



Representing, connecting and supporting Jewish people in Scotland

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime

Chris Ruane (Labour) [433] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many hate crimes were recorded in each category in (a) 2010 and (b) the most recent period for which data is available.

Kit Malthouse: The Home Office collects and publishes statistics annually on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, broken down by monitored strand in the 'Hate Crime, England and Wales' statistical bulletin. The latest available data, covering the period 2011/12 (when the data collection began) to 2018/19, can be found in 'Table 2' of the data tables, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-15/433/>

Twitter: Discrimination

Ian Austin (Independent) [937] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to tackle (a) sexism and (b) racism on Twitter.

Matt Warman: The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems and processes in place to deal with harmful content on their services to keep their users safe. Compliance with this duty of care will be overseen by an independent regulator, which will have a range of enforcement powers.

Alongside the White Paper, the government published the Social Media Code of Practice. This voluntary guidance sets out actions that the Government believes social media platforms should take to prevent bullying, insulting, intimidating and

humiliating behaviours on their sites.

Government has also asked the Law Commission to conduct a second phase of its review of the legal framework around abusive and offensive communications online. This will make specific recommendations for legal reform and is due to report in early 2021.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/937/>

The White Paper referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793360/Online_Harms_White_Paper.pdf

The Code of Practice referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793324/Code_of_Practice_for_providers_of_online_social_media_platforms.d.pdf

Information about the Law Commission review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-to-undertake-phase-2-of-the-abusive-and-offensive-online-communications-project/>

Twitter: Harassment

Ian Austin (Independent) [938] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the effectiveness of Twitter's appeals process for people that have suffered abuse on Twitter.

Matt Warman: The Online Harms White Paper sets out our plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems and processes in place to deal with harmful content on their services to keep their users safe. Compliance with this duty of care will be overseen by an independent regulator, which will have a range of enforcement powers.

As part of the new duty of care, we will expect companies, where appropriate, to have effective and easy-to-access user complaints functions, which will be overseen by the regulator. Companies will need to respond to users' complaints within an appropriate timeframe and to take action consistent with the expectations set out in the regulatory framework

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/938/>

The White Paper referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/793360/Online_Harms_White_Paper.pdf

Welsh Assembly Oral Answers

Racism in Universities

Bethan Sayed (Plaid Cymru): ... Today, you may have seen that the Equality and Human Rights Commission report has revealed that 13 per cent of students questioned had experienced racial harassment, rising to 24 per cent—almost a quarter—of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. But universities are often unaware of the true extent of the problem on these campuses, and there are huge discrepancies between the proportion of students experiencing incidents, according to the report, and the number recorded by the universities. What assurances can you give me today that those strategic plans that the universities are expected to do are going to change this? What are you doing to work with

the sector to ensure that those voices are heard and that they feel that they're being listened to in any structure? They may not get to a point of reporting it formally, but they want to get to a point where they are believed and they are heard and where they can be engaged in a constructive process for the future of the university system.

Kirsty Williams: I have indeed seen the report. It's an important piece of work, although it is very depressing reading. Once again we have to remind ourselves that Wales is not immune from issues of racism. More than simply seeing the report, I met with the Equality and Human Rights Commission recently, ahead of its publication, to have an early discussion with them about their expectations of what more Welsh Government can do. This morning, I found myself at Cardiff University and took the opportunity of meeting with representatives of HEFCW and the vast majority of Welsh vice-chancellors, who were also at the same meeting to raise this report, and I can assure the Member, and indeed all Members here, that I, Universities Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales will want to consider very carefully the recommendations of this report and will want to act on them. One way in which I can do that is including reference in my next remit letter of my expectations on universities and HEFCW to address this point, which I intend to do.

<https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/5854#C235489>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged.pdf>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Abd a-Rahman a-Shteivi

Sarah Wollaston (Liberal Democrat) [1015] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will make representations to the Israeli Government on conducting a criminal investigation into the alleged shooting by the Israeli Defence Force of a 9 year old Palestinian boy, Abd a-Rahman a-Shteivi on 12 July 2019.

Andrew Murrison: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 2 October (PQ 291575). Our Embassy in Tel Aviv has raised the death of Abd a-Rahman with the Israeli authorities, stressing the importance of protecting civilians, especially children. The British Government is very concerned at the high numbers of Palestinian children killed and injured by Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank and Gaza. We have raised the issue of excessive use of force, including use of live ammunition with both the Office of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories and the Israeli Ministry of Defense. We will continue to encourage the Israeli authorities to carry out transparent investigations on the use of live fire.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-16/1015/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-09-27/291575/>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Occupied Palestinian territory: UN expert calls for decisive response to end Israel's 'occu-annexation'

A UN human rights expert said that the international community has a responsibility and a legal obligation to compel Israel to completely end its illegal occupation and remove its barriers to the fulfilment of Palestinian self-determination.

"The status quo of Israel's 'occu-annexation' is endlessly sustainable without decisive international intervention because of the grossly asymmetrical balance of power on the ground," said Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"Accountability is the key to opening the titanium cage that is the permanent occupation. The international community has issued countless resolutions and declarations critical of the never-ending Israeli occupation. The time has long past to match these criticisms with effective consequences." ...

"This 52-year-old occupation – the longest in the modern world – has been characterised by a strong sense of impunity by the occupying power. Israel has rightly assessed that the international community – particularly the Western industrial nations – has lacked the political will to compel a complete end to the occupation. As a result, Israel has rarely faced meaningful consequences for its defiant behaviour," Lynk said.

