotation which will not be to the taste of all Members: "Most Muslims in this country see the preoccupation with Islamophobia, which is increasingly peddled by guilt-ridden white liberals and self-appointed Muslim campaigners, as far from being in their interests, an initiative that is likely to separate, segregate and stigmatise them and their families."

That quote comes from a Muslim scholar, Professor Mohammed Abdel-Haq ... [who] sees the risks associated with something that is, to speak candidly, undoubtedly well intentioned and well motivated. ...

Professor Abdel-Haq and others see the risks in separating out Muslims and doing more harm than good by, in the words of Trevor Phillips, "making life harder" for them. Defining Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism, as stated by the APPG, will distort the argument rather than clarify it. ...

col 418 ... the argument is about whether this definition of Islamophobia is helpful or not. This debate is not about the intent or our shared commitment to dealing with hatred and prejudice ... it is about whether this initiative, APPG report and definition move things on or not. ...

The report essentially identifies Islamophobia as an exercise in racism, which presumes that the Muslim peoples of this country, or any country, are a race. Given that Islam is a religion, that proposition is of itself contentious ... People who ascribe to that religion come from all kinds of places, are all kinds of colours and creeds, and adopt all kinds of different practices. ... To describe them as a race is, of itself, a bold, and some would argue contentious, view, yet that is what the report does by identifying Islamophobia as a matter of anti-racism. ...

It is certainly right that the police should pursue those people, who should be questioned, charged and, where appropriate, prosecuted. However, the argument that we are starting from a blank sheet of paper belies the fact that all kinds of anti-discrimination and anti-racism laws exist that allow us to protect those who might be victims of such prejudice. ...

col 419 We have to take it very seriously indeed when anti-terrorist police, notably Martin Hewitt ... describe the risks associated with this initiative in the way that he has. He describes them as "undermining counterterrorist policing powers and tactics." That very damning criticism should not be dismissed lightly. ...

We should also take it very seriously when human rights lawyers say that these proposals would lead to judicial reviews and legal confusion ... Finally, we should, I am afraid, question whether the effect of this debate will not be to fuel the extreme and far right, who I am profoundly concerned are gaining a foothold again in our country ...

col 420 Khalid Mahmood (Labour): ... My objection to the report on Islamophobia by the all-party group on British Muslims is principled ... It is because of my long-held belief and the work I have done since 2011 that I oppose the report ...

The big problem with integration has predominantly been ... the way the Government fund communities. They fund communities to stay in isolation. They have funded the Sikh community, the Hindu community, the Afro-Caribbean community and the Churches community, and everybody is always divided, competing against each other for the bit of funding they get for community recognition. Whatever the issues are, I think they lie with all the communities, but not all communities are subject to Islamophobia in relation to integration. ...

col 421 When we discuss Islamophobia, we also have to consider inter-community Islamophobia. ...

Chapter 3 of the report looks at a particular case. One person said: "I was stopped at Heathrow airport. The policeman said that they targeted me because of my attire. This has happened to me so many times. I cannot report it because the police do not see this as Islamophobic".

col 422 That goes to the crux of the definition of Muslimness in the report ... Muslimness is not just about the attire someone wears. I have a very good friend who is a civil engineer

and one of the most observant people of his religion I know. He does not walk around wearing a particular turban. ... He is a devout Muslim, but he cannot be identified through his attire. If the report is to go the way it seems to be, how can we protect those Muslims who dress normally in society but have in their heart those religious beliefs? ...

Yasmin Qureshi (Labour): ... The issue about Islamophobia is that we know that women who work in headscarves are repeatedly getting attacked and abused. That is where the Muslimness perception comes into it. ...

Dominic Grieve (Conservative): ... Islamophobia ... exists in this country in ways that are having a significant impact on the daily lives of British Muslims ...

col 424 Much of this behaviour falls well short of criminality. Indeed, I should make it clear that I do not believe that any useful purpose would be served by trying to criminalise it, because at that point one would embark on an endless cycle which I think would have no benefit at all. ...

