



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Religious Buildings: Security

Theresa Villiers (Conservative) [19782] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding has been (a) allocated and (b) disbursed from the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme.

Theresa Villiers (Conservative) [19783] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, which places of worship have received funding from the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme.

Victoria Atkins: The Home Office does not disclose details or confirm individual grants for individual places of worship that have received funding through the Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme, as disclosing the identities of the places of worship may put their security at risk.

For the first three years of the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme, £800,000 was allocated each year. Over those three years, the Home Office awarded 134 grants worth approximately £1.5 million – with 63 to churches, 49 to mosques, 5 to Hindu temples, and 17 to gurdwaras.

For the fourth year of the scheme, the then Home Secretary announced last year an uplift of funding to £1.6 million for 2019-20. The Home Office is currently finalising applications with a view to informing applicants in the near future.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/19782/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-24/19783/>

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>

House of Lords Written Answer

Football: Racial Discrimination

Lord Rosser (Labour) [HL1891] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Lord Ashton of Hyde on 11 April 2019 (HL Deb, col 585), what "clear, tangible actions" have been delivered to address racist abuse in football, in relation to each of the six areas they identified as needing to be examined further.

Baroness Barran: Racism or any form of discrimination has no place in football or society, and we must confront this vile behaviour.

In July last year, the football authorities wrote to the government setting out their actions to further tackle discrimination:

- A review of how professional clubs sanction and educate offenders to provide more clarity and consistency.
- A review of FA sanctions for discrimination in the professional and grassroots game.
- Improved steward training, including new modules on recognising and responding to discriminatory behaviour.
- Improved reporting methods to enable fans to quickly and simply make clubs and the authorities aware of concerns or incidents of discrimination.
- Enhance and grow programmes to provide more opportunities for BAME people in coaching, refereeing, management and administrative positions in the sport.
- Further developing schools and community programmes, particularly in promoting inclusion through projects delivered by Premier League and EFL clubs.

There is still more to do: the previous Minister for Sport recently met with the FA and EFL to discuss their progress, and the current Minister for Sport will be calling in all the footballing authorities for a further update about their work on this important issue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-25/HL1891/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2019-04-11/debates/236555C6-619C-444D-A9B0-757058F6C738/DiscriminationInFootball>

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

New £2 million scheme to unite communities

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick today (6 March 2020) opened a new grant scheme to promote inter-faith and community work, and build bridges between people of all backgrounds.

The Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant scheme will invite established community groups and civil society organisations to apply to run short projects that champion the government's commitment to building a diverse and tolerant society for all faiths and races. The projects will also tackle discrimination and prejudice, helping to unite Britain, and tackle discriminatory behaviour.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said: Our country is home to people with a wonderfully diverse range of faiths and beliefs.

The funding announced today will help us celebrate this diversity, champion our shared identity and values and bring people together to create a better society.

The scheme will also help tackle discriminatory behaviour. This Government has a zero

tolerance towards hate crimes against anyone of any faith and background, and we stand in support of all communities that suffer from prejudice and discrimination.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-2-million-scheme-to-unite-communities>

Guidance: Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant scheme 2020 to 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faith-race-and-hate-crime-grant-scheme-2020-to-2021>

Muslim Council of Britain

Muslim Council of Britain submits new dossier of Conservative Islamophobia to EHRC, with evidence of over 300 individuals

... The MCB's call comes with an [updated dossier](#) of incidents involving over 300 individuals, including councillors and party members, new MPs and even Number 10 special advisers, including Dominic Cummings and Andrew Sabisky. ...

Since becoming Prime Minister, Boris Johnson has made a [number of strong statements](#) against Islamophobia and against the tolerance of Islamophobia in the Conservative Party. He has claimed the Party has a "zero tolerance approach... we have one bounce and we deal with it approach to this." The Party has also [separately confirmed](#) anti-Islam comments "have no place in society". Unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case, with scores of incidents showing a pattern of behaviour ignoring complaints of Islamophobia and allowing those found to have engaged in Islamophobia to retain their membership, and often, their elected positions.

The Muslim Council of Britain [first reported](#) the Conservative Party to the EHRC in May 2019. It provided evidence of Islamophobia and anti-Islam remarks from 150 Party members. The EHRC has thus far [failed to respond](#) to the Muslim Council of Britain and has given no indication as to whether it intends to investigate. ...

