



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Visas: Ministers of Religion**

**Mhairi Black (SNP)** [274563] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the meeting he is hosting in August 2019 with representatives from faith communities on changes to the immigration rules for (a) Tier 2 and (b) Tier 5 religious workers visas will involve representatives from the Scottish clergy and other religious organisations based in Scotland.

**Mhairi Black (SNP)** [274564] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions his officials have had with (a) the Scottish Government and (b) members of the Scottish clergy and other religious organisations based in Scotland on changes to the immigration rules in relation to (i) Tier 2 and (ii) Tier 5 visas for religious workers .

**Caroline Nokes:** On 8 July I held a meeting with representatives from the faith community about changes to Tier 2 and Tier 5 immigration rules. That meeting included a representative of the Scottish clergy.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-08/274563/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-08/274564/>

### UK Parliament Home Affairs Committee

#### **Evidence session: Inquiry into the Macpherson Report: twenty years on**

**Q388 Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service):**  
... For me, the Stephen Lawrence public inquiry is undoubtedly the single most important influence on the police service that I now lead. To put that another way, Stephen's murder and the subsequent inquiry I believe is the most important thing that has happened in the police service in the last 30-plus years.

The Met that I now lead is so much more transparent, so much more accountable, so much more responsive. It has so many more meaningful, deeper, better responsive relationships with London's very, and increasingly so, diverse communities. We are so much better at dealing with racist incidents and crimes ... We are so much better at dealing with homicides and we are so much better at working with bereaved families. I believe we are very, very much, I could sum it up by saying, in tune with London. It has affected every single aspect of our practice, strategy, policies and tactics in neighbourhoods, investigations, counterterrorism, public order and the way we work with our public. ... Great steps have been taken in the right direction but I am not in any way complacent. The world has changed. There are different challenges and different issues for today's police service and there is so much more to do ...

**Q389 Chair (Yvette Cooper, Labour):** You do have a confidence gap, though, between many communities, particularly black Londoners and white Londoners. ...

**Cressida Dick:** ... We have for many, many, many years done—and now it is our police and crime commissioner who does it—a very consistent survey of both victim satisfaction and confidence, which is measured at the moment through six different elements. We do have a confidence gap and when I arrived as commissioner ... I set out that one of the things I wanted the Met to achieve under my leadership was to reduce the gap between those who have least confidence and those who have most. ...

**Q390 Chair:** The March 2019 figures that I have for London suggest a drop in confidence among black Londoners of 13% compared to last year, with only 63% of black Londoners thinking that the police treat people fairly. ...

**Cressida Dick:** ... I would have to acknowledge that in the last year in all communities in the way that we currently measure it—and I think there is a slight weakness in one aspect of that but nevertheless in all communities—the overall percentages have dropped but the gap over the last couple of years has narrowed a little. ...

**Q391 Chair:** Can you clarify what it is that has narrowed? I do not want to be misreading the figures that I have but these figures suggest that the gap on the assessment of whether or not the police treat people fairly regardless of their background, on that measure it looks as though the gap has widened in the last 12 months.

**Cressida Dick:** Yes, I think that is true.

**Q392 Chair:** That does suggest that the force is going backwards. ...

**Q395 Chair:** What is your assessment of the confidence gap for young black Londoners?

**Cressida Dick:** That is more extreme. Young people in general have lower confidence than older people and young black Londoners undoubtedly have less. ...

**Q400 Rehman Chishti (Conservative):** ... When you see individuals from certain sections of the community being targeted more, based on their ethnic origins, that would lead to having a further gap in confidence in policing with certain sections of the community. How do you address that?

**Cressida Dick:** I really don't think that is what is going on. ... I have absolutely no sense whatsoever that my people are targeting people on the basis of ethnicity or race. I think when you look at the positive outcome figures, which are of course very similar for people of all ethnic origins, that shows that this is being done fairly. ...

**Q412 Cressida Dick:** ... I sit in rooms with some young people who will say to me, "Why should I ever speak to a police officer? I was told from the age of one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, we don't, we won't, we can't, we shouldn't, they are not safe, you shouldn't". The gang people put an awful lot of nonsense into their heads about this as well. I think we all have a responsibility, as I said before, to make sure that of course each interaction is as positive as it possibly can be. ...

**Q418 Toby Perkins (Labour):** ... around 40% of London is from BME communities and I think about 14% of your officers are, so there is still a huge discrepancy between the

proportion of the population that is from these communities and the proportion of your officers. What do you think is the main reason for that?

**Cressida Dick:** ... since we gave you those figures we have increased the officer proportion to just about 15% and overall the Metropolitan Police is about 19% black and minority ethnic. Both of those are quite a big lift in the last few years and I am absolutely determined that that should continue and indeed accelerate ...

