



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Equality

**Caroline Lucas (Green)** [5427] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the Equality Act 2010, what assessment she has made of the effect of leaving the EU on people in the UK in respect of (a) age, (b) disability, (c) gender reassignment, (d) pregnancy and maternity, (e) race, (f) religion or belief (g) sex and (h) sexual orientation; and if she will make a statement.

**Victoria Atkins:** The Government is committed to retaining all the protections in the Equality Act 2010 and equivalent legislation in Northern Ireland, when we leave the EU, so our leaving will have no effect on protections against discrimination, harassment or victimisation in relation to any of the protected characteristics listed in the Question.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-25/5427/>

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Hate Crime

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative)** [HL176] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to encourage the reporting of hate crime, and (2) to achieve successful prosecutions for hate crime.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Police recorded hate crime has more than doubled over the period 2012/13 to 2018/19, with 103,379 hate crimes being recorded in 2018/19- an increase of 10 per cent compared with 2017/2018 (94,121 offences). This increase is thought to be driven largely by improvements in police recording practices, as well as better identification of hate crimes, willingness of victims to come forward, and a genuine increase in these offences around certain events. Better recording is an important part of how to tackle hate crime and support victims.

However, this Government recognises that there is no room for complacency given

the impact of hate crimes on victims, their families and wider communities. The Hate Crime Action Plan refresh published in October 2018 sets out a comprehensive plan for tackling the issue. This includes work under 5 key themes: preventing hate crime by challenging beliefs and attitudes; responding to hate crime within our communities; increasing the reporting of hate crime; improving support for victims of hate crime; and building our understanding of hate crime.

A number of steps have been taken to improve the effectiveness of prosecutions. The CPS has delivered mandatory face to face training for prosecutors and conducts assurance checks on hate crime cases to ensure they are dealt with effectively. The CPS Hate Crime Annual Report shows that the conviction rate for hate crime prosecutions remains steady at 84.3% and the proportion of cases where the CPS was successful in achieving uplifted sentences increased from 67.1% in 2017-18, to 73.6% in 2018-19.

Work includes supporting reporting mechanisms such as the police reporting portal TrueVision, the online hate crime hub and third party reporting centres like Tell MAMA as well as improving general understanding of hate crime through activities like the public awareness campaign.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-17/HL176/>

*The 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)

*The CPS report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/CPS-Hate-Crime-Annual-Report-2018-2019.PDF>

#### **Universities: Racial Harassment**

**Lord Boateng (Labour)** [HL347] To ask Her Majesty's Government what proposals they will make in response to the report of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Tackling Racial Harassment: Universities Challenged, published on 23 October.

**Baronees Berridge:** Racial harassment is unacceptable and we cannot tolerate staff and students being victims of it at our world-leading universities.

Higher education providers have clear responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and should discharge their responsibilities fully and have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, to investigate and swiftly address incidents reported to them.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) inquiry has made an important contribution to our knowledge of the extent of racism in higher education. The government will look closely at EHRC's recommendations. Although some progress has been made, it is clear there is still more to do. Universities have clear responsibilities in this regard and I expect them to take these seriously.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-23/HL347/>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

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

#### **Universities: Racial Harassment**

**Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated)** [HL370] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Universities UK about the steps it is taking to reduce racial abuse on campuses.

**Baroness Berridge:** Racial harassment is unacceptable and we cannot tolerate

staff and students being victims of it at our world-leading universities. Higher education providers have clear responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and should discharge their responsibilities fully and have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, to investigate and swiftly address incidents reported to them.

The government will continue to work closely with partners, including Universities UK (UUK) and the Office for Students (OfS), to drive progress on matters of racial harassment and hatred in higher education. Department for Education officials meet with UUK and OfS at least quarterly to discuss progress on this area, drive momentum and communicate the government's priorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-10-23/HL370/>

## Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

### Terms of Reference – Independent Antisemitism Adviser

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/843734/Independent\\_Antisemitism\\_Adviser\\_ToR.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843734/Independent_Antisemitism_Adviser_ToR.pdf)

## Scottish Government FoI Release

Various questions surrounding Scottish Government antisemitism policy:

FOI reference: FOI/201900004948

### ... 1. Definition of antisemitism

#### **Q1a. Has the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition of Antisemitism ('IHRA Definition') been adopted by the Scottish Government?**

See [antisemitism.uk/definition](https://www.antisemitism.uk/definition) for more information about the IHRA Definition. The Scottish Government formally adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism in June 2017.

#### **Q1b. If the IHRA Definition has been adopted, please provide the date that the motion to do so was approved.**

In a Parliamentary Statement on 13 June 2017, the then Communities and Equalities Secretary, Angela Constance, announced the adoption of the International Holocaust Memorial Trust's working definition of anti-Semitism as part of the Scottish Government's plan of action to implement the recommendations made by the Independent Advisory Group on hate crime, prejudice and community cohesion.

#### **Q1c. If the IHRA Definition has been adopted, was the IHRA Definition adopted in its entirety including all of the examples?**

The Scottish Government formally adopted the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism in June 2017, including all of the examples of anti-Semitism which accompany the definition.

