

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Grand Committee

#### **Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England and Northern Ireland) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019**

*col 56GC* **Baroness Flather (Crossbench):** ... There is a lot of ritual slaughter in this country, and I have no idea whether those who perform it are in any way regulated. Those who know anything about slaughter for halal meat will know that it is not the way animals should be treated—a prayer has to be said while the neck is being separated from the body. It is just going on, and we do nothing about it.

The other thing is that some halal meat—the majority, some say—is, I cannot remember the word—

**Lord De Mauley (Conservative):** Pre-stunned.

**Baroness Flather:** I thank the noble Lord. I said to the last Secretary of State that meat that is available as halal or pre-stunned should be labelled. He said that that might reflect badly on Muslims. But they too want it to be labelled because the very conservative Muslims will not eat pre-stunned halal. They will eat only halal meat where the neck was cut off while prayers were being said. It is time we looked at that, as it certainly goes against animal welfare.

Really, everything should be labelled. We have always labelled everything in this country; why do we not label halal? Everyone says that all the takeaways now serve halal because they want Muslims to buy it. That is fine, but we should know. Everybody should know what they are eating. People like me who will not buy halal because of the ritual slaughter should also know whether we are eating halal. I would very much like the Minister to look at this issue, which has just been brushed under the carpet: “Oh, we do not want to upset the Muslims”. Why not? They are living in this country; they should conform to our standards.

**The Earl of Cathness (Conservative):** My Lords, I support the point made by the noble Baroness about stunning animals before slaughter ...

*col 60GC* **Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen (Conservative):** ... The Government will not accept labelling changes that could put up the cost of food for religious communities. We expect industry to provide consumers with the information to enable them to make informed choices about the food they eat. The Government are aware that there is public

concern about meat from animals being slaughtered in accordance with religious beliefs being sold to consumers who do not require their meat to be prepared in that way. My right honourable friend the Minister, Zac Goldsmith, was asked a similar question when this SI went through in the House of Commons. He said:

“The previous Secretary of State initiated a series of roundtables with stakeholders from across the board. Those discussions continue and I am now involved in them. I have had some very good meetings with stakeholders in the last month. It is not the right time to pre-empt what we will deliver as a consequence of that, but we will deliver steps that I think will satisfy the stakeholders’ concerns and improve animal welfare at the point of slaughter”. ...

**Baroness Flather:** Will we be able to know what we are eating? I want to know what I am eating. We have always had that in this country. We always tell people what they are eating. There are many countries where horses are normally eaten, but here there was a big hoo-hah about it. Why should it bother the people for whom the ritual slaughter is done? They should be happy that they know what they are eating.

**Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen:** The Government are aware that there is public concern about that. I think that that is part of the round table discussions going on at the moment with my right honourable friend.

**Lord Rooker (Labour):** Are some of the round table discussions about the fact that all New Zealand lamb imported into the UK is halal, and it is all pre-stunned? Is it a fact that the meat used in the National Health Service is all halal and patients are never told and that the meat in prisons is all halal and prisoners are never told? Should they not be?

**Baroness Flather:** There is meat in schools as well.

**Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen:** I hear what the noble Baroness and the noble Lord say, and I will certainly take it back to the department. As I said earlier, it is being looked into. ...

*col 61CG* **Baroness Flather:** There is still the question of whether there is anything to look at the people who practise these ritual killings. Do we know anything about them, such as whether they are in any way competent?

**Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen:** Everybody who works in an abattoir is registered.

**Baroness Flather:** I am not talking just about people. Is there something for abattoirs? I do not know.

**Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen:** All abattoirs are registered. There certainly are some illegal ones, but they should not be allowed to practise. ...

*Motion agreed.*

**To read the full transcript see**

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-10-30/debates/D5A01CCA-BF95-476E-8981-692C690459A1/WelfareOfAnimalsAtTheTimeOfKilling\(EnglandAndNorthernIreland\)\(Amendment\)\(EUExit\)Regulations2019](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-10-30/debates/D5A01CCA-BF95-476E-8981-692C690459A1/WelfareOfAnimalsAtTheTimeOfKilling(EnglandAndNorthernIreland)(Amendment)(EUExit)Regulations2019)

## House of Commons Written Answer

### Muslims: Discrimination

**Yasmin Qureshi (Labour)** [4975] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Integrated Communities Action Plan published in February 2019, whether his Department has facilitated meetings between the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group and the Independent Press Standards Organisation to help them to develop guidance for editors and journalists to tackle unnecessary negative portrayals of Muslims in the media.