**Q420 Cressida Dick:** We have a recruitment process that until recently was largely based on a portal. If you had heard about us and you were interested in us or somebody had pointed you in our direction you go into a portal and do an online application. We are now out much more actively with our neighbourhood teams and with other officers in schools, in colleges, on the streets, in areas of very high African and Caribbean in particular but ethnic and racial diversity more broadly, talking to people about thinking about becoming a police officer, because we are determined to try to increase the numbers. ...

**Q421 Toby Perkins:** ... black and ethnic minority police officers are more likely to be disciplined, more likely to resign or be dismissed. ...

**Cressida Dick:** ... we have slightly narrowed the gap but you are still 1.8 times more likely to be subject to a misconduct allegation if you are from a black and minority ethnic background. However, in terms of what happens in the process, it is pretty equal throughout after that. The outcome after that is very similar, which is a good and positive change because a few years ago the punishments, the treatment of the black and minority ethnic people appeared to be much heavier sanctions. ...

**Q422 Toby Perkins:** Can you tell us about any evidence you have from exit interviews when black and minority ethnic police officers have left the force of their own volition? ...

**Cressida Dick:** ... Our latest figures would tend to suggest that we are losing on resignation a slightly higher proportion of black and minority ethnic officers in the first two years but after that it is very equal. I expect we may talk about progression in a second but if we don't, just to say that every promotion process is now very equal, it really is. ...

... the predominant things that come out are that people find that they want to make a change for career development reasons. They are saying, "I thought this was the job for me but actually I have now been offered this or I can see that and I would like to go somewhere else".

**Q423 Toby Perkins:** That could happen to anyone, couldn't it? ...

But there is a discrepancy, isn't there?

**Cressida Dick:** Sure, but I have to face the fact that young talented black and minority ethnic people may well be very attractive to other employers, for all the reasons that you talk about. ... Secondly, they talk about, as other leavers do, quality of life in terms of some family issues ... They had not quite understood some of the demands of the job.

**Q424 Toby Perkins:** Are they more likely to not have understood them than white officers? ...

**Cressida Dick:** I don't know. I can't tell you that. It is possible but I don't have that evidence. ...

**Q426 Cressida Dick:** ... some talk about feelings around respect and fairness. It is a whole variety of different things. It is a category that we would end up with if somebody said, "I just didn't feel that this was the environment I thought it was going to be". There will be some cultural issues, or they had a disagreement with somebody or whatever. We tend to put that in a different silo pot, but that is the third and least dominant of the issues. ...

**Q428 Chair:** Your description of it makes it sound like it is quite a few fluffy things and it might be a broad range of things. If there are some serious concerns, even if it is not the majority, is that the category that should be being taken most seriously?

**Cressida Dick:** Absolutely. We are concerned about the other two, of course we are, but absolutely and I do, and I think any leader of any organisation in London now might, report something slightly similar and certainly ought to be drilling down and analysing it and working hard at it in the way that I am. ...

**Q467 Cressida Dick:** ... I remain concerned about the perception, unfair though it might be, of unfairness and organisational injustice that can come from positive discrimination. I think there are many examples of that in history. The police service does need to be a place where people can walk into a job with confidence knowing that other people have confidence in them and they do not have a confidence gap themselves and also there is not a kind of pushback, "I should have had that job". ...

**Q477 Stephen Doughty (Labour Co-op):** Commissioner, in April 2003 when you were head of the Diversity Directorate it was reported that the Met was unlikely to ever be able to eliminate institutional racism. More recently, this year *The Guardian* reported that you felt that the Met had transformed and was no longer institutionally racist and that the headline finding from the Macpherson Report was redundant. You said that you did not see it as a helpful or accurate description and you do not believe that the Met was. Can you explain the change in opinion between 2003 and 2019?

**Cressida Dick:** What I was trying to say in that article ... was that if you took a very purist view of the definition it was very hard to see how any organisation, I was not just talking about policing, could prove that it was not in 2003. That is what I feel about the definition; it has been so useful in many respects, so let me say that first of all. I think it has some really important elements within it, which have become almost watchwords for me, but it is now in particular for me, but I have always said ... it is for others to judge, not us. My view is that it is a very unhelpful label now and the label itself, when given, does more harm than good. When you look at Sir William's definition I find the elements useful but I do not think it is useful to say that the organisation is. It is binary; either you are or you are not, and it is very hard to prove you are not.

I am always on the lookout for unwitting, prejudiced, stereotypical behaviour, absolutely. I am looking at my systems and processes. You have heard me say that. We are doing that all the time and I am leading that, but I think that the label now does, as I say, more harm than good. It is something that is immediately interpreted by anybody who hears it as not institutional but racist full stop, full of racists, which we are not, racist, which we are not. ... When I look at the today Met compared with the Met I knew, it is utterly transformed. For me it is not a useful term at all now and I think it is a label that puts people off from engaging with the police, which we need, which reduces trust in the police, which is a bad thing, stops people joining the police, that is a bad thing, and generally affects transactions and the engagement on the street for my officers in a way that is unhelpful and ends up making people less safe, not more.