I live, and have the benefit of living, in what is, in a sense, part of what would be seen as a majority community in this country, and I do not think we should underestimate the adverse impact that what I call Islamophobia is having on our society. ...

col 425 "racism" ... started as an attempt to define a prejudice or discrimination on the basis of someone's immutable colour characteristics, but it has evolved over time into meaning something rather broader ... and has taken on a far more cultural and wider context. It can be defined as hostility to the "other" outside one's own group. ...

col 426 **Naz Shah (Labour):** ... although every other Westminster political party has accepted the APPG definition of Islamophobia, one party has not: the Conservative party, which refuses to accept the definition. Indeed, every party in Scotland, including the Conservative party, has accepted and endorsed the definition. ...

... the chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, Martin Hewitt, wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting that the APPG definition of Islamophobia creates some sort of security risk. Let me put this to bed once and for all: this is a non-legally binding working definition, which is why that assertion is simply plain stupid. It is as stupid as saying that, because we have a non-legally binding definition of antisemitism, we can no longer do foreign policy in the middle east.

I am a member of the National Police Chiefs' Council national roundtable for race, religion and belief, which until this week was chaired by Chief Constable Jon Boutcher. He was not aware of Martin Hewitt's letter or concerns. Furthermore, Chief Constable Ian Hopkins, the national lead on matters of policing and diversity from Greater Manchester police, did not know either, and nor did John Robins, my chief constable in West Yorkshire.

What is deeply worrying is not only that Martin Hewitt attributes concerns to his colleagues without actually speaking to them, but that the intervention suggests that the police have a disgraceful lack of understanding of hate crimes. They recognise the importance of having racism and antisemitism defined, but the intervention suggests that the police are blind to the same need for Muslims ...

col 427 If it is down to the experiences of women to define feminism, the experiences of people of colour to define racism, the experiences of Jews to define antisemitism, and the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities to define homophobia, I say to the Secretary of State: how dare he tell British Muslims that our experiences cannot define Islamophobia. If that is not a pernicious form of racism, what is it? ...

col 428 **Wes Streeting:** ... I heard from the Conservative Benches the comment that clearly not all Muslims agree with this definition and that is true, but I would just, through her, ask the Secretary of State to reflect on the same claims that are made by members of my own party about Jewish Voice for Labour and by other fringe groups who consistently seek to undermine the real fight against antisemitism. ... Do not mistake the views of a minority with the views of the majority. ...

col 429 **Naz Shah:** ... If we do not act today, I ask which Muslim's life must go next before

we simply recognise and understand Islamophobia. Never before have I shared this openly, but I do question, as many Muslims across this country do, which Muslim's life will be next and whether it will be mine. ...

It is high time we accepted this definition and moved forward to actually tackle Islamophobia. For those of privilege, a definition—or no definition—is just semantics, but for British Muslims, it is about their safety, the security of their lives and the fear of their sisters' hijabs being pulled off on the streets. It is about their places of worship being attacked while they pray; it is about being denied a job because of their Muslim-sounding name and struggling to make ends meet; and it is about their right to be equal citizens because of the faith they belong to. ...

col 431 Yasmin Qureshi: ... It is time we accepted that a large proportion of the British press incites hatred against Muslims to millions of people every day. This is not about freedom of speech; it is plain, downright lying published in our media, day in, day out. ...

col 432 ... stories that play on public fears and feed prejudices are popular, especially in times when, according to polls, more than half of British people see Islam as a threat to western liberal democracy, and others may not see Muslims as threats but feel softer dislike and that Muslims and Islam are not compatible. The fact is that most people in this country have probably never met a Muslim person and know nothing about Islam, but their reading and understanding of Islam are derived from the media. That is why so many of them, when surveyed, express views that clearly show that they have been affected by what they read. ...

This is not a matter of freedom of speech; it is about the choice of editors to tolerate, if not encourage, bigotry in our papers. We live in a country that rightly cherishes freedom of the press, and that must be respected, but freedom comes with responsibility, which must be upheld. To publish inaccurate stories helps the rise of the far right; the “othering” of Muslims has real-world consequences. ...

col 433 Imran Hussain (Labour) ... Of course we need a definition of Islamophobia ... The aim of the definition is to eradicate Islamophobia ... We cannot eradicate Islamophobia if we do not understand Islamophobia. That is the point. ...

