



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Debate

Covid-19: BAME Communities

col/ 995 Dawn Butler (Labour): ... Every time the Government get dragged kicking and screaming to do the right thing, I can't breathe. I can't breathe every time the Government hide a report or kick an issue into the long grass by announcing another commission or report. I can't breathe. My breath is taken away by the lack of care, empathy and emotional intelligence shown by the Government time and again. ...

col/ 996 The death rate for covid-19 has exposed and amplified what has been going on in society for decades. The concentration of deaths in areas where people are just about managing should worry us all. ... According to the ONS, adjusting for age, black people are more than four times as likely to die from covid as white people. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are more than three times as likely and Indians more than twice as likely. ... Structural and systemic racism is also a health issue, and the Institute for Fiscal Studies revealed that the jobs that are most at risk are over-populated by African, Caribbean, Asian, and minority ethnic people. We must be honest with ourselves and ask why that is. The higher BAME death rate is apparent across all grades of the NHS, even in the highest socioeconomic groups. We must be honest with ourselves and ask why that is. If we shy away from the truth, nothing will change. The publication of the first report on this issue stated that 17 doctors died, 16 of whom were BAME. It was then reported that, since 2 June, when that report was published, another 18 doctors died after saving lives, 17 of whom were BAME. We must be honest with ourselves and ask why that is. ...

col/ 997 It is not the pandemic that discriminates—it is society. It is almost as though being black is a pre-existing condition that results in worse outcomes for health, employment and education. ... It is racism, and it has become more structural and systemic. It is not just about individuals. Structural and systemic racism can exist without individual acts of racism, but it is an unfair, unequal discriminatory system—and it is literally killing us. ...

col/ 999 I have listened to many scientists talk about covid-19, and it is not genetics that have resulted in a higher death rate. ... it is noted that covid-19 potentially has had a less severe impact in the Caribbean, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. That raises questions as to why BAME communities in England are so severely affected. ...

col 1000 Government Ministers are revealing trauma on one hand and then saying that racism does not exist on the other; it is cruel. I do not think the Minister should not give a speech. I think the Minister should list actions. What will the Government do and when will they do it? She should tell the House and the country when the Government will start to implement the 150-plus outstanding recommendations from previous reports and reviews, not focus on the new commission that the Prime Minister mentioned. We know that that is designed to agitate and gaslight us, just like the Foreign Secretary's comments on taking the knee. ...

I stand to tell the Government that we are done with the games, we are done with the platitudes and we are done with kicking this issue into the long grass. Enough is enough. Now is the time to act. Now is the time for action. Now is the time to get the Government's knee off the neck of the black, African, Caribbean, Asian, minority ethnic communities.

col 1002 **Caroline Nokes (Conservative):** ... Covid-19 ... has highlighted health inequalities that are real and current: if someone lives in overcrowded, poor-quality housing, they are more likely to be negatively impacted; if someone is in frontline, public-facing work, they are more likely to be negatively impacted; if someone's English is poor or they have learning difficulties, they will not be able to receive the important public health messages that they need; and if someone lives in multigenerational families, they are more likely to be negatively impacted, as are those whose work is insecure. ...

col 1003 **Maria Miller (Conservative):** ... we have to take great care not to simply treat BAME communities as one homogeneous group. We run the great risk of coming to the wrong conclusions if we speak as though they all have the same challenges ... The way that we can address this is by understanding each group individually, and having accurate data ...

col 1004 **Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour):** ... Back in April, we saw BAME people being disproportionately affected by covid-19 as data came in from emergency admissions to hospital from more than three months ago. On 22 May, King's College London research showed that patients from BAME groups admitted to hospital with covid-19 are, on average, a decade younger than white patients. ...

col 1005 Figures released last week by the NHS Confederation show that the number of ethnic minority chairs and non-executive directors of NHS trusts in England has almost halved from 15% in 2010 to a mere 8% in 2018. ...

Representation matters, and the dismally low number of executive directors of NHS trusts is inexcusable. If BAME doctors and nurses are good enough to die on the frontline, surely they are good enough to lead. ...

