



# 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*

#### **Antisemitism: Yorkshire and the Humber**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [8294] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of antisemitic hate crime took place in (a) South Yorkshire and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber in 2019.

#### **Hate Crime: Islam**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [8295] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many incidents of Islamophobic hate crime took place in (a) South Yorkshire and (b) Yorkshire and the Humber in 2019.

**Kit Malthouse:** The Home Office collects data on the number of religious hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales by perceived religion of the victim.

The latest available data, for 2018/19, can be found in 'Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018/19' which can be accessed here:

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

The number of religious hate crimes for 2018/19, where the perceived religion of the victim was Jewish or Muslim, recorded by South Yorkshire Police and for the Yorkshire and Humber region are shown in the table.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8294/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8295/>

#### **Racial Discrimination**

**Sarah Owen (Labour)** [9149] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many reported incidents of racism have occurred in each year since 2010.

**Kit Malhouse:** 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 (including race) 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/2020-01-28/9149/>

### **Vandalism: Religious Buildings**

**Andrea Jenkyns (Conservative)** [426] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to recent acts of vandalism on a Synagogue and a Mosque in London, if she will introduce further measures to protect religious buildings and congregations.

**Victoria Atkins:** Attacks on places of worship are completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Through the Government's Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, and the Jewish Communities Protective Security Grant, the Government provides reassurance and appropriate measures to better protect all faith groups from hate crime. Funding for the Places of Worship scheme has been increased in the current year to £1.6 million (double the amount awarded last year), and the Chancellor has announced a further increase to £3.2 million for 2020/21. Tackling faith related hate crime is a key commitment in the Cross-Government Hate Crime Action Plan, and we regularly engage with faith representatives and organisations.

In addition, we have committed £5 million over three years for the provision of security training to places of worship, and we have committed to consult with communities on what more can and should be done to protect faith communities.

We have also asked the Law Commission to conduct a wide-ranging review into hate crime, looking at the breadth of hate crime legislation, and whether new strands should be introduced.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-06/426/>

*Information about the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-protective-security-funding-scheme-open-for-applications>

*Information about the Jewish Communities Protective Security Grant, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-for-tighter-security-to-protect-jewish-schools-from-anti-semitism>

*The Action Plan 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)

### **Transplant Surgery: Ethnic Groups**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [9031] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that waiting times for BAME patients for organ transplants are reduced after the introduction of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019.

**Caroline Dinenge:** NHS Blood and Transplant works closely with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities to encourage more people to register to donate and to address barriers to organ donation. Since its launch in April 2019,

NHS Blood and Transplant's communication campaign has developed specific materials to resonate with diverse audiences and communities, including translating materials into different languages and taking into account different faith and beliefs. In addition, the BAME Community Investment Scheme provides small grants to community-led organisations to raise awareness of the law change and the Government has so far provided £200,000 of funding for 26 projects.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-28/9031/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Hate Crime

**Lord Black of Brentwood (Conservative)** [HL546] Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all protected characteristics from hate crime are treated equally under sentencing laws.

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Law Commission have been invited to review the law relating to hate crime and to make recommendations to the Government for its reform. The review began in March 2019.

Specifically, the Law Commission have been asked to consider the current range of offences and aggravating factors in sentencing, and to make recommendations on the most appropriate models to ensure that the criminal law provides consistent and effective protection from conduct motivated by hatred towards protected groups or characteristics. The review will also take account of the existing range of protected characteristics, identifying any gaps in the scope of protection currently offered under the law and making recommendations to promote a consistent approach.

The Law Commission plan to issue a consultation on this matter in early 2020. Further information on the review can be found on the Law Commission webpage at: <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

Under the current law, the courts already have a duty to treat evidence of hostility based on someone's sexual orientation or transgender identity as an aggravating factor when considering the seriousness of an offence. Where an offence is proven, this would merit an increase in penalty within the maximum available for that offence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-20/HL546/>

### Religion: Freedom of Expression

**Lord Vinson (Conservative)** [HL727] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Viscount Younger of Leckie on 21 January (HL187), what criteria they use to assess what constitutes a "legitimate criticism" of a religion when investigating any incident that has been reported by someone who has perceived it to "be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's religion or perceived religion"; and what steps they take to ensure freedom of expression is upheld.

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** Once a hate crime has been reported it is for the police to investigate whether a hate crime has been committed, in line with the relevant legislation, and to refer cases to the Crown Prosecution Service to decide whether there should be a charge.