Over half of all religiously motivated hate crimes recorded in 2017-18—almost 3,000—were committed against Muslims. Although abusive behaviour forms the core of recorded Islamophobia, we cannot downplay the number and severity of the physical attacks, many of the offences being of an extremely serious nature. ...

The normalisation of Islamophobia created by the media, public figures and even policies such as Prevent and others, under which Muslims are treated as policing and social policy problems, is extremely damaging. Islamophobia is not just a far-right extremism issue, and the extreme abuse and violent attacks on Muslims are not the only issues they face. The commonplace and trivialised views of Islamophobia send out the message to Muslims that they are outsiders in this country and that they are excluded as society divides into two groups—us and them. ...

col 434 It is fitting during this holy month of Ramadan to point out that Muslims in Britain this year alone will donate tens of millions of pounds to charity, which I celebrate and the Charity Commission praises. Yet, sadly, because of the normalisation of Islamophobia, instead of feeling like they are productive and included members of society, Muslims are made to feel marginalised and isolated. ...

col 435 Lyn Brown (Labour): ... Evil rhetoric has power not just because it causes violence, but because it creates fear and causes children to be afraid because of the faith they hold. ...

col 436 I am also really grateful to the Community Security Trust, to Dave Rich and to others who have offered their time, experience and solidarity to the Muslim community in Newham to help with their community safety efforts. My mosque groups have readily accepted that help because, sadly, the CST gained its expertise because Jewish

communities have also been so consistently under threat for so long. Its knowledge has been won from pain.

The same poisonous rhetoric that has long targeted our Jewish communities is being used to incite hatred and violence by Islamophobes, racists and fascists, and the rhetoric is sometimes directed at both Jewish and Muslim communities simultaneously by the same people. ... While the Nazi lie was that Jewish people were conspiring to control and replace white people directly, many fascists today weave antisemitism and Islamophobia together. Today's alt-right say that so-called liberal elites, with Jewish people such as philanthropist George Soros always front and centre, support migrants and multiculturalism because we are trying to replace white people and Christian traditions with people, beliefs and practices that are both foreign and threatening.

The rhetoric about the so-called "great replacement" is as horrific as it is false. Chillingly, it echoes some of the propaganda that the Nazis used to prepare for the utter horror of the holocaust. ...

col 439 **Chris Stephens (SNP):** ... The Labour party, the Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru have adopted the definition, as has the Scottish National party Westminster group. We are now going to feed that into our internal party structures so that the definition can be adopted at our next conference. ...

col 440 The Scottish Government's publication "Religiously aggravated offending in Scotland" has figures on the proportion of charges for offences that relate to Islamophobia. In 2010-11, there were 15 charges that were defined as Islamophobia, and that number rose to 115 in 2017-18. The number of charges in relation to other offences peaked in 2015-16, when there were 134 charges, of which 57 were recorded during one incident involving a march in Glasgow. It should be noted that the police in Scotland do not record the religion of the victims of religiously aggravated offences, so the data has been derived by analysing police reports and is based on the details of the incident and what the accused said and did. As such, the figures presented on the targeted religion should not necessarily be regarded as definitive. ...

col 441 **Afzal Khan (Labour):** ... This Government have shown through their refusal to accept the definition proposed by the all-party group that they are in pure denial over Islamophobia. To add insult to injury, they cannot even bring themselves to use the term "Islamophobia". How can the Government possibly deal with a problem that they cannot even name? ...

col 442 There is a lack of transparency surrounding the way in which the Conservative party deals with Islamophobia. With its constant foot-dragging on the issue, we demand to know more about this process and how it works. How many complaints has the party received and how many members have been suspended? ...

col 443 **The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (James Brokenshire):** ... As a country, we are stronger because of the contribution that British Muslims make at every level and in so many different ways. That is why it is right that we should celebrate and be proud of this rich diversity, and of how British Muslims make this country—our country—so special and a place that we all rightly call home. ...

col 444 ... the shadow of what happened in New Zealand just two months ago is inescapable ... That is why it was right that as we grieved for those affected in mosques, synagogues, churches and other places of worship up and down the country, we reaffirmed our unity against all forms of hatred. We stood together with that sense of purpose against extremism and the false narratives that so often underpin it. We came together in love and solidarity, underlining not only our condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of this attack, but the fact that all communities stand shoulder to shoulder with our Muslim brothers and sisters, because we know that an attack on one group is an attack on all of us. ...

