



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Social Media: Antisemitism**

**Sajid Javid (Conservative)** [81792] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to tackle anti-Semitic hate online.

**Simon Clarke:** Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, which is why we're taking a strong lead in tackling it in all its forms. In the refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan, we have reaffirmed our commitment to combating all forms of hatred and our total support for Jewish communities.

We have recognised that incidents of online hate crime are becoming more prevalent and we have committed to take action to reduce this in the Hate Crime Action Plan. In September the Communities Secretary confirmed £100,000 of funding for the Antisemitism Policy Trust to support the organisation's ongoing work to tackle the spread of racist tropes online.

We have recently published a White Paper on Online Harms, which contains a range of legislative and non-legislative measures, setting out definitive plans to tackle a wide range of harms online, and opens a consultation on options for regulation.

The Online Harms White Paper sets out the government's plans for world leading legislation to make the UK the safest place to be online. We intend to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users which will be overseen by an independent regulator. This regulator will set clear safety standards, backed up by mandatory reporting requirements and strong enforcement powers to deal with non-compliance.

We are also ensuring that the criminal law is fit for purpose to deal with online harms. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Ministry of Justice have engaged the Law Commission on a second phase of their review of abusive and offensive online communications. The Law Commission will review existing communications offences and make specific recommendations about options for reform, to ensure that criminal law provides consistent and effective protection against such behaviours.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-08-28/81792>

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)

The White Paper referred to above, and initial consultation response, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper>

Information about the review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-to-undertake-phase-2-of-the-abusive-and-offensive-online-communications-project/>

### **Marriage: Coronavirus**

**Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat)** [82250] To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the 30 person limit for weddings includes staff at the wedding venue.

**Paul Scully:** As set out in [COVID-19: Guidance for wedding and civil partnership receptions and celebrations](#), 30 people is the maximum number for all attendees at the event, including the couple and guests. It also includes any third-party suppliers, such as photographers or security. It does not include staff employed by the venue or third-party catering staff.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-08-28/82250>

### **Religious Buildings: Sanitation**

**Holly Lynch (Labour)** [82127] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the March 2020 Budget, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including places of worship as a sector in the Changing Places Fund to build accessible toilet facilities in existing buildings.

**Christopher Pincher:** The Government is determined to see greater provision of Changing Places toilet facilities in new and existing buildings. We will work with the Changing Places Consortium and others to identify those sectors where we most need to accelerate the provision of such facilities and will set out the criteria for funding in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-08-28/82127>

### **Burial**

**Feryal Clark (Labour)** [82557] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the Government's policy is on non-English inscriptions on tombstones in (a) local authority maintained cemeteries, (b) faith and communities cemeteries and (c) other burial sites.

**Alex Chalk:** The Government has published [guidance](#) on the management of burial grounds. This sets out the general expectation that managers should always have regard for equal treatment policies and practice in the provision of burial services and emphasises that consideration should be given to unintended consequences or discrimination which may arise in a variety of ways, including in the allowed wording of commemorative inscriptions.

[Section 13 of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977](#) provides that a bishop of the Church of England may object to, and have removed, any inscription on a tombstone or other memorial in ground consecrated to the Church of England within any cemetery (including its chapel). This reflects similar statutory provision relating to tombstones located within Church of England churches and their churchyards.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-08-28/82577>

## Scottish Parliament Motions

The following four motions are all amendments to a motion included in yesterday's Political Affairs Digest:

**S5M-22636 Liam Kerr (Conservative): Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** – That the Parliament believes that hate crimes are a blight on society in Scotland and must be dealt with robustly; notes that the right to freedom of expression is the cornerstone of democracy and must never be compromised; believes that the significant number of responses to the Scottish Government consultation on its proposed Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill highlight the significant and valid concerns that the Bill would be an attack on free speech, and urges the Scottish Government to accept these criticisms, remove its proposed Bill and immediately begin work with stakeholders and others to draft the legislation that is needed to tackle hate crime in Scotland, while not threatening to make free speech a crime.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-22636>

**S5M-22636.1 Liam McArthur (Liberal Democrat): Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** – As an amendment to motion S5M-22636 in the name of Liam Kerr (Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill), leave out from second "believes" to end and insert "recognises the significant number of responses to the Justice Committee's call for evidence on the Scottish Government's proposed Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill highlighting serious and substantial concerns in relation to its potential impact on free speech, and calls on the Scottish Government to set out the steps that it plans to take to address these concerns, specifically in relation to Part 2 of the Bill, in time for the Committee to hear evidence and give them due consideration."