Diversity is crucial because it brings in people with fresh perspectives and different priorities, thereby enhancing and improving the overall performance for all of us ...

col 1008 **Lilian Greenwood (Labour):** ... We know that racism and race discrimination really matter. If someone has experienced racism at work or already feels isolated, of course it is harder for them to speak up or raise concerns about safety. The British Medical Association found in 2018 that BAME doctors were twice as likely as white doctors to say that they would not feel confident raising safety concerns. ...

col 1009 **Naz Shah (Labour):** ... "Unprecedented" is a word we have heard bandied around a lot in the last few months. The new ways of working and interacting with our communities may be unprecedented, but sadly, the effect of covid-19 on black and minority ethnic communities does have precedent. If the Government had taken the findings of previous reports seriously, not only is it possible that many of these black and minority ethnic deaths could have been avoided, but we would not once again have to be asking the Government to ensure that more people do not lose their lives to this horrible disease. ...

Black and minority ethnic communities have faced structural racism for decades, and we are having to have the same conversations 20 years on. People are concerned and, rightly,

angry. Although I support both Show Racism the Red Card and the Anne Frank Trust, which the Government fund, is this the message that the Government want to give—just £219,000 of the Department’s annual budget is spent on racism, yet the Prime Minister is willing to spend £900,000 on rebranding his plane? ...

col 1011 **Theresa Villiers (Conservative):** ... I believe this country has come a long way in recent decades towards tackling discrimination, combating racism and building a more cohesive society that is proud of its ethnic and cultural diversity. ... but the covid emergency and the cry of pain that has arisen after the appalling killing of George Floyd ... are a stark reminder that while we have come a long way, there is still a long road to travel before we can say that everyone in this nation is being given the chance to go as far as their talent and their hard work will take them, whatever their faith, ethnicity or cultural background. ...

col 1012 **Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru):** ... there have been enough reviews, enough commissions and enough descriptions of how racism oozes from private attitudes into public experience. Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter campaign together are reforging our values and forcing us to question our cultural heritage. Thinking again of Stephen Lawrence and all the battles that his brave parents, Neville and Doreen Lawrence, have fought in the intervening years, the people my family knew in Eltham back then did not think of themselves as racists and we did not think of ourselves as racists, but look what happened in Well Hall Road.

People like us would have been horrified to be called racists and people like us are still horrified to be called racists, but that is not enough, is it? It is not enough to be not racist. Our social media feeds tonight will almost certainly include comments that “all lives matter”. Of course all lives matter, but it is not an indictment of anybody for us to be calling for this particular attention. One person’s gain is not another person’s loss. If we are not racists, we must be anti-racist. Do not commission; act on what we already know.

col 1013 **Apsana Begum (Labour):** ... Discrimination and structural racism continue to dictate who gets dumped and who gets resources—who suffers events worse. ...

col 1014 ... last week, as people were calling out the state regarding racism, Islamophobia and discrimination, the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Bill received its Second Reading. That Bill delays the long-awaited review of Prevent, which fosters discrimination against Muslim people and introduces significant curtailments of civil liberties, which will disadvantage BAME communities. It is time for some joined-up thinking and plain speaking: from now on, every decision by government or other public authorities needs to consider and act on addressing the needs of BAME communities. ...

col 1021 **Jeremy Corbyn (Labour):** ... This virus has exposed the necessity of communities working absolutely together, but it also shows a disproportionate number of deaths among people from the BAME community, who are 50% more likely to die from covid-19 than those who are not from the BAME community. The same figures apply for admissions to emergency care and intensive treatment units in hospitals. ...

Life expectancy is shorter for people from BAME communities, and there is a lack of community facilities in so many areas. ...

col 1022 **Sam Tarry (Labour):** ... Through the recent covid crisis, I have had heartening moments with local people, such as when the local gurdwara has provided over 4,000 meals a week to help the vulnerable and those in need. People have been working together—churches alongside mosques alongside synagogues. ...

