



# 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*

#### **Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme**

**Claudia Webbe (Labour) [23613]** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to ensure equitable access to security funding for places of worship.

**Claudia Webbe (Labour) [23486]** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has to ensure equitable access to security funding for religious institutions.

**Kit Malthouse:** All places of worship, other than the Jewish community, have access to the Places of Worship Scheme that funds protective security measures to counter hate crime. The Jewish community has access to separate funding that was put in place following a series of terrorist attacks against Jews and Jewish targets in Europe. The Government regularly considers the range of threats to our places of worship from hate crime.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-02/23613/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-02/23486/>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

*Information about the separate funding for the Jewish community, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-grants-14-million-funding-for-security-at-jewish-institutions>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Places of Worship Security Funding Scheme**

**Zarah Sultana (Labour) [26191]** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many places of worship have made unsuccessful applications for funding from the

Places of Worship Security Funding scheme in each category of place of worship in (a) England and (b) Wales.

**Zarah Sultana (Labour)** [26192] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many of each category of place of worship have applied for funding through the Places of Worship Security Funding scheme in (a) England and (b) Wales.

**Kit Malthouse:** Over the first three years, the Places of Worship scheme has received 431 applications in total. Of the applications received, 134 were successful and 297 were unsuccessful.

In England, there have been 253 applications from Christian communities, 108 applications from Muslim communities, 19 applications from Hindu communities, 34 applications from Sikh communities and 1 application from Jain communities.

Of those applications, there have been 193 unsuccessful applications from Christian communities, 60 unsuccessful applications from Muslim communities, 14 unsuccessful applications from Hindu communities, 17 unsuccessful applications from Sikh communities, and 1 unsuccessful application from Jain communities.

In Wales, there have been 14 applications from Christian communities, 1 application from Muslim communities, 1 application from Hindu communities and 0 applications from Sikh and Jain communities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-06/26191/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-03-06/26192/>

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

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Lord Ahmed (Non-affiliated)** [HL2725] To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they have provided, and plan to provide, in relation to religious gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lord Bethell:** The Government has introduced social distancing guidance which should be implemented across all sectors including religious gatherings, this will help reduce the transmission of COVID-19. A copy of *Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK* is attached.

Additionally, a scientific evidence-based review on the impact of mass gatherings on an influenza pandemic has been published. A copy of *Impact of Mass Gatherings on an Influenza Pandemic: Scientific Evidence Base Review* is attached.

[Guidance on social distancing](#)

[Mass gatherings evidence review](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-18/HL2725/>

### Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Lord Ahmed (Non-affiliated)** [HL2726] To ask Her Majesty's Government what advice they have provided to the Muslim Council of Britain about (1) Friday prayers, and (2) the celebration of Ramadan, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lord Bethell:** The Muslim Council of Britain continues to follow the Government's

and National Health Service COVID-19 advice as well as publishing their own guidance for the Muslim community. This guidance includes plans for likely suspension of congregational activities, advice for congregation members to keep good hygiene and support for the socially vulnerable and isolated. A copy of *Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for mosques/madrasas and Umrah Pilgrims* is attached.

There is information on how Ramadan may be affected and whether United Kingdom mosques must similarly prepare for the very likely possibility of suspending iftar programs and congregational tarawih prayers.

[Guidance for mosques madrasas and Umrah pilgrims](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-18/HL2726/>

## UK Labour Party / Evening Standard

### **Keir Starmer: I apologise to the Jewish community – rebuilding your trust starts now**

This week the Jewish community will be celebrating Passover in circumstances that could not have been imagined only a few weeks ago. A festival that over the centuries has been celebrated as the ultimate family moment will for so many be marked in a very different way. The coronavirus outbreak has fundamentally changed our way of life. At a time when the synagogues are closed and movement is restricted, Passover may well be an isolated one where we cannot be together with our friends, family and loved ones, and all of my thoughts are with everyone celebrating during this difficult period.

Passover is also a fitting moment for me to acknowledge the pain and hurt that the Labour Party has caused Jewish people in recent years. Anti-Semitism has been a stain on our party. I have seen first-hand the unacceptable and unimaginable levels of grief and distress it has caused many in the Jewish community and beyond. It is why my very first act on becoming leader over the weekend was to apologise for the hurt that has been caused. I want to apologise again and reiterate my pledge to tear out this poison by its roots.