In order for a crime to be charged and prosecuted as a hate crime, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) uses the legal definitions contained in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA 1998) and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (CJA 2003).

The CPS assesses each case on its individual facts and circumstances.

Prosecutions can only be brought in line with legislation and in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

The CPS legal guidance on hate crime recognises the right to freedom of expression set out in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The legal guidance makes it clear that it is not only speech which is well-received and popular that is protected but also speech which is potentially offensive, shocking or disturbing. The CPS seeks to balance the right to freedom of speech and expression against the duty of the state to act proportionately.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-22/HL727/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL187/>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Oral Answer

#### Global Britain

**Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat):** If the concept of a global Britain is to have any meaning and value, surely it must have respect for human rights and an international rules-based order at its heart. With that in mind, will the Foreign Secretary reconsider the unqualified support he gave to President Trump last week in respect of the so-called peace plan for Palestine? Will the right hon. Gentleman repudiate the proposed annexation of the west bank and at long last support the recognition of a Palestinian state?

**Dominic Raab:** I gently say to the right hon. Gentleman that I do not think he has read the detail of this. Whatever else he may disagree with, the one thing that the plan put forward by the US included was a recognition of and commitment to a two-state solution. We have been absolutely clear that that is the only way in which the conflict can be resolved.

We support a plan and a mechanism to get the parties out of the destabilising vacuum and void that there has been of late, and around the table. The plan is only the point of departure. I share some of the concerns expressed around settlements; I think there is also a question around the status of Jerusalem. But above all, rather than just rejecting the plan, it is important that we try to bring the parties together around the negotiating table. That is the only path to peace and to a two-state solution.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-03/debates/2002039000001/GlobalBritain#contribution-B28CE52D-F292-4A1D-A2FE-651B3399BF53>

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour) [9764]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent steps has he taken to help promote peace between Palestinians and Israel.

**Andrew Murrison:** We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that

undermine the viability of the two-state solution, including terrorism, anti-Semitic incitement, settlement expansion, and the demolition of Palestinian property in the West Bank. Steps to transform the situation in Gaza are also needed. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel at all levels. We are encouraging both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking unilateral actions that may make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-29/9764/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour)** [9765] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the prospects for peace between Palestine and Israel.

**Andrew Murrison:** We are concerned by the lack of progress in the Middle East Peace Process and note the UN Secretary-General's assessment that the situation on the ground has deteriorated over the last three years. The ongoing violence underlines that a just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. We continue to believe the best way to achieve an end to this conflict is through substantive peace talks between the parties, but international action has a role in facilitating progress. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel at all levels. We are encouraging both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking unilateral actions that may make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-29/9765/>

## **House of Lords Written Answers**

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL592] Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that a Palestinian political prisoner who was released after an 18 year sentence from Negev Detention Camp on 14 January was immediately re-interned without charge or trial.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made any representations on this specific issue, we remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, 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 continue to 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/2020-01-20/HL592/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL593] Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that Palestinian fruit and vegetable stalls and their contents have been destroyed by Israeli forces and that stall holders were threatened not to return.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made any representations on this specific incident. The Government remains concerned about actions which further entrench the Israeli occupation, cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, and are harmful to the peace process.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-20/HL593/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL594] Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about ensuring that the reported perpetrator of a hit and run incident that injured a Palestinian girl on 14 January is brought to justice swiftly.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not raised this issue specifically with the Israeli Government, we call on the Israeli authorities to thoroughly investigate every instance and allegation of crimes against protected persons in the West Bank, and where appropriate bring those responsible to justice. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-20/HL594/>

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## **Foreign Affairs**

### **House of Commons Library Briefing**

#### **Persecution of Christians**

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2020-0019/CDP-2020-0019.pdf>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

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

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

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

#### **Education (Assemblies) Bill**

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

#### **\*\* Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/58-01/085/5801085.pdf>

First Reading, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-02-03/debates/C55ED4BD-28E1-4B62-A336-BFDA18BA1B0D/MarriageAct1949\(Amendment\)Bill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-02-03/debates/C55ED4BD-28E1-4B62-A336-BFDA18BA1B0D/MarriageAct1949(Amendment)Bill(HL))

## **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill**

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

## **Scottish Parliament**

### **Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill**

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

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

### **Harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education** (closing date 27 March 2020)

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/76f6bdd3-bb14-4956-b089-cd1598323d55/consultation-on-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education.pdf>

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