Actually, in many BAME communities, the proportion of people who work in frontline services, whether it be bus drivers or people working in the NHS, is incredibly high and people are fearful, and they are angry that they and their communities have not been prioritised by the Government in the way that they should have been. These are rational fears. ...

Over the past few months, one thing that I have found particularly difficult has been the

increase in not just fear but racism—that some communities have almost been targeted, perhaps because of online rumours that their community is more likely to be bringing in this awful disease. ...

col 1024 **Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat):** ... Our society's acute emotional response to the disproportionate impact of covid-19 on BAME communities has been perhaps the one saving grace in this shocking failure to protect our communities, so many of whom were at the forefront of tackling the virus and have paid the ultimate price. ...

I believe we need a race equality strategy for the whole of the UK. ...

I am disappointed that I cannot pay tribute to the BAME community in my constituency or anywhere in Scotland and talk about the impact on them, because National Records of Scotland does not record deaths by ethnicity—it is voluntary—so the impact could be anywhere between 1% and 10%. I find it unacceptable that the Scottish Government do not have the figures to recognise that and address the issue in the way that we are at least attempting to in Westminster. ...

col 1026 **Chi Onwurah (Labour):** ... I experienced significant racism as a child, including name calling and worse, although I was supported by a strong community, family and school. Over the last few years, name calling, physical abuse and hate crimes have unfortunately risen, but when the name calling stops, that does not mean that racism has gone away. It is instead in the structures and systems that define how we live. ...

col 1027 Whether it is a Foreign Secretary who thinks that taking the knee is from fantasy fiction or a Prime Minister who speaks of “smiling piccaninnies”, the Government have demonstrated a lack of interest in the racism that we face. ... Covid-19 has shone a light on the discrimination that so many black and minority ethnic people suffer in this country. The Government need to act to change that and ensure that it does not continue, as it has for so many years. We do not need another review. ...

col 1029 **Kim Johnson (Labour):** ... Race equality has been firmly placed on the agenda in the past couple of weeks, but we all know only too well that countless reports and commissions tell black people what we already know: that we are disadvantaged simply because of the colour of our skin. I say enough is enough. Now is the time for action and change. I do not want my grandsons having the same debate in years to come. ...

col 1032 **Zarah Sultana (Labour):** ... This systemic racism is not incidental. It has a history, and thanks to the action of Black Lives Matter campaigners, light is being shed on this history. It is a history of colonialism and conquest, empire and enslavement, and inequality and exploitation. It is a history of the rich and powerful using their influence to maintain control and spread hate. Today, their newspapers run stories spreading fear about migrants arriving on our shores. Tomorrow, it might be about Muslims or young black men or Gypsies or Roma, and it is done with the same purpose: to divide the people, deflect blame and protect their rotten system. That is why they target minorities, and we see it with the threat to the trans community at the moment. ...

col 1044 **Ann McLaughlin (SNP):** ... Children are not born racist, and when they first become aware of it they find it very difficult to understand. It is not their instinct to be racist, and then they are taught it. If they go through nursery and school with positive role models from all ethnicities, and if their school books reflect those positive role models, they are far less likely to be able to be taught to be racist.

I have spoken to teachers who care deeply about this matter who told me that schools already teach about racism, as they should, but it others people and it portrays those classmates as victims. That is not to say that people are not victims of racism, but there is so much more that we could be doing to stop it in the first place. One of those things is looking at a positive role models in history and demonstrating that the ethnicity of the people who built these islands and this world is many and varied. ...

I have set up the all-party parliamentary group on unconscious bias. ... my intention is to have a number of distinct investigations. They could be into a number of things, but the

first must be into race. I want the group to take evidence from people not necessarily about overt racism but about undercover racism, where even the person doing it does not know that they are doing it. ...

col 1045 **Rosena Allin-Khan (Labour):** ... The resounding message is clear: our BAME communities are grieving. The priority from the outset of this pandemic should have been to save lives—all lives—but it pains me to have to stand here and state the most obvious point, which has, regrettably, been missed: that no one life is more important than any other.

