



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Private Education: Regulation**

**Lord Warner (Crossbench)** [HL5139] To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to re-open the public consultation on "Regulating independent educational institutions"; and what measures they will be taking to protect pupils at risk in unregistered settings, including illegal religious schools, until the law is changed.

#### **Schools: Coronavirus**

**Lord Warner (Crossbench)** [HL5140] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which illegal schools have continued to operate during the COVID-19 lockdown; and how they intend to mitigate the risks to the pupils attending such settings as the lockdown is eased.

**Baroness Berridge:** The department intends to reopen the consultation on 'Regulating independent educational institutions' when stakeholders ability to respond is less likely to be significantly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Responses received to date will be combined with responses received after the consultation reopens and fully reviewed after the consultation finally closes.

It is not yet appropriate to set a date for reopening the consultation as the situation in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak continues to change.

Ofsted continues to investigate potential illegal schools including consideration of new intelligence. Where appropriate, Ofsted have liaised with local authorities and other statutory bodies to consider whether there is appropriate action that should be taken, for example, to close settings where people are gathering illegally during the COVID-19 outbreak.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-02/HL5139/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-02/HL5140/>

## Scottish Parliament Debate

### Showing Solidarity with Anti-racism

**15.10 The Minister for Older People and Equalities (Christina McKelvie):** ... It is clear to me that the roots of the entrenched structural racism that continues to pervade global society are firmly based in the historic enslavement of black people, mainly from African countries. Racism has allowed white people to determine black people as a subhuman class and treat them as chattels, or property. Reducing black people to that status salved the collective conscience of white people around the world and enabled them to justify their barbaric acts, and we should all take responsibility for that. ...

The Scottish Government has taken steps to advance race equality and tackle racism—but, to be frank and absolutely honest, we have not gone far enough and we need to make much greater progress.

In 2017, we published a race equality action plan that outlined the actions that we will take during the current parliamentary session to secure better outcomes for minority ethnic communities in Scotland. An update published last year indicated that although progress has been made in some areas, there remains so much more to do. ...

Black and minority ethnic representation in this place is still severely lacking, and it remains a significant issue that we have never seen a woman from any ethnic minority background in 20 years of the Scottish Parliament. ...

We have the overall vision for race equality in Scotland that, by 2030, “Scotland is a place where people are healthier, happier and treated with respect, and where opportunities, wealth and power are spread more equally.” Our race equality framework aims to ensure that that vision is achieved equally for people from all ethnicities, and to help to build a Scotland in which we all share a common sense of purpose and belonging.

As I draw to a close, I emphasise that point. The inequality that black and other minority ethnic people continue to experience, whether it be health related, hate crime related, economic or societal, continues to be unacceptable and is a fundamental result of the failure to realise the human rights of everyone in Scotland. It can and it must change. ...

**15.22 Pauline McNeil (Labour):** ... Scotland is not exceptional when it comes to racism. That is even more the case when we consider the lack of progress that we have made at every level of our society. I could give many quotations and figures that relate to underrepresentation of BME people in teaching, the civil service and the law at every level. That amounts to failure of our action plans, and we all have to accept that. As anti-racists, we must be clear that we fight against Islamophobia and antisemitism—against any form of racism whatsoever.

**15.35 Brian Whittle (Conservative):** ... Let us be clear: racism pervades our society, and it is a learned behaviour. People are not born racist; it is absorbed from the society in which we live. I am old enough to remember when casual racism was commonplace across mainstream television programmes, and comedians readily appeared on television using language that we could not countenance now. It was not that long ago. The thing about casual racism is that, much of the time, the perpetrators will not accept or recognise that they are being racist. Nonetheless, it falls on us all to continually point out racism whenever we hear or see it. ...

Any discrimination is about seeking out and highlighting what makes us different. If we truly want to tackle the scourge of racism and discrimination in all its forms, we need to look at what binds us. We need to look at opportunities to share passions and experiences. ...