The letter outlines a clear case made up of five key pillars against the Conservative Party: Islamophobia among MPs, an atmosphere of hostility against Muslim Party members, the scale of Islamophobia in the Party, the failure of the complaints process and the denial of Islamophobia. The complaints process is particularly problematic with its failure to uphold transparency. There are scores of cases where the Conservative Party has failed to reveal whether an individual has been suspended, had their membership revoked, or been readmitted into the Party, and similarly, the Party refuses to confirm how many cases of Islamophobia it is investigating at any time.

Concerns about the way in which the Conservative Party has thus far failed to take meaningful action on its problem of Islamophobia, and calls for the Conservative Party to be investigated over this have been made by a number of prominent Muslims in the Conservative Party, including Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, former co-chair of the Party, Lord Sheikh, founder of the Conservative Muslim Forum, and Sajjad Karim, former Conservative MEP for the West Midlands, who spoke about a senior serving minister having made Islamophobic comments about him.

Commenting, Harun Khan, Secretary General of the MCB said: ... The EHRC has a duty to uphold the Equality Act, and this responsibility includes investigating where there are allegations of discrimination. The absence of meaningful action by the Conservative Party despite the wealth of evidence makes it all the more important that the EHRC recognises the impact of this level of Islamophobia in our governing party, and takes swift action."

To read the full press release see

<https://mcb.org.uk/press-releases/mcb-submits-new-dossier-of-conservative-islamophobia-to-ehrc-with-evidence-of-over-300-individuals/>

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answer

Topical Questions: Department for International Trade

T5. Craig Tracey (Conservative) Israeli exports to the UK grew by 286% over the last decade, and bilateral trade levels are also at a record high, so it was no surprise that one of the first post-Brexit trade agreements we signed was with Israel. What steps will the Secretary of State be taking to further strengthen and enhance our trade relationship with Israel and go beyond the terms of the continuity agreement that is already in place? [901143]

The Minister of State, Department for International Trade (Conor Burns): We strongly value our trading relationship with the state of Israel and are working closely with the Israeli Government to implement the UK-Israel trade and partnership agreement, but my hon. Friend is absolutely correct to identify the opportunities for us to do so much more. In my constituency, the town of Bournemouth is twinned with Netanya in Israel, and I have seen first-hand the opportunities in the innovation and tech sectors. We are working with Israeli counterparts to host a UK-Israel trade and investment conference in London, whose primary focus will be scoping out and identifying new opportunities for collaboration between Israel and the United Kingdom.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-03-05/debates/6EF7F20F-3D3C-4E97-9396-FE3B5860D2FB/TopicalQuestions#contribution-961EE25D-E44E-4DF6-A39A-A8F76E888BDF>

House of Commons Written Answer

Israel: Educational Exchanges

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [23467] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the benefits to (a) the UK and (b) Israel of the Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange Partnership in each of the last eight years.

James Cleverly: The Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange (BIRAX) is a flagship project of the British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Council Israel. Since the launch of BIRAX in 2011, around £13 million has been invested in 26 research projects, focusing on regenerative medicine including cardiovascular and liver disease, Alzheimer's, Diabetes and Parkinson's. BIRAX-supported research has been published in 77 publications and presented in about 96 conferences around the world. With projects at the forefront of scientific innovation, BIRAX has now progressed to tackle the global challenge of ageing, a priority for both the UK and Israel.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-02/23467/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Updated Guidance: Foreign Travel Advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated Guidance: Foreign Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

House of Commons Library

Briefing: Radicalisation in the Palestinian school curriculum

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CDP-2020-0046/CDP-2020-0046.pdf>

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Other Relevant Information

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Wales Impact Report 2018-19

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/wales_impact_report_2018-19.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>

Genocide Determination Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

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

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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** 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>

Hate crime legislation in Northern Ireland: an independent review (closing date 31 March 2020)
<https://www.hatecrimereviewni.org.uk/sites/hcr/files/media-files/Consultation%20Paper%20Feb%202020.pdf>

Amendments to the organ donation regulations (Wales) (closing date 30 April 2020)
<https://gov.wales/amendments-organ-donation-regulations>

Regulating Independent Educational Institutions (closing date 8 May 2020)
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/regulating-independent-education-institutions/>

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