I am not in denial. I need absolutely no encouragement to keep on working on these issues that were raised initially 20 years ago and all the things that you have been talking about are things that I talk about with my teams most days, but I do not think this label is helpful. ...

**Q478 Cressida Dick:** ... Nobody in my organisation could be in any doubt whatsoever that we have, I have, zero tolerance of racism and that I am never saying the job is done. I could show you countless examples of where we are continually bringing up the issues of race and how we are engaging better with our public, better with people, ... how we are setting out to ensure that we are really, truly inclusive, diverse and entirely responsive to London's diverse communities. ...

**Q479 Stephen Doughty:** I accept you could take a zero tolerance approach to individuals guilty of racism and racist practice and so on, but obviously the Macpherson definition is very clear. It was about processes, attitudes and behaviour, which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist

stereotypes that disadvantages minority ethnic people. It is not the same as having that danger of looking at it just as individuals. It is the structures.

**Cressida Dick:** I agree, but people hear me talking about inclusion, they hear me talking about promotion and about impact on communities. They hear me talking about the efforts we are making on positive action. ...

**Q480 Stephen Doughty:** I am not disputing that, but if you take a complete objective look at the facts and some of the discrepancies we have identified today in a whole series of different areas, the concerns that are being raised, those could be argued to be amounting to processes, attitudes, behaviour, systems, structures that are still leading to institutionally racist outcomes or situations.

**Cressida Dick:** ... I am working on our systems, our processes, our culture, working to improve all our understanding of the various challenges and opportunities of working in this wonderful city all the time. I do not accept that label as a useful label now. I do not think people in my team think anything other than, "She is passionately driving on these issues and she is investing more" and if they stop and think about it in this way, "She is investing more than probably anyone has in it".

**Q481 Stephen Doughty:** Would you argue that the headline finding from the Macpherson Report is now redundant?

**Cressida Dick:** I will say again I do not find the label helpful.

**Q482 Chair:** Is it your view that the Met does not have processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and so on? Is it your view that the Met no longer has any of those processes, attitudes and behaviours? That is the Macpherson definition.

**Cressida Dick:** If you take the top line, "The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin", I do not think we are doing that. ...

**Q483 Chair:** The processes, attitudes and behaviour become the evidence of the collective failure. In order for us to assess whether there is collective failure of an organisation we need to start from whether or not there are processes, attitudes and behaviour that amount to discrimination. The question is: do you think that the Met no longer has any of those processes, attitudes and behaviour?

**Cressida Dick:** No, I do not think we have none, but I think what we come back to is that I am saying it is not an organisation-wide issue. It is not systemic and I do not accept a collective failure. ...

**Q484 Chair:** It is not clear to me whether you are disagreeing with the content or whether you are simply making an assessment of the impact of the phrase. ...

**Cressida Dick:** I am not sure what else I can say, really, Chair. These phrases you have read out are watchwords for me. They have been for the last 20 years. I care about them deeply and I look at them all the time. I do not think the label is a useful label in any sense at all for the Metropolitan Police of 2019 or indeed a police service at the moment. I think to say, "You are. Given that, you either are or you aren't and it is impossible to prove you are not" is not helpful. I think it does more harm than good and that is really all I can say. ...

**Q485 Chair:** Harm to whom?

**Cressida Dick:** To the public, because as I have said it alienates people from their police service. They hear it not as institutional, they hear it as racist, "Okay, so that is the way they are", some people obviously. It stops people wanting to give us intelligence, give us evidence, come and join us, work with us. It is such a toxic thing to say that it affects the public and public safety, I believe, in a negative way and it suggests, also, that the Met of today is just like the one of 20 years ago, which is also patently untrue and unfair in so many respects. ...

**Q494 Stuart C. McDonald (SNP):** ... We took evidence privately from a group of young

folk a couple of months back and I have to say I thought some of the stuff that we heard was pretty staggering. In essence we were hearing that there were parts of London where lots of young folk would not even phone the police if they felt in danger and their impression of the police and their lack of trust in them was not just because of the general reputation of the police. It was more from their own experience of and interaction with the police. Do you accept there are places where there has been a significant breakdown in the relationship between young people and the police, in particular in black and minority ethnic young people, and what work has been done to try to rebuild that?

**Cressida Dick:** We are here 20 years on. If we were to compare the relationship now with what it was then it is infinitely, generally, very, very much better. It just is. I think the relationship between the police and young people from black and minority ethnic communities, and indeed the broader black and minority communities, is hugely improved. I do not accept the phrase “breakdown” as the inference there is that it has gone wrong recently. ...

