

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Universities: Antisemitism**

**Lord Leigh of Hurley (Conservative)** [HL17160] To ask Her Majesty's Government which universities have replied to the letter sent by the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation on 17 May asking them to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism.

**Lord Leigh of Hurley (Conservative)** [HL17161] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take, if any, in respect of those universities which refuse to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** On 16 May 2019, the former Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore), my hon. Friend for Kingswood, wrote to higher education providers on the importance of tackling antisemitism in universities. This letter urged them to consider adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition and set out his view that, although legally non-binding, it is a useful tool which will help front-line services better understand and recognise instances of antisemitism.

This government believes that adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism sends a clear message that antisemitic behaviour will not be tolerated, and that any instances of antisemitism will be taken very seriously. It is for public bodies and agencies to implement the definition and embed it within operational guidance as relevant. As autonomous organisations, it is for each higher education provider to decide if and how they wish to implement the IHRA definition. The government will continue to call on providers to demonstrate their commitment to Jewish students on campus by adopting this definition in its entirety.

In this letter, the former Minister for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation (Chris Skidmore), my hon. Friend for Kingswood, communicated to providers that the department would be keen to hear more regarding the initiatives taken by providers to address antisemitism and all forms of intolerance, harassment and hate-crime. The following institutions have so far responded to the letter: University of Cambridge, University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University, University of

Oxford, University of Worcester, SOAS University of London and University of Southampton.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17160/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-07-15/HL17161/>

*Information about the letter referred to above can be read at*

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

## UK Parliament, House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee

### Enforcing the Equality Act: the law and the role of the Equality and Human Rights Commission

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/1470/1470.pdf>

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## Israel

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

#### Press briefing note on Occupied Palestinian territories

We are very concerned by the critical condition of a nine-year-old Palestinian child, Abdul Rahman Shteivi, after he was shot in the head by the Israeli Security Forces (ISF) on 12 July, in what appears to have been an example of excessive use of force. While it has been reported that the Israeli Defense Forces have opened an internal investigation, we call on the Israeli authorities to conduct a thorough, effective, impartial and independent investigation into the incident, and to make sure that those responsible for any wrongdoing are held accountable.

The incident occurred during a weekly protest in the village of Kafr Qaddum, near Nablus. While protesters were burning tires and throwing stones at the ISF, Israeli soldiers -- after initially responding with rubber bullets and stun grenades -- reportedly resorted to using live ammunition, without apparent reason to justify the move to use of lethal force.

According to several credible sources, this nine-year-old child, Abdul Rahman, was not taking an active part in the protest. He was reportedly over 100 metres away from the clashes, and manifestly did not present an imminent physical threat to the ISF.

The shot to his forehead resulted in a large hole and multiple skull fractures. Initially taken to a hospital in Nablus, he was later transferred to an Israeli hospital, where he remains alive but in a critical condition. Scans show dozens of fragments in the child's head resulting in serious brain damage, from which he is unlikely to recover, even if he survives. The shooting of Abdul Rahman is one of the latest in a long list of incidents in the occupied Palestinian Territory in which children and juveniles have been injured or killed in circumstances that strongly suggest excessive force was used by the ISF.

At the Israel-Gaza fence, after 10 weeks had passed without fatalities at the demonstrations, a 22-year old man was shot and killed by live ammunition on 26 July. However, over the same period, 102 children, mostly teenagers, have been injured by live ammunition fired by the ISF at the fence.

Use of force must be exceptional, and lethal force should only be used in circumstances where there is an imminent threat of death or serious injury to security forces or other

individuals, and in strict application of international human rights standards. Once again, we urge Israel to review the rules of engagement of its security forces, and ensure they are in line with international standards, applicable in all countries.

Children must be afforded special protection. They must not be targeted, and must not be put at risk of violence nor encouraged to participate in violence.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24862&LanglD=E>

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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>

#### **Domestic Abuse Bill**

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

#### **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>

**\*\* Human rights: Freedom of religion and belief, and human rights defenders inquiry**

(closing date 31 August 2019)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/inquiries1/parliament-2017/freedom-of-religion-and-belief-inquiry-17-19/>

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