**15.42 Alex Cole-Hamilton (Liberal Democrat):** ... Racism exists in modern Scotland, whether in the unconscious bias of Scottish boardrooms or in the excessive use of force that led to the killing of Sheku Bayoh on a street in Kirkcaldy. It is also evident in the heartbreaking reality that a range of structural factors in our society have left people of colour more and disproportionately exposed to the Covid-19 threat. ...

**15.49 Linda Fabiani (SNP):** ... I have been exercised by people saying in response to the Black Lives Matter campaign, "Yeah, but all lives matter." Of course, all lives matter; all lives are and should be of equal value. However, too often in this world, that is not the case. When we say, "Black lives matter," it is not to lessen the value of any other life; it is simply to say that black lives matter. Too often, in our society and history, they have not mattered as much as white lives have mattered. ...

... we must do more in education, not just in what we teach and learn but in how we deal with racism. Whether that racism is overt, casual or unintentional, we must deal with it. ... There must be a message to all of us that we recognise racism, whether it be institutional racism ... racism in the workplace or in social interaction, racism in the successive UK Governments' immigration and asylum policies or the rhetoric that panders to the worst of the right-wing press. We must recognise it, call it out and add substance to the statement "Black lives matter" that we are all finding easy to say. Let us make it the reality and let us start now. ...

**16.01 Keith Brown (SNP):** ... We recognise that we also have to address our own prejudices and the racism that poisons our society in Scotland, and that we have to use that white privilege to challenge it.

Most of us will be familiar with Angela Davis's words. She said: "In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist."

I question whether even that is enough. Surely we have to continually challenge whether the anti-racist activities—the values that we say that we hold to—are actually affecting progress in society. The evidence seems to be that they are not. Self-examination means that every one of us has to have the courage to face up to Scotland's colonial history and to take substantive action to dismantle the structural inequalities that have followed. ...

By and large, I think that we are right to say that Scotland is a welcoming and inclusive country, but we are not immune from racism or bigotry. That becomes obvious when our constituents are abused or attacked on the streets. ...

**16.08 Anas Sarwar (Labour):** ... I say to people of all political parties and to every member in the chamber that it is easy to take the knee and to tweet and post about how black lives matter when it is trending on Twitter. It is easy to say the words when the whole world is talking about the issue, but it is what we do that matters. To every leader of every political party, and to every leader of every institution and organisation, I say, "Thank you for your solidarity. It matters. It is important. But we will judge you on the action you take and the decisions you make."

I know, from my experience of speaking out, that people are accused of playing the race card. The leadership of the Scottish Police Federation accused me of playing the race card. I have been told that I am playing a game. People on "my own side"—I put that in inverted commas—have briefed journalists that I am playing a game; they have claimed that it was some kind of master plan. This is not a game; this is life, and it is life for far too many of our fellow citizens in this country.

I say to every colleague and every member of all political parties in the Parliament that if they base their condemnation or their solidarity on the politics, or the perceived politics, of the perpetrator or the victim, they are part of the problem, not part of the solution. ...

I welcome the Government motion, but I am disappointed that there is not more action in it, because it is actions, and not just words, that will make a difference. I will share some examples. In Scotland, every chief executive of every council and every Government department is white. Every director of a department is white. Every principal of our colleges and universities is white. Every headteacher is white. Every chair of a public sector body is white. Every High Court judge is white. Every prisoner governor is white. Every editor of a news organisation is white. Why? Is it because we do not have the talent? Is it because we do not have the ability? Is it because the opportunity does not exist, or, worse yet, is it because people do not think that they are wanted or welcome? Those are the fundamental

issues that we should be addressing.

Representation in this Parliament has been mentioned. In the entire history of Scotland, we have elected only three BME MPs to Westminster, two of whom were from one family. In 20 years, we have elected only four BME representatives to the Scottish Parliament. All four were from Glasgow. They were male and Muslim, and they had a Pakistani background. None has been from a different gender or a different race. To be blunt, quite often they were elected despite their political parties, not because of their political parties. ...

Silence is no longer an option. Colleagues, stop picking and choosing. There is no hierarchy of prejudice. Let us have actions, not words.