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-22636.1>

**S5M-22636.2 John Finnie (Green): Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** – As an amendment to motion S5M-22636 in the name of Liam Kerr (Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill), leave out from "notes" to end and insert "considers that the development of hate crime law in Scotland has been carried out in a piecemeal fashion, resulting in fragmented legislation; notes that calls have been made for the consolidation of hate crime law for more than a decade; believes that freedom of expression is a critically important human right, and that Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) protects it within the context of factors such as the prevention of crime and protecting the rights of others; recognises that stirring up racial hatred has been the basis of criminal offences since 1986 and is clearly compatible with ECHR; welcomes the Scottish Government's commitment to examine the development of an offence on misogynistic harassment and looks forward to the working group on misogynistic harassment's output on this matter, and commits to listen to all serious views on ways to improve the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill as part of the normal process of parliamentary scrutiny and to consider how best to ensure that all forms of hate crime are taken seriously."

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-22636.2>

**S5M-22636.3 Rhoda Grant (Labour): Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** – As an amendment to motion S5M-22636 in the name of Liam Kerr (Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill), leave out from “, remove” to end and insert “; has serious concerns about Part Two of the Bill as currently drafted and considers that it will require substantial

revision if it is to be fit for purpose, and urges the Scottish Government to work with stakeholders and the Parliament throughout the legislative process to amend the Bill so that it does deal robustly with hate crime, protect individuals while protecting the privileges that people enjoy with regard to free speech and builds consensus that prejudice and hatred have no place in Scotland."

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-22636.3>

**S5M-22636.4 Humza Yousaf (SNP): Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** – As an amendment to motion S5M-22636 in the name of Liam Kerr (Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill), leave out from second "believes" to end and insert "agrees that tackling hate crime is central to building the Scotland that all people want to see, a Scotland free from hatred, prejudice, discrimination and bigotry; acknowledges the importance of ensuring that hate crime legislation in Scotland affords sufficient protection for those that need it; agrees with the unanimous decision of the Justice Committee to afford the Bill rigorous and detailed scrutiny over the coming months; recognises that there are concerns about aspects of the Bill, including in relation to the stirring up of hatred offence provisions, which will benefit from further engagement with stakeholders and Parliamentary scrutiny; further recognises that there is a clear need to tackle misogyny in Scotland, and that the Scottish Government is committed, in principle, to developing a standalone offence of misogynistic harassment and is establishing a working group to take this forward, and agrees to seek common ground and compromise to ensure that effective legislation can be agreed that protects those affected by hate crime and prejudice in Scotland while respecting freedom of expression."

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-22636.4>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Israel

**Sam Tarry (Labour):** Whether he made representations to his Israeli counterpart on the full withdrawal of proposals to annex parts of the west bank during his visit to Israel in August 2020. [905644]

**Rosie Cooper (Labour):** Whether he made representations to his Israeli counterpart on the full withdrawal of proposals to annex parts of the west bank during his visit to Israel in August 2020. [905646]

**Mary Glendon (Labour):** Whether he made representations to his Israeli counterpart on the full withdrawal of proposals to annex parts of the west bank during his visit to Israel in August 2020. [905651]

**Michael Fabricant (Conservative):** What assessment he has made of the effect of normalisation of relations between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates on regional stability and security; and if he will make a statement. [905654]

**The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and First Secretary of State (Dominic Raab):** As I made clear in my statement on 13 August, we welcome both the suspension of plans to annex parts of the west bank and the normalisation of relations between the UAE and Israel. The deal was a historic step forward between two great friends of the United Kingdom.

**Sam Tarry:** A week before the election in Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu indicated he

would move forward with the expansion of the illegal settlement at Efrat—an additional 3,500 homes. That plan had been previously frozen for years. It would cut off the north and the south of the west bank and is particularly problematic. Does the Foreign Secretary agree that the suspension of annexation plans should be made permanent and should not be substituted for the massive settlement expansion such as the 5,000 homes that are planned in E1 zone, which represent—in my view and that of my constituents—annexation in all but name?

**Dominic Raab:** I agree with the hon. Gentleman that settlements are both contrary to international law and counterproductive to peace. It is hugely welcome, first, that Israel has taken the plans off the table for the foreseeable future, coupled with the UAE deal, which is a substantial step forward in the wider process of reconciliation and peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours.-

**Rosie Cooper:** I welcome the Israel-UAE deal, which stops the prospect of any damaging annexation and should bring about normalisation between the two countries. What steps are the Government taking to encourage more Arab states to follow the UAE's lead and to use it as a catalyst to get lasting negotiated peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

**Dominic Raab:** I thank the hon. Lady. She is right and there can hopefully be a virtuous cycle of these normalisation agreements. I have been in touch with US authorities, including Jared Kushner when he visited London and Mike Pompeo, the US Secretary of State, and I visited Israel on 25 August, where I not only saw Prime Minister Netanyahu, Alternate Prime Minister Gantz and Foreign Minister Ashkenazi, but visited the west bank and spoke to President Abbas and Prime Minister Shtayyeh—all with a view to encouraging normalisation with the countries of the region and, now that annexation is at least off the table for the foreseeable future, encouraging greater dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israeli Government.