#### **Q1d. If all of the examples were not adopted, which ones were omitted?**

See Q1c.

### **Q2. Codes of Conduct**

#### **Q2a. If adopted, has the IHRA Definition been incorporated into the officers' and employees' code of conduct and conditions of employment?**

The IHRA definition is not specifically mentioned in our codes of conduct however our standards of behaviour are clear that all staff should be treated equally irrespective of their sex, marital/civil partnership status, maternity/paternity status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, working pattern, employment status, gender identity (transgender), caring responsibility, or trade union membership. The Civil Service

Code underpins all our codes of conduct and sets out the core values of the Civil Service and the standard of behaviour expected of all civil servants – including behaviour outside of work and in dealings with one another. One of our core values is impartiality which states that:

we must carry out our responsibilities in a way that is fair, just and equitable and reflects the Civil Service commitment to equality and diversity; and we must not act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests. ...

### **Q3. Complaints**

**Q3a. How many formal complaints of anti-Semitic conduct has the Scottish Government considered between 1st January 2017 and 31st December 2018 against members, officers or government employees?**

During the period 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018 there have been no anti-Semitic complaints received from Scottish Government employees. ...

### **Q4. Equality, diversity & training**

... **Q4b. What training does the Scottish Government provide to its members, officers and employees specifically on antisemitism as opposed to generally against all forms of discrimination prohibited under the Equality Act 2010?**

None.

All of the Executive Team of the Scottish Government and a number of senior civil servants act as equality and diversity champions. We have a race equality network to help with awareness raising and we have a Director General and a senior civil servant who are champions for Faith and Belief issues and convene sessions to ensure people of all faiths and none are given respect and a voice in our organisation. ...

### **Q5. Prevent coordinator**

**Q5a. Who is the Scottish Government's Prevent Coordinator? ...**

We do not have a Scottish Government Prevent Coordinator in Scotland. The work in relation to safeguarding those vulnerable to terrorism sits within the Connected Communities Division in the Local Government and Communities portfolio. The Scottish Government plays a key role in safeguarding vulnerable individuals from being drawn into terrorism through its work supporting the delivery of this strategy in Scotland. National Security, including the Counter-Terrorism Prevent programme, is reserved to the UK Government and the way we deliver the Prevent strategy in Scotland reflects our unique needs and communities.

**To read the full Fol response see**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-201900004948/>

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## **Israel**

### **House of Commons Written Answer**

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Ian Paisley (DUP) [4316]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the Middle East peace process.

**Andrew Murrison:** The UK is strongly supportive of a regional approach to the Middle East peace process and has regular discussions with the US and multilateral institutions, including the UN and EU, to support resolutions and policies that encourage both sides to take steps that rebuild trust which is crucial for negotiations

to succeed. The Arab League and Arab states have a key role in the peace process and we are also discussing with them ways we can move the situation forward.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-23/4316/>

## United Nations

### **Despite Divergent Views on Middle East Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, First Committee Delegates Say ‘We Are in the Same Boat’, Must Join Forces to Reach Safe Shores**

... **Aidan Liddle (United Kingdom)** said his country ... supported creating a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, with arrangements freely arrived at by all States in the region. He drew attention to threats to international peace and security posed by the development of ballistic missiles in Iran ... He also called upon the Russian Federation to demonstrate its compliance with arms control regimes and to align itself with international norms. ...

**Ofer Menashe Moreno (Israel)** said the core struggle in the Middle East is between those striving for stability and those who, together with non-State actors, support terrorism and aim at destabilizing the region to promote radical agendas. Showing a blind eye to Iran’s aggressive acts will only worsen the regional security dilemma, he said, adding that Iran and Syria are clear examples of countries that supply lethal weapons to terrorist organizations. As long as a culture of non-compliance with arms control and non-proliferation treaties persists in the Middle East, it will be impossible to promote any regional process. “We are in the same boat and we must work together to reach safe shores,” he said. ...

**Heidar Ali Balouji (Iran)** said the Middle East will become secure only when United States troops withdraw. ... The United States role in creating and assisting terrorist groups, using them as proxies against independent countries, has resulted in catastrophes. Since its inception, the Israeli regime has been engaged in brutal occupation, brazen terrorism, military aggression and all kinds of international crimes with the support of the United States. ...

The representative of **Syria** said ... Israel is repeating false information in a bid to hide its crimes, and the United States is not in a good position to preach to others. ...

The representative of **Israel** underscored the number of Syrians killed with chemical weapons going back to the 1980s and the flow of refugees, some of whom came to Israel.

The representative of **Iran** highlighted the crimes that the Israeli regime is committing, adding that it must correct its behaviour in the region and the occupied territories. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/gadis3637.doc.htm>

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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>

Public Bill Committee not to proceed further with the consideration of the Bill

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-10-31/debates/d9cc4d30-cb60-4aea-adcd-7617d05964d2/DomesticAbuseBill\(ThirdSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-10-31/debates/d9cc4d30-cb60-4aea-adcd-7617d05964d2/DomesticAbuseBill(ThirdSitting))

## **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