You may be aware that London has changed a lot in the last 20 years and one of the things is that we have many more people of black African origin and sadly, when you look at a lot of the serious stabbings and murders, a high proportion come from the black African communities. The issues may be different for some of them than they would be for long-established black British or black Caribbean-origin people. ...

You are saying some of it is how they feel they are currently treated, and I accept that because I have read their words too, but some of it is about what they have been told very early in life ...

There is a whole host of reasons and the reason I am going on slightly, apologies, is because I do not want people to think that this is the police’s fault or the police ought to fix it. This is something that is a challenge for our society. ...

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/the-macpherson-report-twenty-years-on/oral/103709.html>

## House of Commons Library

**Briefing: Civil partnership for opposite sex couples**

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8609/CBP-8609.pdf>

## Downing Street

**Prime Minister announces new independent organisation to tackle deep-rooted injustices in society**

A new independent body responsible for challenging social injustices and creating a fairer country has been announced today by Prime Minister Theresa May.

The Office for Tackling Injustices (OfTI) will present future Governments with more effective, data-driven, evidence-based challenge to help drive forward reforms to tackle wide-ranging disparities in society.

Following the approach taken by the [Race Disparity Audit](#) which uses data to analyse how a person’s ethnicity affects their experiences of public services, the new body will use data and analysis to find out what the key barriers are for specific groups and gather data that is currently unreliable or simply not available.

The OfTI will look at disparities in areas including socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation and explore if specific groups of people are unfairly discriminated against or held back from getting on in life. ...

Prime Minister Theresa May said: Deep-seated societal injustice requires a long-term

focus and cannot be eliminated overnight. ...

I am proud of what we have achieved to make the UK a more just society. But there is more to be done now and in the years to come, if we are truly to say that this is a country which works for everyone – no matter who they are or where they're from. ...

Minister for Women and Equalities, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt said: We know that high quality data and evidence are important tools in tackling inequality. We need to know how well we are tackling injustice and the impact on people's lives. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-independent-organisation-to-tackle-deep-rooted-injustices-in-society>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Arms Trade: Israel

**Chris Law (SNP)** [272863] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which weapons and equipment were licenced for sale to Israel on 18 May 2018.

**Graham Stuart:** No licences were granted for weapons on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018 for export to Israel.

However, two equipment licences were granted – one was a Temporary export licence for military training equipment, which was issued for use in the provision of an aerial target for an air defence training exercise. Temporary exports are returned to the UK within the 12 month validity of the licence granted. The second licence was for information security equipment, which was issued for a street light control gateway.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-03/272863/>

### House of Lords Library

#### Peace to Prosperity: United States Plan for Palestine

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LBP-2019-0089/LBP-2019-0089.pdf>

### UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

#### Occupied Palestinian Territory: UN human rights expert says Israel bent on further annexation

One of the UN's independent experts has voiced concern about lack of human rights accountability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, pointing to the actions of "an occupying power seemingly bent on further territorial annexation".

Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, met with Palestinian and Israeli human rights organisations, and government and United Nations representatives during a week-long visit to Amman, Jordan.

He held these meetings in Amman because Israel, the occupying power, once again refused him entry to the Palestinian Territory. "This refusal is contrary to Israel's obligations as a UN member to cooperate fully with Experts of the United Nations," Lynk, appointed

by the Human Rights Council, said at the end of his visit.

Over the course of the week, the Special Rapporteur heard about shrinking civic space and the difficulties faced by human rights organisations in carrying out their work. ... “Baseless attacks on the credibility of human rights and humanitarian organisations and moves by some states which curtail the organisations’ ability to carry out legitimate and essential work is of great concern,” Lynk said, emphasizing concerns particularly in Gaza where the human rights and humanitarian crisis is especially dire.

Lack of accountability was noted as a pervasive problem across the OPT. Organisations engaging with the Israeli legal system expressed concern that very few of the cases in relation to the 2014 hostilities in Gaza had been investigated, much less prosecuted. “Palestinians seeking redress through the Israeli legal system face a multitude of obstacles such that ultimately, justice is elusive and largely impossible to obtain,” the independent expert said. ...

Lynk heard about ongoing risk of demolitions in the West Bank, and that there had been a sharp rise especially in East Jerusalem. ... Ongoing practices related to detention, including the use of administrative detention, and detention of children, were also noted as issues of serious concern. The Rapporteur heard about the situation of children placed under house arrest, and the strain this puts on parents and particularly mothers who often have the responsibility of being the primary caregiver and thus primary enforcer of house arrest for their own children. ...

