



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Antisemitism: Hate Crime

**Bambos Charalambous (Labour)** [47412] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many Ministerial roundtables on antisemitism have been held since the Home Office's Hate Crime Action Plan refresh document was published in 2018.

**Luke Hall:** Following the publication of the Hate Crime Action Plan Refresh in October 2018, the Government has hosted two ministerial roundtables on antisemitism with stakeholders from Jewish communities, alongside regular meetings of the Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Antisemitism.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-15/47412/>

*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)

#### Sikhs: Hate Crime

**Bambos Charalambous (Labour)** [47413] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many roundtables her Department has held with the Sikh community since the Home Office's Hate Crime Action Plan refresh document was published in 2018.

**Luke Hall:** There is regular engagement at Ministerial and official level with representatives of Sikh communities. In addition to this the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has hosted two hate crime roundtables with the Sikh community since the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan refresh document was published in October 2018.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-15/47413/>

*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)

### **Travellers: Hate Crime**

**Bambos Charalambous (Labour)** [47414] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many roundtables have been held with representatives of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Group since the publication of her Department's updated Hate crime action plan in October 2018.

**Luke Hall:** There have been five Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Group roundtables hosted by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government since the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan refresh document was published in October 2018.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-15/47414/>

*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)

## **House of Lords Written Answers**

### **Religious Buildings: Coronavirus**

**Lord Roberts of Llandudno (Liberal Democrat)** [HL4184] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with religious authorities about opening places of worship for (1) personal private devotions, (2) formal services, and (3) funerals and weddings, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government has been working closely with all major faith groups on a wide variety of issues relating to its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and this engagement will continue.

The Faith Minister has held meetings with Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu faith leaders and representatives since the outbreak. Officials also maintain regular contact with Faith leaders across all major faiths, ensuring the Government is responding to issues relating to COVID-19 as they arise.

This engagement will continue at both ministerial and official level as the Government looks to lift restrictions, as outlined in the recovery strategy – “Our Plan to Rebuild”, which was launched on 11 May can be found (attached) here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/884760/Our\\_plan\\_to\\_rebuild\\_The\\_UK\\_Government\\_s\\_COVID-19\\_recovery\\_strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/884760/Our_plan_to_rebuild_The_UK_Government_s_COVID-19_recovery_strategy.pdf). As the document makes clear in Step 3, the Government's ambition is to open places of worship; the current assumption is that this Step will be no earlier than 4 July.

As part of the recovery strategy, the Government has launched a Taskforce to look at the possible re-opening of places of worship. The Taskforce will be led by the Secretary of State for Communities, or the Faith Minister, and comprise of representatives from the country's major faiths. The aim of the Taskforce is to work towards the safe reopening of places of worship, including for private devotions, services and ceremonies like funerals and weddings. It will address the specific issues that places of worship face in the course of reopening safely.

Places of worship are essential in bringing our communities together, which is why we want to reopen them as soon as we can. However, we will not compromise the safety of those who visit and work at our places of worship. The Government's priority is to protect the public and save lives. We are committed to ensuring our

faith communities have access to the latest public health advice, and to support them to adapt their practices in line with the Government's COVID-19 guidance.

[Our Plan to Rebuild](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4184/>

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## [Israel](#)

*See also the three House of Commons written answers entitled "Hezbollah" included in the Foreign Affairs section below.*

### House of Lords Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Gaza: Coronavirus**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4228] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of COVID-19 cases in Gaza.

#### **Middle East: Medical Equipment**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4229] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the availability of personal protection equipment and ventilators in the West Bank and Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UN assesses that although the current number of detected cases remains relatively low in Gaza and the West Bank, the capacity of the Palestinian health system to cope with an increase in COVID-19 cases is poor, including the low availability of PPE and ventilators. The situation is particularly severe in Gaza, where the health system has shortages in specialised staff, drugs and equipment. As of 14 May, 20 cases have been detected in Gaza (of which 6 remain active). So far, cases have been contained and any community outbreak has been prevented.

The UK has pledged £744 million to support the global humanitarian response to COVID-19. We have delivered additional vital support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by providing funding to the World Health Organization and UNICEF to purchase and co-ordinate the delivery of medical equipment, treat critical care patients, train frontline public health personnel and scale up laboratory testing capacity.

We continue to monitor the situation and are working closely with the UN and the international community to ensure a co-ordinated response.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4228/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-12/HL4229/>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Hezbollah**

**Gary Sambrook (Conservative)** [47457] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with her EU counterparts on tackling Hezbollah fundraising operations in the EU.

**Damien Moore (Conservative)** [47439] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the UK's cooperation with EU counterparts on Hezbollah fundraising activities within the EU.

**Paul Homes (Conservative)** [47471] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with her EU counterparts on tackling Hezbollah fundraising efforts within the EU.

**James Brokenshire:** The UK has a strong reputation for tackling terrorist financing and we work very closely with international partners and financial institutions to exchange and analyse information. This ensures we are better able to detect, prevent and disrupt the movement of global terrorist funds. Our EU cooperation is part of a wider landscape of international counter terrorism work, which includes cooperation through relationships such as Interpol, the Five Eyes, and bilateral work with individual countries.

The entirety of Hizballah is proscribed and designated under the UK's domestic counter terrorism sanctions regime (the Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010 (TAFSA)). Hizballah's Military Wing is also designated along with two named individuals associated with the group under the EU CP931 regime. The investigation and prosecution of offences relating to proscribed organisations is a matter for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-15/47457/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-15/47439/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-15/47471/>

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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>

### 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>

Bill as introduced

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill/introduced/bill-as-introduced-post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill/introduced/explanatory-notes-post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill.pdf>

Policy Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill/introduced/policy-memorandum-post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill.pdf>

Financial Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill/introduced/financial-memorandum-post-mortem-examinations-defence-time-limit-scotland-bill.pdf>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Protecting places of worship** (closing date 28 June 2020)

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

**Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 24 July 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115038.aspx>

**Legislative proposals for religion, values and ethics [Wales]** (closing date 28 July 2020)

<https://gov.wales/legislative-proposals-religion-values-and-ethics>

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