**16.19 Ruth Davidson (Conservative):** ... I think that one of the most arresting experiences that I have ever had is visiting Bergen-Belsen with a group of British Army officers when I was a young reporter; the only other people there were German school groups. A number of the pupils, when faced with such horror—horror that was carried out in their community and their country—were visibly upset and I remember the self-consciousness that I felt about being with uniformed personnel, which compounded the pupils' sense of horror and shame as they tried to process it. It affected me deeply and I have thought about it oftentimes since. I have also thought about how important it is not just that such horror is taught in countries that liberated camps such as Belsen but that blameless German schoolchildren turn their faces to see it, too. ...

**16.32 Daniel Johnson (Labour):** ... If there is one key concept that we have learned from the Macpherson report, it is the concept of institutional racism. Racism is not something that is perpetrated only by people; it is perpetrated by organisations through their practice and culture. Perhaps how we perpetrate and continue racism through culture is a point on which we in Scotland need to closely reflect. ...

The fight against racism is not a fight for other people or in other places. It is our fight, and we must start by understanding Scotland's historical role in racism. That is why we need reform of education. ...

**16.52 Claire Baker (Labour):** ... We often pride ourselves on presenting Scotland as an open and welcoming place to live and work in. Evidence can be found to support that, but that results in our intentionally or otherwise downplaying or hiding the racism that exists. In 2010, the Scottish public were asked whether Scotland would lose its identity if more black and Asian people moved here. Forty-five per cent of the respondents said yes. Perhaps we are less open and welcoming than we like to think we are. Institutional racism and structural inequality exist in Scotland, and we need to recognise them, highlight them and commit to addressing them on a continuing basis. ...

**16.58 Annie Wells (Conservative):** ... It is not talking Scotland down to consider whether and how the country is racist. It is not tarring everyone in Scotland as a racist to consider whether the country and our institutions are racist. It does not mean that every white person must be ashamed; it means that they have a duty to consider what things are like for others. It is very naive to say that we ourselves are not racist—or that other places are worse, so there is no issue here. We have to understand, and come to terms with, the fact that some people's experiences are so different from ours that their whole world view is different. ...

We cannot be complacent. Our country is not equal. Can anyone honestly say that a black child in Scotland is treated the same as a white child? I would love to think so, but I just do not buy it. Kids are called names in the playground. People are told to "go back home". It does not have to end the way that it did for George Floyd for it to ruin a life or at least crush someone's spirit. ...

**17.05 The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Humza Yousaf):** ... a number of members have mentioned the need for disaggregated data on hate crime. I agree with the points that they made. I recently raised the issue and had a good discussion with BEMIS and

some other equality organisations. If it was not for the pandemic, Police Scotland would have brought forward work on that. I will re-engage with Police Scotland on when we can produce disaggregated data, because—as members have pointed out—it is hugely important that we have it.

I will start and end my speech in the same way—by saying that I am angry. I am angry that in 2020 we are once again confronted with scenes of horrific racial injustice. I am angry that in 2020 we are still dealing with overt racism, subtle racism, institutional racism and structural racism. Whatever form it takes, it is still racism. ...

I am angry because, in this day and age, we are still telling people of colour to “go home”. Brian Whittle, in a really excellent speech, said that he remembers a bygone era when he would see casual racism on the TV. He does not have to go back to a bygone era; I heard it just yesterday. ...

Forget the racial jibes and the slurs that we still have to put up with; racism is literally killing minorities, as we have all seen, and as members have all said today. However, as every member has mentioned, racism does not exist only in the United States. The events in the US force us to hold a mirror up to ourselves and to confront the racism that exists here: the unconscious, the subtle, the overt, the institutional and the structural racism. On all those fronts, Scotland is not immune.

This is the part where we should all begin to feel uncomfortable, because we have to accept the reality and the evidence that is in front of us, that Scotland has a problem of structural racism. ...

To my colleagues in the Government, I say that we know that we are not immune, either. Some people have been surprised or taken aback by my mention on my social media that at 99 per cent of the meetings that I go to, I am the only non-white person in the room.