“Israel’s conduct of the 52-year-old occupation is an affront to modern international law,” said the Special Rapporteur. “The United Nations has stated on numerous occasions that the Israeli settlements are illegal, its annexation of East Jerusalem is unlawful, and its violations of the human rights of the Palestinians breach international covenants and treaties. Now is the time for the international community to hold Israel fully accountable for its actions, and to determine whether Israel’s role as the occupying power has crossed the bright red line into illegality.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24817&LangID=E>

TOP

## Foreign Affairs

### House of Lords Debate

#### Religious Persecution

*col 1933 Lord Elton (Conservative):* ... The Truro report is an impressive piece of work. It convincingly estimates that 80% of all religious-based persecution affects Christians. I repeat that I do not wish to bias what is said. This does not mean that their plight should monopolise our attention, because the other 20% is still a vast number. ...

*col 1934* We all know about flight or fight as an instinctive human reaction but, to decide between flight and fight, you have to decide between “us” and “them”. The awkward thing about that is that it is instinctive: we tend to feel safe among people like us, preferably people we know. When we are among others, the “them”, we are not safe; when we are with “us”, we are. That powerful instinct is very handy for dictators, unscrupulous politicians and scurrilous criminals, as it is very easy to whip up a feeling of “they are other” about anyone who has an obvious marker. ...

*col 1935 Lord Garel-Jones (Conservative):* ... very frequently religious persecution happens when one religion opposes another, and consequently that religious faith can be one of the principal causes of religious persecution ...

*col 1936* **Lord Elton:** ... I welcome the submission of the Truro report ... but its terms of reference are too narrow. It is concerned with only the Christian faith. We are here to try to redress that balance—to show that, as Christians, we believe and see that we are all involved in this together, and that the death of someone of another faith is as much a violation of God's peace as the death of one of ours. ...

*col 1937* **Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour):** ... Last week's debate on the human rights record of Pakistan and possible conditionality of our aid revealed that the Government, by failing to provide refuge in the UK for Mrs Bibi, acted in a cowardly way, probably because of fear of extremists in this country. Another negative example is the Government's record on resettling Christian refugees from Syria. ...

Of the 1,112 Syrian refugees resettled in that first quarter, there were no Christians and no Yazidis. All were Muslims. This appears to be evidence of government discrimination. ...

The Government's response is surely shameful, as if they are uncomfortable about assisting Christians because of political correctness or colonial guilt. ...

Secondly, tolerance should begin at home. If our representations abroad are to be taken seriously, we should be strong on Islamophobia; otherwise, this will blunt our pressure on cases such as that of Mrs Bibi and the blasphemy laws. Equally, if we turn a blind eye to anti-Semitism at home, including in our student unions, we will be less credible abroad. I hope our political leaders will heed this. We should listen carefully to the Jewish community and publicise more of its massive contribution to our national life. ...

*col 1938* Finally, if we feel the need to refresh our commitment to religious freedom, we need go no further than room 52 at the British Museum and gaze in wonder at the Cyrus Cylinder, created in 539 BC—a true symbol of tolerance and freedom, which some view as the first charter of human rights in liberating the Jewish minority from its Babylonian captivity. This is an example for today's Iran and for the growing anti-Semitic movements in our Europe today. ...

*col 1939* **Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench):** ... In 1915 a slow-burn genocide, still unrecognised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for political reasons, took the lives of 1.5 million Armenian Christians. Hitler took the world's indifference to the slaughter of the Armenians as a signal that he could butcher Jews, disabled people, gypsies, homosexuals, Roma and non-compliant religious minorities, famously saying, "Who now remembers the Armenians?"

... just over a century ago, Christians constituted 20% of the Middle East's population. Today it is below 5%. ... A student of those events, the Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin, 49 of whose relatives were murdered in the Holocaust, coined the word genocide, and the United Kingdom signed up to the genocide convention which he helped develop, and which requires us to prevent, protect and punish. ...

*col 1941* **Baroness Berridge (Conservative):** ... It is most welcome that the majority of the 22 recommendations in the report focus on freedom of religion or belief. Only six specifically mention Christians ...

I have read all 136 pages of the report, but I cannot find the evidence or analysis to support recommendation 3: "Name the phenomenon of Christian discrimination and persecution and undertake work to identify its particular character alongside similar definitions for other religions, to better inform and develop tailored FCO policies to address these".

There is a recommendation at page 137 to, "commission further research into the particular features of this phenomenon. This should specifically, include the naming of the phenomenon". ...

One must be very careful of the perception that could be created by a Church of England bishop recommending to a Foreign Secretary that they take charge of coming up with a definition of Christian persecution. The Foreign Secretary used a word that has been introduced to the vocabulary, Christianophobia. Even if that is possible to define, is it wise for the UK Government to do it? The danger is that this word may refer to the religion, not

the people—a criticism similarly made of the word “Islamophobia”. ...

*col 1942* As I said in your Lordships’ House when talking about anti-Semitism, we need to be very clear about the distinction between hating or criticising a faith’s tenets and hating people. The latter is the issue we are dealing with, and the report itself makes the mistake in recommendation 3 by referring to the, “particular character alongside similar definitions for other religions”.