That is why the Government have taken steps to ensure that, for the first time, police forces

are required to disaggregate religious hate crime data, to allow us to better identify anti-Muslim hatred. ...

No one should feel unsafe while practising their religion. No one should feel unsafe living in their community. That is why we doubled the places of worship fund to £1.6 million, to physically protect mosques and other places of worship and reassure communities ...

As well as doing more to protect vulnerable communities, we must get a firmer grip on the nature of the bigotry they face, which I believe means creating a formal definition of Islamophobia to strengthen that. ...

col 445 It is vital that we get this right and that any definition reflects the experiences of those who have experienced hatred because they are Muslim; that we are satisfied that it will have the positive effect it sets out to achieve ... and do no harm; and that it commands broad support within communities and wider society.

The APPG definition, with the best of intent, does not yet meet those criteria, and further work and consideration are needed; ... The proposal defines Islamophobia as “a type of racism”. I am in no doubt that racism forms a part of the bigotry that we need to confront, but combining race and religion within the definition causes legal and practical issues. As a starting point, it is not in line with the Equality Act 2010, which defines race as comprising colour, nationality and national or ethnic origins, none of which would necessarily encompass a Muslim or Islamic practice. There are potential consequences for freedom of speech. ...

It is clear that we must interrogate this complex issue further as matter of urgency. The Home Affairs Committee is undertaking a review into the issue, but the Government need to do more. That is why we will appoint two advisers. We will ensure that that reflects the need for community representation and drives the process forward, building on the important work already undertaken by the anti-Muslim hatred working group, and other bodies, which will remain central to our efforts to engage with Muslim communities. ...

col 446 **Wes Streeting:** ... Clearly there are points of disagreement that we need to work through, not just as legislators but with communities up and down the country. ... I genuinely believe that the Government have no more credibility to define Islamophobia than the Labour party had to redefine antisemitism ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-05-16/debates/CF834846-65CA-46CD-B955-CDEF42BAFB26/DefinitionOfIslamophobia>

The APPG report referred to above can be read at

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/599c3d2febbd1a90cffdd8a9/t/5bfd1ea3352f531a6170ceee/1543315109493/Islamophobia+Defined.pdf>

The Scottish Government publication referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/religiously-aggravated-offending-scotland-2017-18/>

House of Commons Written Answers

Schools: Racial Discrimination

David Simpson (DUP) [251990] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to tackle racist behaviour in schools.

Nick Gibb: Schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy that outlines measures to prevent racist and other forms of bullying. The Department produces guidance for head teachers and school staff on developing school behaviour policy. The full guidance can be viewed at:

The full guidance can be viewed at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools -](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools_-_A_guide_for_headteachers_and_School_Staff.pdf)

[_A_guide_for_headteachers_and_School_Staff.pdf.](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools_-_A_guide_for_headteachers_and_School_Staff.pdf)

Under the Equalities Act 2010, schools are under a duty take steps to eliminate harassment, foster good relations, and advance equality of opportunity. Ofsted considers how a school complies with its statutory duties and promotes equality of opportunity, and holds schools to account for racism or other behaviour issues.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-08/251990/>

Religious Buildings: Security

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [252122] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the effect of his Department's funding of the protection of places of worship.

Victoria Atkins: The Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme has been in place since 2016. Over the first three years, in total the scheme has approved grants worth approximately £1.5 million with 63 to churches, 49 to mosques, 5 to Hindu temples and 17 to Gurdwaras.

We continuously listen to feedback to make the scheme as effective as possible, and places of worship which successfully bid for funding have described feeling an increased sense of safety. As part of our ongoing assessment of the success of the scheme, we monitor the scheme's application rates and other related management information, seek regular feedback from faith communities and security experts, and undertake site visits at places of worship which have received funding. We have also heard that some places of worship found it cumbersome to gather multiple quotes for all measures, which is why we have removed the requirement under the 2019-20 scheme.