Why are we so surprised when the most senior positions in Scotland are filled almost exclusively by people who are white? Take my portfolio, for example. The Lord President is white, the Lord Justice Clerk is white, every High Court judge is white, the Lord Advocate is white, the Solicitor General is white, the chief constable is white, every deputy chief constable is white, every assistant chief constable is white, the head of the Law Society is white, the head of the Faculty of Advocates is white and every prison governor is white.

That is not the case only in justice. The chief medical officer is white, the chief nursing officer is white, the chief veterinary officer is white, the chief social work adviser is white and almost every trade union in the country is headed by white people. In the Scottish Government, every director general is white. Every chair of every public body is white. ...

That is a collective failure that includes every single one of us. I hope that we are sitting uncomfortably, because those should be uncomfortable truths for us all.

So, do not just tweet “Black Lives Matter”, do not just post a hashtag and do not just take the knee. As people of colour, we do not need your gestures. Yes—solidarity is helpful, but what we need from you is action and for you to be anti-racist by your deeds. Do not just tell us how you are not racist—I take that as a bare minimum. You must be anti-racist. ...

Presiding Officer, I hope that we are all angry. That should be our overriding emotion when we are confronted with racism. I hope that every single one of us takes that anger and uses it to recommit ourselves as anti-racist. Let us be judged by our deeds, Presiding Officer—by our deeds, and not just our words.

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12685&i=114774#ScotParlOR>

*The action plan update, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-action-plan-year-1-progress-update/>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Coronavirus: Israel**

**Greg Smith (Conservative)** [55047] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to facilitate exports from Israeli companies that are developing technologies to tackle covid-19.

#### **Medical Equipment: Israel**

**David Simmonds (Conservative)** [55146] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that the UK benefits from Israeli thermal scanning technologies to detect covid-19.

**Ranil Jayawardena:** The British Embassy in Tel Aviv is following Israeli research and innovation related to COVID-19 closely, including in the technology sector. We have facilitated exchanges between United Kingdom and Israeli public health and scientific experts to discuss testing, epidemic management strategies, treatments and vaccine research, as well as cooperation on medical equipment.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-04/55047/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-05/55146/>

#### **Gaza: Hamas**

**Alexander Stafford (Conservative)** [55145] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of Hamas's rule in Gaza on regional stability.

**James Cleverly:** The UK remains concerned about the situation in Gaza and any actions by Hamas which increase instability. We utterly condemn rocket fire by Hamas and other militants in Gaza; Palestinians and Israelis deserve to live in safety and peace. We encourage the Palestinian Authority, Israel, regional and international actors to put forward long-term sustainable proposals, to resolve the threat posed to Israel's security by Hamas, and see the Palestinian Authority's return to government functions in Gaza. This will help to improve the dire humanitarian and economic situation in the region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-05/55145/>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### **Iran: Arms Trade**

**Alexander Stafford (Conservative)** [55143] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for regional security in Iran of the expiration of the UN conventional arms embargo on Iran in October 2020.

**James Cleverly:** The UK remains committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA), a reciprocal deal that lifts sanctions in exchange for tough nuclear

limits. Iran has broken the nuclear limits in the JCPoA and we are working to bring Iran back into compliance through the deal's Dispute Resolution Mechanism. UNSCR 2231, which underpins the JCPoA, includes a number of clauses designed to allow sanctions to expire on fixed dates: the UN conventional arms embargo is due to expire in October 2020. The EU arms embargo and UN ballistic missile restrictions will remain in place until 2023. We are consulting partners on the broader implications of the UN arms embargo expiry for Iran as well as the region, and encourage all states to implement national export control best practice. We have repeatedly set out concerns about Iranian destabilising behaviour, including proliferation to non-state actors. UNSCRs 1540, 2216 and 1701, which prohibit the proliferation of weapons to the Houthis and Lebanese Hezbollah, will remain in place after the arms embargo expires.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-05/55143/>

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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>

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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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