Article 18 protects people, not religions. Anti-Semitism is defined by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and, of course, means Semite people. It is worth noting that both Islamophobia and anti-Semitism are being defined by the communities. Who authors a definition does matter. For instance, if anti-Semitism were to be defined by the Israeli Government, it would muddy the issue and potentially put Jews at greater risk. ... Where is the evidence in the review that this recommendation will benefit persecuted Christians? Where is the risk analysis to ensure that we do not make the situation worse? ...

*col 1943* **Lord Taverne (Liberal Democrat):** ... Ahmed Shaheed, the United Nations special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, said at a humanist conference: “Humanists are attacked as viciously and brutally as any other groups. In many countries around the world, it is illegal to be non-religious or humanist. There are places where leaving the state religion is punishable by a prison sentence or death and also where those who express their non-religious or humanist beliefs can be deemed to have committed a crime of blasphemy and again face the death penalty”.

I therefore trust that the Minister will reassure us that the Government will implement the review’s recommendations as inclusively for the non-religious as for the religious. Further, given the persecution faced by the non-religious around the world, I ask the Minister to commit to establish a similar review into the persecution faced by the non-religious. ...

*col 1945* **Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench):** ... [the Truro report] confirmed my suspicions that, all too often, Foreign Office officials have simply been going through the motions when dealing with religious persecution, including the persecution of Christians. I agree with the recommendation that religious literacy should be an integral part of induction training. ...

*col 1946* **Lord Bhatia (Non-affiliated):** ... As an ex-trustee of Oxfam, I met another trustee, Ansel Harris, and we became very good friends ... We travelled together to Israel, India and the Middle East. We learnt about the practice of each other’s faiths and shared each other’s jokes and stories. Ansel and his wife Lea were to attend my introduction to the House of Lords—but Ansel had another appointment, with his maker.

I attended the funeral and saw very little difference between Muslim and Jewish rituals. A few weeks later, there was a memorial service in Hampstead Town Hall. I was asked to speak and made my speech. Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks was present, and after a few days he wrote an article in the *Times*. I have deposited the full article in the Library, but will quote a few sentences: “At the memorial service recently, one of the speakers was Lord Bhatia, whom he had come to know through his work for Oxfam. It was clear from the tone of his tribute that the two men shared a moral vision and had been close friends ...

*col 1947* What held them together, one a passionate Jew, the other a no less committed Muslim? The short answer is that they cared for something larger than their respective faith communities ... When they saw disease, poverty and despair, they didn’t stop to ask who was suffering; they acted. ...

When we focus, not on ourselves, but on those who need help, our separate journeys converge and we become joint builders of a more gracious world”.

To conclude, whenever someone attacks Christians, I feel that they have attacked my faith. ...

**Lord Farmer (Conservative):** ... It is a truism in our value system that persecution on the basis of anyone’s faith or religion should always be unreservedly decried, not least

because, however nonsensical or even potentially offensive these may appear to non-believers, they provide meaning and belonging ... Deeply held religious views are essential to a believer's identity, their sense of who they really are. ...

*col 1948* Mr Hunt ... pledged to develop a term for anti-Christian hatred equivalent to "Islamophobia" and "anti-Semitism" ... The term "Christophobia", suggested by various religious leaders, is popularly considered to have been coined in 2003 by law professor JHH Weiler, himself an Orthodox Jew. ...

*col 1949* **Lord Carey of Clifton (Crossbench):** ... It is often claimed that war between the religions is the cause of so much unrest and violence in the world. That is certainly not my experience. Six weeks ago I attended a conference in Tokyo, where I had the privilege of sharing in the G20 Interfaith Forum ... Some 200 delegates were there with 4,000 participants. ...

The aim of the conference was not to settle scores between the religions but to share and participate in a common commitment to the world and to the securing of the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations. ...

*col 1950* It is a fact that mainstream religions recognise religious diversity and differences and have co-operated in fostering intrafaith and interfaith religious harmony and dialogue. ...

*col 1951* **Baroness Stroud (Conservative):** ... Around the world, almost 85% of people identify with a religious faith. Demographically, over the next century the world is likely to become more religious, not less. ...

However, it is estimated that around a third of the world's population suffers from some form of religious persecution, with Christians, as we have heard, the most persecuted group of all. It is easy to think of the persecution of Christians as something from the medieval age, relegated to history, but the reality of religious persecution is that it is a very modern phenomenon. As we have heard, Open Doors UK has estimated that, on average, each month 345 Christians are killed for faith-related reasons. Research from earlier this year shows that approximately 245 million Christians living across 50 countries face the most extreme persecution and are at severe risk just for following their faith.

This persecution is increasing in severity and has spread at a significant rate. ...