More widely, the Home Secretary has committed to consulting with faith communities to understand what more could and should be done to help protect faith communities at their places of worship. This upcoming consultation will also be an opportunity to assess the impact of the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme further and to identify any potential improvements, which will make the scheme even more effective.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-08/252122/>

Information about the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

Visas: Ministers of Religion

Matthew Pennycook (Labour) [251348] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for Tier 5 temporary religious worker visas were (a) made and (b) granted in the last five years.

Caroline Nokes: Information on 'Tier 5 – Religious Workers' entry clearance visa applications and outcomes (granted, refused, withdrawn, lapsed) is published on a quarterly basis in the Home Office's 'Immigration Statistics', Visas data tables volume 1, table vi_01_q, latest edition at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2018/list-of-tables#visas>.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-07/251348/>

House of Commons Library

Letter from Baroness Williams of Trafford to Baroness Hanwee regarding the average size of grants awarded to individual places of worship through the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme

http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2019-0559/Baroness_Williams_to_Baroness_Hamwee-Places_of_Worship_Security.pdf

Department for Education

Universities told to stamp out antisemitism on campus

Universities must do more to stamp out antisemitism on campus following reports of unfair practices that could amount to indirect discrimination, the Universities Minister has said today ... Chris Skidmore has urged the sector to advance its efforts to tackle unacceptable religious hatred in higher education and is calling on all universities to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism.

The Jewish Leadership Council, Union of Jewish Students and Community Security Trust have raised reports of unfair practices in which Jewish societies have been asked to pay up to £2,000 for their own security at speaker events on campus, which the Universities Minister is concerned may amount to indirect discrimination. ...

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said: There is no place in our society for hatred or any form of harassment and it is frankly appalling that the battle against antisemitism still exists.

Free speech is vital to the independence and innovation that embodies the higher education sector and it must be protected. Not only does it fuel academic thought, but it contributes to a collective feeling of tolerance and acceptance in our universities that challenge injustice.

In this context, it is unacceptable to oblige certain groups of students to incur additional costs because of their race or religion, just to counteract the actions of others. ...

Universities have a responsibility to ensure students do not face discrimination, harassment or victimisation of any kind and provide a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

[Guidance](#) published in February, led by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, clearly states the legal rights and obligations around free speech for all institutions and student unions (SU). ...

Chief Executive of the Jewish Leadership Council, Simon Johnson, said: Following a recent meeting convened by the JLC with member organisations UJS and CST, we are pleased to see that the Universities Minister will be calling on universities to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and advising them that unfair charges to Jewish societies on campus for security are unacceptable.

These actions will ensure that there is a safe, welcoming and tolerant environment on UK campuses and we are grateful to the Government for its continuing support for the welfare of Jewish students.

Campaigns Organiser of the Union of Jewish Students, Daniel Kosky, said: We welcome Universities Minister Chris Skidmore's call for universities to redouble their efforts to tackle antisemitism, including the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/universities-told-to-stamp-out-antisemitism-on-campus>

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

New process set out to establish a working definition of Islamophobia

Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has ... set out the process for establishing a working definition of Islamophobia.

Speaking during a backbench debate on the issue, Mr Brokenshire said he welcomed the work undertaken by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims to develop a definition but confirmed that the Government will not be adopting their proposed wording.

Speaking at the debate, the Communities Secretary agreed that there needs to be a formal definition of Islamophobia. He made clear that the APPG definition raises practical and legal challenges.

The APPG proposal defines Islamophobia as “a type of racism”, which is not in line with the definition enshrined in the Equality Act 2010. The Communities Secretary said that conflating race and religion in conflict with legal definitions could cause confusion, undermine free speech and may not adequately address sectarian hatred.

He announced the government will instead appoint 2 expert advisers to lead a new study in close collaboration with the cross-government [Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group](#).

This new work will build on the definitions of Islamophobia currently being considered, including the APPG definition. It will also draw on a wide range of opinions, to ensure that it commands broad support amongst Muslims.

The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said: I am deeply concerned at hatred which is directed against British Muslims and others because of their faith or heritage. This is utterly unacceptable and does not reflect the values of our country.