The Government have liked to describe the fight against coronavirus as a war; to use their analogy, our BAME communities would have been the cannon fodder. These people's lives are not, and should not have been, dispensable. ...

col 1046 **Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour):** When we found out that elderly people needed support because of covid-19, we shielded them; when we found that people with co-morbidities needed support, we shielded them; but when it came to black communities, all of a sudden we found there had to be a review and a long conversation, and still no measures have been taken to shield them. ...

col 1047 **Rosena Allin-Khan:** ... When we discuss the disproportionately high number of BAME deaths, it is vital that the discourse does not fall into pseudoscience and biological difference. ... To be clear: it is not simply about people from a BAME background having different receptors in their lungs. People from BAME backgrounds are not a homogenous group of people. We are talking about people with vastly different heritage and racial backgrounds. Other countries have got this virus in check. The risk faced by BAME communities here in the UK is down to structural racism and the precarious work that people are placed in as a result.

The UK has been a warm and welcoming country for so many, but for others—for too many—it has not. We cannot ignore the vast number of deaths in our communities and sweep the memories of our loved ones under the rug. In the early days of the crisis, when communication was crucial, why did the Government not reach out to BAME communities? Can the Minister explain that? Why were vital documents not translated so that public health advice could be easily disseminated into some of our most vulnerable communities? ...

If, as a country, we truly want to learn from this crisis and treat everyone as equal, we must tackle racism wherever we come across it, and it is everyone's responsibility, regardless of skin colour, ethnicity or socio-economic status—it is everyone's problem. Our BAME communities have been failed and need to be able to trust that we here in this Chamber, in Parliament, truly represent them. It is our duty to rebuild the trust that has been lost. ...

col 1048 **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Jo Churchill):** ... Members have passionately articulated the findings, and I concur that they are deeply concerning. ... Everybody has been touched by the challenge of not being able to say goodbye, to carry a coffin, to say those last goodbyes. That is the human face of this dreadful disease, which has changed the way we live and work.

Far from being a great leveller, covid-19 cruelly discriminates, but it discriminates more broadly than we have probably touched on today. People who are old, people who—as was mentioned by several Members—live in cities, people who work in public-facing jobs and people from BAME backgrounds are at a heightened risk. ...

col 1049 Crucially, we do not know how different risk factors overlap and interact. I know that the calls for action now are heartfelt, but we need to understand different risk factors, including co-morbidities and occupation, so that we can ensure that there is a standardisation in the data and recommendations actually do what we need them to do. ... We do not have all the answers ... We must address the injustice of these ethnic disparities right across the board ... That is precisely why the Prime Minister announced on the weekend the establishment of a commission to examine ethnic disparities in this country.

It will have an independent chair, will report by the end of this year—within a very short timeframe—and will play an important role in driving the agenda forward. ... Inequalities are stubborn, persistent and difficult to change, but that is no reason to accept them. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-06-18/debates/75FB1500-FB1E-424B-8A76-7F6518DB34A8/Covid-19BAMECommunities>

House of Commons Written Answers

Hate Crime: Coronavirus

Mark Hendrick (Labour) [58642] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the increase in (a) xenophobia and (b) hate crimes reported in relation to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kit Malthouse: The Home Office are working closely with the National Police Chief's Council to ensure that all police forces are providing reassurance to affected communities and encouraging hate crime reporting during the pandemic. The Government are also working with civil society partners to understand whether there are issues of underreporting at this time.

Government continues to work with communities around the country and the police to ensure people of all backgrounds have access to the latest information and are supported through this period.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-11/58642/>

Marriage: Coronavirus

Paul Blomfield (Labour) [59438] To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2020 to Question 55054, what indicators his Department plans to use to determine whether to lift covid-19 lockdown restrictions on marriages.

Penny Mordaunt: As set out in '[Our Plan to Rebuild](#)', any adjustments to current social distancing controls for England will be timed carefully according to both the current transmission rate of the virus and the Government's ability to ensure safety. The steps for modifying social distancing measures are set out in the plan, with strict conditions to safely move from each step to the next.

In the strategy, we committed to exploring how to enable people to gather in slightly larger groups to better facilitate small weddings. We are actively looking at how we can facilitate small weddings, as soon as possible, to deliver the roadmap.