*col 1952* Even in the UK, although we generally think of ourselves as a tolerant society, perceived freedoms ... have been reducing in the past decade. According to the Pew Research Center's social hostilities index, which captures the degree to which social hostilities with religious motivation are present, the UK has seen a significant increase in hostilities over the past 10 years. The UK now ranks just below Algeria and Turkey for social hostilities towards religion. This is not to say that those of faith in the UK are persecuted, but that we should be careful that we are not undermining personal freedoms at home and that we continue to be vigilant as we create a genuinely tolerant society.

Generally, in the UK today there is a high level of religious illiteracy ... This has led to many situations where religious belief is misunderstood and a move towards the assumption that religious belief should be a private activity, whereas our unique history as a nation clearly demonstrates the weaving of faith through the public square. ...

*col 1953* **The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford:** ... Bearing in mind the very helpful observations of the noble Baroness, Lady Berridge, I hope that subsequent steps will not get bogged down in endless debates on the definition of the phenomenon of Christian discrimination and persecution.

*col 1954* As the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster recognised in their letter to the review, "our Christian sisters and brothers face persecution of an intensity and extent unprecedented in many centuries".

We do not need a definition to know that this persecution is real and ongoing. Our focus now should be on how we arrive at interventions that can end this predicament. This will

take time, but it also takes commitment. ...

*col 1955 Lord Sheikh (Conservative):* ... Although the title of this debate refers to the extent of persecution in this century, I will first touch on an event which occurred in the 20th century but which has had a lasting impact. When discussing religious persecution, I must draw upon the horrors of the Holocaust. This was the state-sponsored killing of 6 million people of the Jewish faith. We must not allow anything like this ever to happen again. I fully support the setting up of a Holocaust memorial and learning centre in Victoria Tower Gardens.

I have previously spoken in your Lordships' House about the abhorrence of anti-Semitism. The fact that anti-Semitism is still prevalent in many societies is a great cause for concern. It suggests that there remains more work to be done in educating communities about historical injustices that must never be repeated. I was disturbed to learn that the Equality and Human Rights Commission felt it necessary to launch a formal investigation into reports of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. Any such behaviour in a political party is totally unacceptable. Something is not quite right in the Labour Party if three Members of your Lordships' House have recently resigned from it. The party must take remedial action immediately.

In December 2018, I led a debate in your Lordships' house on Islamophobia in the UK. Shortage of time means that I cannot go into the details here. I simply ask the Minister whether the Government now accept the definition of Islamophobia proposed by the APPG on British Muslims, to ensure that we can make meaningful change for Muslims in the UK. ...

*col 1959 Baroness Eaton (Conservative):* ... the persecution of Christian minorities has become a marginalised issue in much of the western world. An example of this is the underwhelming response to the persecution of Christians, juxtaposed with the reaction to attacks on Muslims by far-right terrorists. After the Christchurch attack, there was unequivocal condemnation, expressions of solidarity with the global Islamic community and clear identification of the perpetrator. After the Easter Sunday suicide bombings in Sri Lanka, there was a much more muted response, avoidance of clear identification of the ideology of the perpetrators and the rebranding of Christians as Easter worshippers.

Western metropolitan liberal politicians, who have adopted identity politics domestically, view Christians through this lens as white and privileged. This leaves western liberal elites, who seemingly celebrate the decline of Judeo-Christian norms, unsure how to approach cases of religious persecution affecting Christians across the world. Followers of Christianity across the world are becoming increasingly demoralised over the lack of urgency shown by western politicians over global persecution of Christian minorities. ...

*col 1961 Baroness Flather (Crossbench):* ... when I learned about the Holocaust I became a non-believer. I thought, if 6 million people, who prayed and were good people, had no response, I am not going to waste my time. ...

*col 1962 Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench):* ... Mobs who kill and maim fellow citizens do not do so after a detailed study of the actual beliefs and teachings of those they wish to harm, but because of a latent ingrained fear of difference that is all too easily exploited by unscrupulous religious and political leaders. ... when two or more people find enough in common to call themselves "us", they will immediately look around for a "them" to look down on to strengthen their sense of common identity. We see this in a less harmful form in the behaviour of football fans. In the 1930s, Hitler exploited latent fear and envy against the Jewish minority to blame it for all the country's economic and social ills. It carried him to political power. ...

*col 1963 Religions,* which bear the brunt of the suffering, also have the key to reducing conflict, if, instead of focusing on supposed superiority and difference, they emphasise common aspirations and beliefs. ...