To get a firmer grip on the nature of this bigotry and division we agree there needs to be a formal definition of Islamophobia to help strengthen our efforts.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-process-set-out-to-establish-a-working-definition-of-islamophobia>

Crown Prosecution Service

Life sentence for white supremacist in MP murder plot

A far right extremist who planned to murder his local MP with a sword has been sentenced to life ... He also pleaded guilty to making threats to kill a police officer who had been investigating him for an unrelated matter.

The CPS presented evidence that in his warped imagination the virulently racist Renshaw saw the murder as a blow against a “Jewish-controlled state” oppressing the white community. He saw the MP as a traitor who deserved to die as she represented a false democracy.

Before sentencing him the judge at the Old Bailey heard how Renshaw was serving a three year prison term for stirring up racial hatred in two anti-Semitic speeches in 2016.

At another trial last year he was also sentenced to 16 months for child sex offences.

Renshaw admitted being a member of racist group National Action until it was banned as a terrorist organisation in December 2016.

Jenny Hopkins, from the CPS, said: “A crime of this type against anyone is a serious matter but when our MPs are targeted it is also an attack on the democratic process and public service. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/life-sentence-white-supremacist-mp-murder-plot>

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Incidents and Crimes with a Hate Motivation Recorded by the Police in Northern Ireland Update to 31 March 2019

<https://www.psnipolice.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/2018-19/q4/hate-motivation-bulletin-mar-19.pdf>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

LGBT People: Monuments

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [252650] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether the Government plans to commission a memorial for LGBT academics who lost their lives during the Holocaust.

Victoria Atkins: It is important we use the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia to remember the countless LGBT people who faced persecution during the Holocaust.

The Government, with cross-party support, has committed to build a new national Memorial to the Holocaust with a Learning Centre, alongside the Houses of Parliament. The Memorial will stand as a reminder to all in Parliament, and the whole nation, of our responsibility to remain vigilant against all forms of intolerance and bigotry.

Recognising their suffering and the injustices LGBT people continue to face should, of course, not simply be about gestures; it must translate into action. That is why the Government set out commitments in the LGBT Action Plan to promote the representation of LGBT people in public life.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-09/252650/>

House of Lords Written Answers

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Lord West of Spithead (Labour) [HL15445] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 5 February (HL Deb, col 1428), whether they have conducted a full security assessment of the implications of siting the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens; if so, by whom; and whether any such assessment is available for scrutiny.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government funds a national network of Police Counter Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSAs) to ensure owners, operators, and local authorities, are aware of terrorist threat methodologies and steps they can take to reduce their vulnerability to terrorist attacks. This includes the provision of advice and guidance on protective security measures to planners, designers and architects at significant new builds such as the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre. A Metropolitan Police Service CTSA has been part of the security assessment process for the Holocaust memorial, working jointly with the other partners involved.

Security advice, as part of planning policies in England, is provided through the Government's National Planning Policy Framework and associated Guidance. On

12 July 2017, the Chief Planning Officer wrote to all local planning authorities to reiterate the role the planning system plays in ensuring appropriate measures are in place to help prevent terrorist threats. There is also a range of further Government advice and guidance available online, including the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure's 'Protecting Crowded Places: Design and Technical Issues' guide.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-04-30/HL15445/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-02-05/debates/DF4B1B4E-D1A9-433E-B1F9-CF56250E132E/WestminsterSecurity#contribution-1C4DDF7F-D5A4-4CC8-857C-11B94D1772FB>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Lord Truscott (Independent Labour) [HL15619] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with parliamentary authorities about the construction of a Holocaust Memorial within the grounds of the Palace of Westminster.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Regular discussions have taken place with officials from the parliamentary authorities over the last three years to keep them updated.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-08/HL15619/>

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

WhatsApp Data Breach

... col 236 **Tom Watson (Labour):** ... Spyware called Pegasus, created by the Israeli security company NSO Group, has been used to hack the phones of lawyers and human rights activists. The news reports read like a nightmare: a dystopian world of tech-enabled total surveillance. The spyware transmits malicious code via a WhatsApp call. The target does not even need to answer the call for the phone to be infected. According to *The New York Times*, once the spyware is installed, it can extract everything: messages, contacts, GPS location, email and browser history. It can even use the phone's camera and microphone to record the user's surroundings. That is terrifying. ...

col 237 ... The spyware was licensed for export by the Israeli Government. What assurances can the Minister provide to social media companies that any digital surveillance products that the UK exports will not be misused to track and monitor human rights defenders? ...