**Jake Berry:** Members of the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group continue to engage with the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) on the

development of guidance for editors and journalists on the reporting of Muslims in the media. Members are currently working with IPSO to develop and refine the guidance. This work is an important contribution towards commitments set out in the Integrated Communities Action Plan and Government's Hate Crime Action Plan refresh.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-24/4975/>

*The Integrated Communities Action Plan, referred to above can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/778045/Integrated Communities Strategy Govt Action Plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778045/Integrated_Communities_Strategy_Govt_Action_Plan.pdf)*

*The Hate Crime Action Plan refresh, referred to above, can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/748175/Hate crime refresh 2018 FINAL WEB.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF)*

## House of Lords Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

### **Racial Discrimination: Football**

**Lord Bassam of Brighton (Labour)** [HL180] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many football-related racist incidents were recorded in each year since 2009.

**Lord Bassam of Brighton (Labour)** [HL181] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to investigate the possibility of increasing the penalties for football-related racist attacks and incidents.

**Lord Bassam of Brighton (Labour)** [HL182] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the Football (Disorder) Act 2000 with a view to increasing penalties for racist incidents.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We abhor racism, which has no place in football and must not be tolerated. Racist chanting or abuse may be an offence under section 3 of the Football (Offences) Act 1991 or sections 4, 4A or 5 of the Public Order Act 1986. Offences under sections 4 and 4A of the 1986 Act carry a maximum penalty of six months' imprisonment and are capable of being charged as a racially or religiously aggravated offence. In addition, the court must impose a preventative Football Banning Order following conviction for these offences if making an order would help to prevent football-related violence or disorder. Football Banning Orders prohibit the subject from attending regulated football matches for between three and ten years and can impose additional conditions if necessary.

Data on police reported football-related racist incidents for football seasons 2012/13 to 2018/19 is shown in the table below. No earlier data is available. During the 2017/18 football season, the Home Office's UK Football Policing Unit commenced a new working arrangement with the Football Association and Kick It Out to ensure police are aware of football-related racist incidents that otherwise would not have been reported.

Season	Number of police reported football-related racist incidents
2012/13	94
2013/14	99
2014/15	78
2015/15	68
2016/17	70

2017/18	94
2018/19	152

We have a strong legal framework in place to deal with the perpetrators of racism and other hate crime. The Law Commission is carrying out a full review of the coverage and approach of current hate crime legislative provisions, including in the context of football.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-17/HL180/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-17/HL181/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-17/HL182/>

## Scottish Parliament Motion

**S5M-19662 Fulton MacGregor (SNP): Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged** – That the Parliament notes the inquiry into racial harassment in publicly-funded universities by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) conducted in 2019; welcomes the publication of the inquiry findings in the report, *Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged*; understands that 11% of students from an ethnic minority background studying at Scottish universities reported having experienced racial harassment; considers with regret that a disconnect exists between how victims and universities feel incidents of racial harassment are reported; supports the response by Universities Scotland, which has committed to tackling racial harassment with a series of actions, and considers that Scotland aspires to be a global destination of choice for people to live, study and work.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-19662>

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 Lords Written Answers

#### Palestinians: Detainees

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL167] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the ruling by the Jerusalem Magistrate Court on 10 October which banned the publication of any details regarding certain detainees' cases and therefore prevents Addameer the Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association from expressing concern for the well-being and health of those detainees.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made any assessment on this issue, the Government has concerns about mistreatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, and about Israel's respect of its obligations in this regard under applicable international law. We have raised concerns over treatment of Palestinian

minors detained by the Israeli authorities on many occasions, most recently on 27 August. We have concerns over the continued transfer of Palestinian child and adult detainees to prisons inside Israel in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-16/HL167/>