*col 1964 Baroness Smith of Newnham (Liberal Democrat):* ... One point about religious

literacy came very close to home on Ash Wednesday. As a cradle Catholic, who went to a Catholic school where all my friends were Catholic, my Brownie pack was Catholic—essentially, as a small child I did not know people other than fellow Catholics—I was used on Ash Wednesday to having ashes put on my forehead, and nobody ever asked me what they were. When I became a school governor in a non-religious school in Cambridge, I was a little surprised to turn up to a governors' meeting and be told by the headmistress, "You've got a dirty mark on your forehead". Over the years, I became a little more used to that. This year, we had votes on Ash Wednesday, and several MPs and Members of your Lordships' House came to mass at 6 o'clock where we had ashes imposed. ... I wondered about taking my ashes off. I did not. People kept saying, "What's that?". I spent quite a long time explaining to people the concept of wearing ashes ... It was very clear that the idea of wearing ashes—which is something that Catholics just do—is something that even fellow Christians find somewhat strange. Even within a Christian country with an established Christian Church, there are things that divide us but divide us in a way that can be easily explained. ...

*col 1965* ... as evidence we took in the Christians in Parliament APPG inquiry showed, there are Christians in this country who feel that their jobs are very difficult to fulfil because their faith puts them at odds with the norms of this country. If we are a liberal country and a liberal democracy, we need to find ways to ensure that people can live out their faith or absence of faith equally. ...

Of course, Christians in this country are not persecuted. I hope that Jews and Muslims are not persecuted in this country either, but anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are clearly on the rise. ... getting into definitions is not helpful but if, even in this country, there is a rise in opposition to people of faith, that is something about which we should not be complacent. ...

*col 1968 Baroness Goldie (Conservative):* ... Persecution of people on the basis of their faith or belief or because they have no faith at all is unfortunately a phenomenon, a malaise, as old as faith itself. Invariably, it is born of ignorance, fear and a failure to appreciate our common humanity. It is the practice of intolerance. ...

It is deeply concerning that in the 21st century, religious intolerance still blights the lives of millions of people around the world, affecting people of all faiths and beliefs on every continent. This year alone, we have seen attacks on individuals, religious symbols or places of worship in countries as varied as the United States, Burkina Faso, the Philippines, New Zealand, France and here in the UK. No one is immune. ...

*col 1969* It would be easy to extrapolate from these examples that persecution is on the rise in this century. Indeed, I think that might have been the apprehension of a number of your Lordships, but I urge a note of caution. While there is no doubt that millions around the world continue to suffer discrimination on grounds of their faith ... our understanding of the extent of persecution of people of faith is limited by the lack of data on religious minorities globally. That is a material gap in our knowledge and a serious deficiency regarding the extent of what we are dealing with. The UK is trying to tackle this head-on, including through our support for the Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development and a pilot project to develop a methodology for tracking data on religious minorities. ...

*col 1970* I am proud of the action that the UK has taken, and continues to take, to promote interfaith understanding, to combat intolerance and to support those who have suffered discrimination or persecution. Our approach recognises that religiously motivated attacks and atrocities often—although of course not exclusively—occur in and around conflict. ...

*col 1971* We will consider this hard-hitting report in depth. We will look at its recommendations carefully and, in doing so, see how they can be applied to our work in support of all faiths and beliefs. This is not a task that government can achieve alone, which is why we will continue to work closely with faith organisations, NGOs, civil society and parliamentarians to break down barriers, build bridges between communities and

promote respect for our common humanity. ...

col/ 1972 The noble Lord, Lord Sheikh, raised the issue of anti-Semitism in this country. I reassure him that the Government are committed to combating anti-Semitism both internationally and domestically. At an event at the United Nations General Assembly last September, my noble friend Lord Ahmad reaffirmed the UK's commitment to education and dialogue to combat the scourge of anti-Semitism in all its forms. The UK also recently took part in an informal meeting of the General Assembly on combating anti-Semitism.

The noble Lord, Lord Sheikh, also raised the issue of a definition of Islamophobia. The Government agree that there needs to be a formal definition. It is vital that we get this right and that any definition reflects the experiences of those who have experienced anti-Muslim hatred. That is why the Government will be appointing two advisers to drive this process and make recommendations on a definition. ...

As members of a successful, vibrant, multifaith, multi-ethnic society, we know that diversity makes us stronger, not weaker. We know that society as a whole can fulfil its potential only when every individual is truly free, including to practise their religion within the law. Armed with this knowledge, the UK will continue to champion the message of mutual understanding, respect and strength in diversity, at home and abroad. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-07-11/debates/02D5B083-95DD-4143-93EE-7867B8E75404/ReligiousPersecution>

*The Truro Report, referred to above can be read at*

<https://christianpersecutionreview.org.uk/storage/2019/07/final-report-and-recommendations.pdf>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill**

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

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 10 days**

**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>

**Civil Partnerships: Next Steps Conversion** (closing date 20 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/civil-partnerships-next-steps-and-consultation-on-conversion>

**Regulation of pre-paid funeral plans** (closing date 25 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulation-of-pre-paid-funeral-plans-consultation-on-a-policy-proposal>

**Islamophobia in Scotland** (closing date 26 August 2019)

<https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=13027>

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