The attack looks as if it was carried out by malicious actors, possibly other state actors, trying to close down journalists, dissidents, human rights activists and lawyers seeking justice ...

Margot James: I share the shadow Secretary of State's outrage and shock at this latest development and I agree that such transgressions happen far too frequently. ...

col 238 I share the concern that a state could use this kind of attack to monitor human rights activists. That is deeply worrying. I am assured by the NCSC that we should all follow its current advice and that it is investigating the likelihood of any UK users being victims of the latest attack. ...

To read the lengthy question and answer session in full see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-05-15/debates/B7EA7926-DDE7-4E6B-BC9B-47BB7B0BA5CF/WhatsappDataBreach>

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Foreign Relations

Nicholas Soames (conservative) [253445] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the objectives of the Government's diplomatic and political policy on Palestine are for 2019; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Murrison: The UK remains committed to the Palestinian people. Our priorities for 2019 include continuing to support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees. We want to work with the Palestinians and the Israelis to address the financial crisis faced by the Palestinian Authority. I discussed these priorities with the Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr Riyad Al Malki when he visited London on 16 May.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-13/253445/>

Israel: Official Visits

Paula Sherriff (Labour) [253629] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, how many visits Government Ministers have made to Hebron since 2010.

Andrew Murrison: According to a review of relevant records, we are aware of at least seven visits that have been made to Hebron by Government Ministers in an official capacity since 2010.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-13/253629/>

Hebron: Visits Abroad

Paula Sherriff (Labour) [253630] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, on how many occasions Ministers in her Department have visited Hebron since 2010.

Andrew Murrison: According to a review of relevant records in the provided time window, four visits have been made to Hebron by DFID Ministers since 2010. UK officials continue to monitor the situation in Hebron, especially following the withdrawal of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-05-13/253630/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israeli Settlements: Water

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL15459] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the plans of Mekorot Water to build a water pipeline through the West Bank (Area C) province of Qalqilya and Salfit in order to supply nearby Israeli settlements.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our concerns about the damage to water sources and the destruction of

Palestinian agricultural land that has been caused by settlement-related activity.
We will continue to call on the Israeli authorities to cease such activity.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-01/HL15459/>

Israel: Palestinians

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL15460] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about their current withholding of tax revenues which are due to be paid to the Palestinian Authority.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have regularly raised with the Government of Israel our concerns about Israel's decision to withhold tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority (PA). We expect economic and fiscal agreements between Israel and the PA to continue to be fully implemented, including Israel's obligations under the Oslo Accords and Paris Protocol.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-01/HL15460/>

Palestinians: Prisoners

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL15461] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ending of a hunger-strike by Palestinian prisoners in Israel affiliated to Hamas, and of the provision of access by the government of Israel to public telephones in order for such prisoners to speak to their families; and whether they intend thank the government of Egypt for its assistance in this matter.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have made no assessment on this specific issue, the British Government welcomes any steps towards the peaceful resolution of tensions and the end of hunger strikes; we welcome Egypt's role in this process. We regularly raise the situation of Palestinians in Israeli prisons with the Israeli authorities who have reiterated their commitment to treat prisoners and detainees humanely and in accordance with international law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-01/HL15461/>

Palestinians: Health

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL15545] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will meet with Medical Aid for Palestinians and other non-governmental organisations working in Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Lebanon and Jordan to discuss health problems affecting the population of those areas, following violence, blockades, and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East budgetary restraints.

Baroness Sugg: The UK regularly meets with a range of organisations to discuss healthcare for Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and surrounding countries, including Medical Aid for Palestinians, the World Health Organisation, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The UK has made a commitment to UNRWA of up to £80m over the next two years, to help provide medical services and education to Palestinian refugees living across the Middle East. The UK has also provided £3.5m of support to the International Committee of the Red Cross Appeal over the last year to help the healthcare system, particularly in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-07/HL15545/>

Gaza: Contamination

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL15578] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the contamination by heavy metal weapon remnants in Gaza since 2009; and whether any research has been conducted into any relationship between such contamination and low birth weight in Gaza.