The Special Rapporteur stated that the international community should take prudent and necessary steps to collectively construct a list of effective countermeasures which would be appropriate and proportional to the circumstances. "Should Israel remain unmoved, it should apply and escalate the range of its targeted countermeasures until compliance had been achieved," he said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25187&LanglD=E>

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Other Relevant Information

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights

Governments and Internet companies fail to meet challenges of online hate – UN expert

In a landmark report that reinforces legal standards to combat online hate, the UN's monitor for freedom of expression calls on governments and companies to move away from standardless policies and inconsistent enforcement, and to align their laws and practices against 'hate speech' with international human rights law.

"The prevalence of online hate poses challenges to everyone, first and foremost the marginalised individuals who are its principal targets," said David Kaye, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression ...

"Online hate is no less harmful because it is online," the Special Rapporteur said. "To the contrary, online hate, with the speed and reach of its dissemination, can incite grave offline harm and nearly always aims to silence others. The question is not *whether* to address such abuse. It is *how* to do so in a way that respects the rights everyone enjoys." ...

"Companies likewise are not taking seriously their responsibilities to respect human rights," he said. "It is on their platforms where hateful content spreads, spurred on by a business model and algorithmic tools that value attention and virality. They have massive impact on

human rights and yet all fail to articulate policies rooted in human rights law ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25174&LangID=E>

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the freedom of opinion and expression

https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Expression/A_74_48050_AdvanceUneditedVersion.docx

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Universities oblivious to scale of racial abuse on campus

Our inquiry report *Tackling racial harassment: universities challenged* has revealed that with racial harassment occurring at an alarmingly high rate across British universities, many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are not only unaware of the scale of the issue but are overconfident in their ability to handle it.

The inquiry found that 24% of ethnic minority students have experienced racial harassment on campus.

Universities are over confident that individuals will report harassment, with 43% of universities believing that every incident of racial harassment against students was reported, and 56% believing that all incidents against staff were reported.

However, two thirds of students who responded to our survey and had experienced racial harassment said that they had not reported the incident to their university.

Less than half of all staff who responded to our call for evidence because they had experienced racial harassment, said that they had reported it to their university.

Students and staff suggested that they did not come forward about their experiences because they had no confidence that the incident would be addressed.

Others said that fear of reprisals also played a part, as two thirds of staff said that better protection from personal repercussions would have made it easier for them to bring a complaint.

Responding to the inquiry's findings, Rebecca Hilsenrath, Chief Executive at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, said:

'... No one should ever be subjected to racial harassment in any setting. Our report reveals that not only are universities out of touch with the extent that this is occurring on their campuses, some are also completely oblivious to the issue. This isn't good enough. More must be done to protect all students and staff on campus so everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential in work and education.'

The report also warns that universities are reluctant to admit the prevalence of racial harassment on campus for fear of reputational damage or putting off potential students.

One student told us:

'The university's response shows that this university was more bothered about covering the incident up to maintain a "spotless" reputation, than it was about tackling racism, sexism, or homophobia – hence a delayed investigation, and the unfair sacking of a whistleblower.' ...

We have made a series of recommendations for the UK Government and higher education providers to address racial harassment, including:

- **mandatory duty on employers:** the UK Government must reinstate third party harassment protections and introduce a mandatory duty on employers to increase protections for staff from harassment
- **adequate powers for regulators:** governments across Britain should ensure the sector regulator and funding councils have adequate powers and that these are

used to hold universities to account on their performance to prevent and tackle harassment

- **effective complaints procedures:** higher education providers must enable students and staff to report harassment and ensure their complaints procedures are fit for purpose and offer effective redress
- **senior-level action on inclusive cultures:** senior leaders should take steps to embed an inclusive culture where staff and students feel confident and supported when making complaints.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/universities-oblivious-scale-racial-abuse-campus>

Tackling racial harassment: Universities challenged

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged.pdf>

Racial harassment inquiry: survey of universities

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/racial-harassment-inquiry-survey-of-universities_0.docx

Racial harassment in British universities: qualitative research findings

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/racial-harassment-in-british-universities-qualitative-research-findings.docx>

CST

CST supports National Hate Crime Awareness Week and launches guide to tackling antisemitism on Facebook

... The need for more action was made clear this week when the Home Office [revealed](#) that hate crimes against Jews had doubled in England and Wales, with 1,326 recorded in 2018/9, compared to 672 the previous year. In 18% of the recorded religious hatred crimes, Jews were the target, while 47% targeted the Muslim community. ...

... CST alongside Facebook and the Board of Deputies have produced a new guide 'Protecting the Jewish community from antisemitism on Facebook' ... For a number of years, CST has worked with Facebook as a trusted flagger to report content which violates both their community standards and the law. CST acts as a critical friend to the platform advising on policy development and content regulation. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2019/10/17/cst-supports-national-hate-crime-awareness-week-and-launches-guide-to-tackling-antisemitism-on-facebook>

Protecting the Jewish community from antisemitism on Facebook

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/4/f/Facebook-AntiSemitism-Brochure-03-DIGTIAL-SINGLEPAGE.pdf>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/divorcedissolutionandseparation.html>

Domestic Abuse Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/domesticabuse.html>

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Welsh Government Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-24 (closing date 19 November 2019)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-09/strategic-equality-objectives-2020-2024-consultation.pdf>

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