Step Three of the plan also includes the ambition to open at least some places of worship, including the potential for some small wedding ceremonies. The Government's current planning assumption is that this step will be no earlier than 4 July, subject to the five tests for easing measures and further detailed scientific advice provided closer to the time, on how far we can go.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-15/59438/>

House of Lords Written Answers

The following four questions all received the same answer

Relationship and Sex Education

Baroness Barker (Liberal Democrat) [HL5271] To ask Her Majesty's Government what resources they are providing to schools to teach LGBT-inclusive Relationships Education

and Relationships and Sex Education.

Baroness Barker (Liberal Democrat) [HL5272] To ask Her Majesty's Government what role Ofsted will play in ensuring that LGBT-inclusive statutory Relationships Education or Relationships and Sex Education is taught in all schools from September.

Baroness Barker (Liberal Democrat) [HL5273] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Berridge on 5 May (HL3330), what is meant by schools developing Relationships Education or Relationships and Sex Education "that is sensitive to the ... backgrounds of their pupils".

Baroness Barker (Liberal Democrat) [HL5274] To ask Her Majesty's Government what resources have been requested by (1) teachers, (2) schools, and (3) teaching unions, to teach statutory Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education from September.

Baroness Berridge: We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We also want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. We are making Relationships Education compulsory for primary school-age pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for secondary school-age pupils and Health Education compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools from September 2020.

Whilst it is important that the statutory duty to teach the new subject still comes into force in September, given the current circumstances faced by schools, the department will reassure schools that there will be some flexibility. Schools that are prepared to teach the subjects should begin teaching from September 2020. Schools that are not ready to teach the subjects should aim to start preparations as soon as possible and begin teaching no later than the start of the summer term in 2021.

The department is committed to supporting schools in their preparations and is currently developing a new online service featuring innovative training materials, an implementation guide, case studies and support to access resources. This support will cover all of the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance and will be inclusive to all pupils. This will be available in the summer term, with additional content added in the following months. Training will also be available for schools that need additional support. This will complement the online training materials and will be available through existing teaching schools' regional networks.

As part of the consultation on the draft regulations and statutory guidance, the department included a number of questions on school support and implementation. The responses to the consultation, including from expert organisations and teachers, demonstrated that teachers want to receive training to support the delivery of the new subjects. The government response to the consultation can be accessed via the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/780768/Government_Response_to_RSE_Consultation.pdf.

The department has also been working extensively with teachers, schools and subject experts throughout the development of these subjects, to assess the needs of schools. We have also been working closely with over 1,500 early adopter schools. This has informed our investment in a central package to help all schools to increase the confidence and quality of their teaching practice in these subjects.

In all schools, the religious background of all pupils must be taken into account when planning teaching, so that the topics that are included in the core content listed in the statutory guidance are appropriately handled. Schools must ensure they comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010. The statutory guidance can be accessed via the following link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships Education Relationships and Sex Education RSE and Health Education.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education_Relationships_and_Sex_Education_RSE_and_Health_Education.pdf).

Ofsted's school inspection handbook sets out that inspectors will consider the provision for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Health Education as part of a wider judgment of pupils' personal development. Routine Ofsted school inspections are currently suspended in order to alleviate pressure on school leaders and staff at this challenging time, and there are no plans to lift the suspension this term. When routine inspections do re-start, inspectors will be sensitive to, and will take account of, the context and circumstances of schools. Further information on this will be made available in advance of any re-introduction of routine inspections.

[HL5271](#) [HL5272](#) [HL5273](#) [HL5274](#) [PDF 1](#)
[HL5271](#) [HL5272](#) [HL5273](#) [HL5274](#) [PDF 2](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-04/HL5271/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-04/HL5272/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-04/HL5273/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-04/HL5274/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-04-21/HL3330/>

Office of National Statistics

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by religious group, England and Wales:
2 March to 15 May 2020**

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronaviruscovid19relateddeathsbyreligiousgroupenglandandwales/2marchto15may2020/pdf>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Racism (Education System)

Keith Brown (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government how issues relating to racism are addressed within the Scottish education system. (S5O-04430)

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney): Helping children and young people to develop as responsible global citizens is a key feature of the curriculum in schools in Scotland. Learning about current and past attitudes and values and historical events, and their impact on society today, is a key element of the curriculum.