Baroness Sugg: The UK remains deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza and we continue to engage closely with the World Health Organisation, UN OCHA, MaP, and other health and humanitarian-based NGOs working in Gaza to ensure we are able to monitor the situation and humanitarian needs there. The Government has not made its own assessment of this specific issue.

To help ensure hospitals in Gaza can continue to provide essential services on a range of health issues, we provided £1.5 million for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) OPTs Appeal in 2018, and a further £2m in 2019. This new funding will contribute to the delivery of surgical equipment, drugs and disposables, wound dressing kits, and rehabilitative prosthetics. It will also help provide physical rehabilitation services for up to 3,000 disabled people. The UK remains engaged on the challenges facing Gaza's health sector and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-05-07/HL15578/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Office: The Foreign Secretary & Palestinian Foreign Minister Malki discussed the urgent need for progress on the Middle East Peace Process. The UK is committed to a just peace between Israel & the Palestinians, which can best be achieved via a two-state solution along 1967 lines.

<https://twitter.com/foreignoffice/status/1129315612528979969>

Andrew Murrison: I reaffirmed the UK's commitment to supporting the Palestinian people in my meeting with Foreign Minister Malki this morning. The UK will continue to work with partners towards a two-state solution.

<https://twitter.com/AWMurrison/status/1129036120510083073>

IMPACT-se

The New Palestinian School Curriculum Grades 1–12 2016–19

http://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Reports_Combined-Selected-Examples.pdf

IMPACT-se with Wasatia Education

Exploring the Palestinian Curriculum

http://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/WASATIA-IMPACT-Booklet_Digital-Format-A5.pdf

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Other Relevant Information

European Economic and Social Committee

Fight against antisemitism is also a fight for a democratic, value-based Europe

... Antisemitism, which many had thought relegated to an inglorious past, has unfortunately returned to become more widespread in Europe than anyone ever predicted. France and Germany report an increase in offences against Jews of 74% and 60% respectively.

Last year, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted the biggest ever survey of Jewish people, covering twelve Member States and involving almost 16 500 Jews. The results were shocking, with 90% of the respondents sensing a growing antisemitism and 30% having even been themselves harassed. ...

Against this background, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) invited Raya Kalnova (European Jewish Congress), Michael Bilewicz (Centre for Research on Prejudice, University of Warsaw) and Joel Kotek (Free University of Brussels – ULB) to discuss antisemitism in Europe at its 543rd plenary session.

[Introducing the debate](#), EESC President Luca Jahier said that the issue was central to what we stand for in Europe ...

Ms Kalnova said that the Jewish World Congress felt an increasing sense of emergency because places of worship, community institutions, and even Jewish shops and homes were being targeted. Wearing a kippa in public is unsafe today, she said, and identifying oneself as a Jew in social media is often an invitation to harassment.

Many Jewish children were unable to attend state schools. Antisemitic threats were becoming more common in schools, universities and workplaces all over Europe. If they send their kid to a state school, the kid is a target. If they send their kid to a Jewish school, the school is a target, said Ms Kalnova, highlighting the dilemma Jewish parents are facing.

Equally alarming is the fact that only 1 out of 10 young people know about the Holocaust. In France it is only 1 out of 5. ...

The definition [of antisemitism] has already been endorsed by eleven European Member States, as well as the European Parliament, the European Council and many governmental and non-governmental organisations. Civil society organisations also need to endorse and apply this definition and offer leadership in addressing the problem. ...

Against all expectations, the conspiracy theory that Jews have too much power is again back in our society, in the media and sometimes even in our parliaments ...

The Jewish people are declining in Europe. In Poland there were 3.3 million Jews before the 2nd world war, and now there are only around 20 000. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/press-releases/fight-against-antisemitism-also-fight-democratic-value-based-europe>

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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

**** Scottish Human Rights Commission Draft Strategic Plan** (closing date 28 June 2019)

<http://www.scottishhumanrights.com/media/1860/strategic-plan-consultation-vfinal-eh.docx>

Online Harms White Paper (closing date 1 July 2019)

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

Opt-out organ donation: organs and tissues excluded from the new system (closing date 22 July 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/opt-out-organ-donation-organs-and-tissues-excluded-from-the-new-system>

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