But I accept that an apology alone is not good enough. I know that ultimately I will be judged, not on what I say, but on what I do. Tackling anti-Semitism within the Labour Party must be a priority ...

Today I will be holding my first set of talks with leaders of the Jewish community ... to talk about how we can work together to stamp out anti-Semitism from the Labour Party — and indeed across the country — once and for all. ...

Second, we must fully co-operate with the Equality and Human Rights Commission's inquiry into allegations of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. We must throw open the books and the files and give the commission access to any politician or any member of staff they wish to interview. We must acknowledge we have a problem and be candid in our response. ...

However, we cannot wait until the commission completes its inquiry before we get a grip on this situation. People do not believe the processes we have in place at the moment are adequate. I will therefore begin work immediately to deliver on my campaign pledge to establish an independent complaints process.

I will also be requesting that a report on all outstanding cases of anti-Semitism within the party is on my desk by the end of this week and that there is a timetable for their resolution. Clear cases of anti-Semitism must be dealt with robustly and swiftly ...

And once the coronavirus pandemic is over, I will be closing the Labour Party's offices for a day and inviting representatives of the Jewish community to come in and facilitate a day's training for all members of staff on anti-Semitism. ...

The principle of what I want to achieve is clear: if you are anti-Semitic, you cannot and should not be in the Labour Party. ...

I will leave no stone left unturned in the fight against anti-Semitism. That is my promise to the Jewish community. ...

This is a moral imperative, not a political one. The Jewish community makes Britain and our capital city a better, stronger society. It is a community which inspires the nation. And I hope to be able to build a strong relationship with it in the months and years to come ...

**To read the full article see**

<https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/i-apologise-to-the-jewish-community-rebuilding-your-trust-starts-now-a4408901.html>

## Scottish Government

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on preparation for burial or cremation for religious organisations, faith and cultural groups**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-religious-organisations-faith-and-cultural-groups---preparation-for-burial-or-cremation-of-covid-19-deceased/>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Lord Mann (Non-affiliated)** [HL2874] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of advances made by open sourcing research in relation to testing vaccines and treatments for COVID-19; what steps they have taken to ensure cooperation with scientific and research institutions in real time; with which countries such cooperation occurs; and in particular, whether they cooperate with such institutions in (1) South Korea, (2) Israel, (3) China, and (4) other G20 members.

**Lord Bethell:** Public Health England and other United Kingdom scientists and clinicians are members of several World Health Organization (WHO) working groups that cover new therapeutics, vaccines, diagnostics and sero-epidemiology. There is excellent collaboration across many countries, including those in the G20. Data and presentations have been shared at these working groups by many countries including China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, the Netherlands, France, Canada, the UK and the United States of America. There are publicly available outputs from these groups on the WHO Blueprint Research and Development website, one of which is the draft landscape of COVID-19 candidate vaccines.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-24/HL2874/>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### Israel: Prisons

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2895] To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports (1) that the Israeli Prison Service plans to stop the provision of cleaning products and medical visits to Palestinian prisoners, and (2) of unsanitary conditions in Israeli prisons.

#### Palestinians: Arrests

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2847] To ask Her Majesty's Government what

representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that Palestinians trying to raise awareness of COVID-19 in East Jerusalem were arrested.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made representations regarding these reports, the British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem are in regular contact with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities respectively. Both report good co-operation between the two entities in response to COVID-19.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-24/HL2895/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-23/HL2847/>

### Israel: Bedouin

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL2846] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that that government destroyed agricultural land and crops in two Bedouin communities in the Negev desert on 16 March.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made any representations on these reports, we are troubled by reports of assaults on farmers and vandalism of agricultural land. We continue to encourage the Israeli authorities and Bedouin communities to engage in dialogue to agree a satisfactory solution to the issue, respecting the rights of the people affected.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-03-23/HL2846/>

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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>

### Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/114929.aspx>

Stage 1, whole Parliament

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12602&i=113926#ScotParlOR>

Legislative Programme

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12602&i=113947#ScotParlOR>

Committee Stage, whole Parliament

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12602&i=113949&c=2252974#ScotParlOR>

Stage 3, whole Parliament

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12602&i=113956#ScotParlOR>

Crown consent

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12602&i=113956&c=2252955#ScotParlOR>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Electing a more diverse Assembly** (closing date 22 April 2020)

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=389>

**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/>

**Protecting places of worship** (closing date 10 May 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>

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