We all need to be vigilant in challenging any racist and abusive behaviour in our schools. Where it occurs, it must be challenged through educating children about all faiths and belief systems, and ensuring that they learn tolerance, respect and equality, and about healthy relationships.

Keith Brown: The cabinet secretary will be aware that there is substantial strength of feeling in Scotland following the Black Lives Matter protests and the highlighting of the need to face up to our colonial past. Many schools are making efforts to introduce anti-racism learning. An example of those is Alva academy, in my constituency, which has been awarded the status of a vision school for Holocaust education.

I understand that dealing with the coronavirus pandemic must be the Scottish Government's overriding concern at the moment. However, will the cabinet secretary consider how the Government might encourage further diversification in the curriculum, so that Scottish children are fully aware of Scotland's history, not least its shameful roles in slavery and colonisation?

John Swinney: I congratulate Alva academy on the prestigious award that it has received on achieving the status of a vision school for Holocaust education. On Tuesday I had the pleasure of discussing a range of educational issues with headteachers from the Clackmannanshire local authority area and Scott McEwan, the headteacher of Alva academy, was one of the participants. It is a great credit to the school that it has achieved that status.

While Scotland's curriculum is not prescriptive, it provides teachers with a flexible framework through the experiences and outcomes contained in the curriculum for excellence. Such a framework allows teachers and schools to teach what is appropriate for the learners in their own classrooms, schools and local authority areas. Education Scotland's national improvement hub contains materials to support teaching about slavery. The experiences and outcomes in social studies offer opportunities to teach black history. However, I acknowledge the significance of the issues that have been raised by the Black Lives Matter movement, so I intend to look afresh at our materials to ensure that the guidance and the experiences and outcomes adequately address the point that Mr Brown has raised.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12702&i=114932#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Government

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for the safe use of places of worship

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>

Guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): funeral services in places of worship

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-funeral-services-in-places-of-worship/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making – Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis - Phase 2 update

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-2-update/>

Welsh Government

First Minister announces further steps to unlock Wales

... The changes are part of a comprehensive package of measures being introduced step by step every Monday over the next 3 weeks. Pupils will return to schools on 29 June and the requirement to stay local will be lifted, if conditions allow on 6 July. ...

First Minister Mark Drakeford said: The threat of coronavirus hasn't gone away but thanks to the efforts we have all made over the last few months, the number of people contracting

coronavirus each day in Wales is falling, so too is the risk of meeting somebody with virus. Given the progress we have made, we are able to take some additional cautious steps to further unlock our society and economy. ...

Monday's changes include ... Enabling private prayer in places of worship where social distancing is maintained and gatherings do not take place ...

The requirement to stay local and not generally travelling more than 5 miles from home remains in place. However, new guidance will make it clear people are able to travel outside their local area on compassionate grounds. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://gov.wales/first-minister-announces-further-steps-to-unlock-wales>

TOP

Holocaust

See the Scottish Parliament oral answer "Racism (Education System)" that is included in the Home Affairs section above.

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Coronavirus: Medical Equipment

Christian Wakeford (Conservative) [38631] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether officials in his Department have held discussions with representatives of Israeli medical technology companies on the (a) use and (b) importation of medical technologies developed in that country to tackle the covid-19 outbreak in the UK.

Jo Churchill: The Department is regularly in discussions with other countries on a wide range of issues of issues relating to COVID-19, including Israel. COVID-19 presents a global challenge which requires a collaborative response. The Department will continue to work with other countries throughout the crisis and beyond.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-04-21/38631/>

Coronavirus: Israel

Scott Benton (Conservative) [55132] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Israel's use of plasma samples obtained by Magen David Adom from patients who have recovered from covid-19 on patients with severe symptoms of that disease.