### **Gaza: Breast Cancer**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL168] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of, and access to, urgent treatment for breast cancer by women in Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on movement and access in Gaza, and the impact that this is having on the humanitarian situation. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the matter of medical permits with the Israeli authorities. Israeli restrictions severely restrict the movement of medical professionals, patients and families from Gaza, hampering the provision of quality health services, as well as impacting Palestinians in the West Bank. The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa also raised this issue with the Israeli Ambassador on 22 October. The situation in Gaza is particularly acute, and is compounded by frequent closure by Egypt of the Rafah crossing, preventing urgent medical cases from seeking treatment in Egypt. A lasting resolution to the situation is needed that will ensure that all those who are in need of medical attention and their families have unimpeded access to healthcare provisions. We call on the Israeli Government to ease restrictions further and for Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt to work together to ensure a durable solution for Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-16/HL168/>

### **Palestinians: Political Prisoners**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL301] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel about the reported detention of (1) Adnan Ghaith, (2) Shadi Mutawar, and (3) Yasser Darwish; and what responses they have received.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not raised these specific cases, we urge Israel to respect the role of Palestinian institutions and politicians serving Palestinians in East Jerusalem. British ministers and officials continue to make repeated representations to the Israeli Government about their extensive use of administrative detentions. According to international law, these should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-22/HL301/>

## **Scottish Parliament Motion**

**S5M-19652: John Finnie (Green): Israeli Soldier Receives One-month Sentence Over Death of Gaza Teenager** – That the Parliament notes reports of the decision of a military court in Israel to convict an unnamed Israeli soldier over the killing of a 15-year-old Gazan protester during a series of demonstrations in 2018 referred to as the Great March of Return; understands that the protester was identified by Gazan officials as Othman Helles;

further understands that the soldier accepted a plea deal of the charge of disobeying an order leading to a threat to life or health, punished with a “month of military labour” and a demotion in rank; considers that this sentence is wholly disproportionate to the death of Mr Helles; notes the comments by Santiago Canton, the chair of the UN Independent Inquiry on the 2018 Gaza Protests, that there were “reasonable grounds to believe that Israeli soldiers committed violations of international human rights and humanitarian law”, and calls on the Israeli Government to give what it considers proper justice to Mr Helles’ family and all of those living in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-19652>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Israel: UN experts express grave concerns over detention of Heba Al-Labadi, call for her release**

UN human rights experts called on Israel to immediately release Heba Al-Labadi, a Palestinian woman with Jordanian nationality, who was placed in solitary confinement after an Israeli military court sentenced her to administrative detention without trial. ...

“We are gravely concerned that Ms. Al-Labadi was subjected to treatment during her interrogation that could amount to torture and ill-treatment,” the experts said. “We are especially troubled by the fact that Ms. Al Labadi was denied access to a lawyer for a period of three weeks and has not yet been allowed to see her family.”

On 24 September, an Israeli military court sentenced Ms. Al-Labadi to five months of administrative detention, and transferred her to Kishon detention facility (Al-Jalamah), where she was held in solitary confinement. ... Following her sentencing, Ms. Al-Labadi launched a hunger strike, which is currently in its sixth week. As a result, she has been suffering from several medical conditions. On 27 October she was admitted to hospital in Haifa.

“Ms. Al-Labadi’s deteriorating health as a result of her protest is of serious concern,” the experts said. “The use of solitary confinement against Ms. Al-Labadi for 30 consecutive days during her administrative detention is not a legitimate instrument of a State as it may cause severe mental and physical pain and suffering.” UN experts have previously stated that prolonged periods of solitary confinement may amount to torture. ...

While administrative detention as such is not prohibited under international law, it is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and subject to stringent safeguards. Israel practices a form of administrative detention that relies on the use of secret evidence, fails to provide reasons for the arrest, allows for indefinite detention through consecutive administrative detention orders without charges or trials and is often based on military jurisdiction, among others.

“We call on Israel to abolish this form of administrative detention, where individuals are deprived of core due process guarantees,” the experts said. “Israel’s wide practice of administrative detention is incompatible with international humanitarian law and international human rights law.”

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25236&LanglD=E>

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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>

Briefing for Lords Stages

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2019-0146/LLN-2019-0146.pdf>

#### **\*\* Domestic Abuse Bill**

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

**Correspondence from Victoria Atkins MP to Carolyn Harris MP following the second reading**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/843520/2019-10-24 Letter to Carolyn Harris post 2nd Reading FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843520/2019-10-24_Letter_to_Carolyn_Harris_post_2nd_Reading_FINAL.pdf)

### 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