**Mary Glendon:** Will the Secretary of State talk to European colleagues, particularly the Irish, with a view to taking joint action on settlement trade and on recognition to ensure the Israeli Government do not go ahead with their annexation threat in future?

**Dominic Raab:** I thank the hon. Lady. We do talk regularly to our E3 and wider European colleagues—we consider all the different permutations—but I think the positive here is that, through engagement and indeed through this wider process of normalisation, Israel has pulled back from those plans for annexation. That does create a window of opportunity not just with the countries of the region, but with the Palestinians themselves. My focus and the Prime Minister's focus is on trying to use that to catalyse dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israelis, which is the only route to a two-state solution, which is the only route to enduring peace.

**Michael Fabricant:** Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the United States Administration and indeed the US State Department on helping to broker this deal? I suspect he will not agree with me when I say that I think it is their pragmatic approach to say that a two-state deal is not going to happen as long as we have Hamas and Hezbollah taking the line they do, but what I would ask my right hon. Friend is: what role does he see for the United Kingdom in brokering further such peace deals between the United Kingdom and Arab states?

**Dominic Raab:** I thank my hon. Friend. I think he is right about the positivity of this step. We need some good news in the peace process and in the middle east, and I think the UAE deal with Israel is very positive. We are looking to and will certainly be encouraging—indeed, we have already started to encourage—others to follow suit, but also to make sure that we can engage with the Palestinians, at the level of the Palestinian Authority, to try to galvanise some dialogue between the two principal protagonists to the dispute.

**Tom Tugendhat (Conservative):** My right hon. Friend knows very well that one of the

reasons for the proximity between the United Arab Emirates and Israel is the pressure put on both by the Iranian regime, and the work that his Department has done in holding the Iranian regime to account at the UN has been hugely impressive. Applying the rule of law and applying the principles of non-violable international treaty to international negotiation has been so important. Could he please tell me that the UK will read the letter of the treaty of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231, and recognise that any of the named states has the opportunity to snapback sanctions on the violating state of Iran? Will he recognise as well that those international treaties are not for interpretation, but are actually pretty clearly laid out in black and white?

**Dominic Raab:** I thank my hon. Friend the Chair of the Select Committee. Lawyers will always have different views on the precise permutations, but I think the position on snapback in relation to the joint comprehensive plan of action is tolerably clear. He is absolutely right also to point to the role that Iran plays not just with its own activities—those it engages in directly—but working through Hamas and Hezbollah and other proxies throughout the middle east as a source of tension and instability. We are working with all of our allies to try to make sure we limit and hold to account Iran for those activities.

**Wayne David (Labour):** The social and health situation in Gaza is extremely serious, especially with regard to covid-19, and recently there was a clash between Israel and Hamas. Fortunately, a ceasefire was agreed, but a concern is that it is only a matter of time before another outbreak of violence occurs. How does the Secretary of State believe that further conflict between Gaza and Israel can be avoided?

**Dominic Raab:** First, we need to see an end to the targeting of civilians and the firing of improvised explosive devices by Hamas into Israel. That is unlawful and totally unacceptable. I share the hon. Gentleman's concerns on the broader humanitarian situation. When I visited the west bank on 20 August, I announced £2.7 million-worth of further humanitarian assistance. Now that Israel has taken annexation off the table, it would make sense, even irrespective of the broader peace talks, for the Palestinian Authority to engage with the Israelis on finance and security co-operation in the west bank and Gaza, including in relation to being able to receive tax revenues to pay Palestinian public servants. As a confidence-building measure, given the UAE deal, that is something the Palestinians could do on their side as well.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-09-08/debates/CA585031-2B84-43C0-ABAA-506756914E84/Israel>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-israel-uae-agreement>

*The Security Council resolution referred to above can be read at*

<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2231>

## House of Commons Written Answer

### Trade Agreements: Israeli Settlements

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [84735] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has had discussions with her Israeli counterpart on illegal annexation; and if she will take steps to reconsider UK trade deals with settlement territories.

**Ranil Jayawardena:** HM Government has maintained a dialogue with Israel and we welcome the suspension of Israel's plans for annexation, which would have been counterproductive to the goal of securing peace in the region.

The United Kingdom does not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), including settlements, as part of Israel. For this reason, the OPTs are not

covered by the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which currently governs our trade with Israel, nor by the United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement, which will enter into force at the end of the Transition Period.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-03/84735>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2592>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>

#### **Genocide Determination Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2621>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2608>

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

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2584>

### **Scottish Parliament**

#### **Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

#### **Post-mortem Examinations (Defence Time Limit) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill>

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## **Consultations** \*\* new or updated today

**Getting Married: A Consultation Paper on Weddings Law** (closing date 3 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/#weddings-consultation-paper>

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