Helen Whately: An assessment has not been made at this stage of the effectiveness of Israel's use of plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients (convalescent plasma) on patients with severe symptoms of COVID-19. However, all international evidence on the use of convalescent plasma in COVID-19 patients will be considered when the results of the trials are available, in addition to the findings from the clinical trials currently taking place in the United Kingdom.

Clinical trials in the UK include patients receiving convalescent plasma, to determine if it can help those with the virus. NHS Blood and Transplant is collecting

convalescent plasma to supply the clinical trials and for wider treatment, if it is shown to be effective in reducing disease symptoms.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-05/55132/>

Israel: Palestinians

Jonathan Gullis (Conservative) [58831] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his overseas counterparts on the Middle East peace process.

James Cleverly: We continue to work closely with international partners advocating a two-state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations between both parties. The Foreign Secretary discussed the Middle East Peace Process and our opposition to the unilateral annexation of territory during calls with Alternate Israeli Prime Minister Gantz on 20 May, Egyptian Foreign Minister Shoukry on 21 May, Jordanian Foreign Minister Safadi on 28 May and Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 2 June.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-11/58831/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Israeli Settlements

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL5374] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to (1) end visa-free entry to the UK for Israeli citizens, and (2) consider other sanctions, in response to the annexation of new areas of land by Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We will not discuss possible responses to hypothetical situations. The Foreign Secretary made clear our concerns about reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement, which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank, during a call with the Israeli Foreign Minister on 2 June. We also reiterated our concerns at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May. The UK position is clear: any unilateral moves towards annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel would be damaging to efforts to restart peace negotiations and contrary to international law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-08/HL5374/>

The UK speech to the UN Security Council referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/securing-a-peaceful-future-for-israelis-and-palestinians>

Iyad Hallaq

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL5432] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the (1) killing of Iyad Khairi Hallaq, (2) raiding of his parents' home, and (3) physical assault of his sisters, by Israeli forces.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the UK Consul General in Jerusalem and the UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv stated on 31 May, we are deeply saddened to hear about the death of Iyad Khairi Hallaq after he was shot by Israeli police in East Jerusalem. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family. We urge restraint in the use of live fire by the Israel Defense Forces. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations and

if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. The perpetual cycle of violence must end.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-08/HL5432/>

West Bank: Water

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL5433] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that water tanks belonging to Palestinians living in Kafr Qadum were shot by Israeli soldiers.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not made representations on these reports, the UK is concerned by the continued destruction of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances such destruction by an occupying power is contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We urge both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-08/HL5433/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL5434] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that that government plans to renew legislation which prohibits Palestinians living outside of the 1967 ceasefire border from living with their spouses in Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of these reports. The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process is clear: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-08/HL5434/>

West Bank: Demolition

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL5436] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports of the demolition of Palestinian homes within parts of the West Bank which that government plans to annex.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As we made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May, we remain concerned by the continued demolition of Palestinian property by Israeli authorities. We urge both sides to avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-08/HL5436/>

The UK speech to the UN Security Council referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/securing-a-peaceful-future-for-israelis-and-palestinians>

United Nations

Secretary-General Appoints Leni Stenseth of Norway Deputy Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced today the appointment of Leni Stenseth of Norway as Deputy Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) ...

Currently Norwegian Ambassador to Lebanon, Ms. Stenseth brings to the position nearly 20 years of experience in international politics, humanitarian action and crisis management, 15 of which were in leadership positions with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Red Cross. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sga1963.doc.htm>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Iran: Arms Trade

Jonathan Gullis (Conservative) [58830] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for regional security 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 Hizballah, will remain in place after the arms embargo expires.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-11/58830/>

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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>

Lords agreement to Commons amendment

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-06-18/debates/9C1D0256-CCB7-41B6-8AEB-F21D00D37C17/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill\(HL\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-06-18/debates/9C1D0256-CCB7-41B6-8AEB-F21D00D37C17/DivorceDissolutionAndSeparationBill(HL))

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

**** closes in 9 days**

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