



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Antisemitism

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [18972] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of time in days is between the report of an anti-Semitic hate crime and conviction of the offender.

James Brokenshire: The Ministry of Justice does not record statistics in this way and so it is not possible to answer your question directly; prosecutions and convictions for crimes of this nature are recorded under the legislation of the specific offence they take, which means that there is no way to extract the data for anti-Semitic hate crime specifically as it would be recorded as 'assault' or a different category depending on the nature of the offence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-02-21/18972/>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Internet: Hate Crime

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [64379] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on tackling the platforming of far-right hate speech online.

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [64380] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the online platforming of hate speech.

Caroline Dinenage: Ministers have regular discussions with their Cabinet Colleagues on a range of issues, including tackling online hate speech. The Home Office are working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), civil society partners and social media platforms to encourage victim reporting of online hate crime during the pandemic and to ensure that all police forces are providing reassurance to affected communities. Policy for combating online hate crime remains with the Home Office.

Ensuring the UK is the safest place in the world to go online is a priority for the

Government. We are pressing ahead with legislation to establish a new Online Harms regulatory framework which will protect users from harm. The Government's Online Harms White Paper, published in April 2019, set out our plans for world-leading legislation, by making companies more responsible for their users' safety online.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-24/64379/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-24/64380/>

The White Paper referred to above can be read at

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

Schools: Bullying and Racial Harassment

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [68454] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of racist harassment and bullying in schools.

Vicky Ford: Racism in all its forms is abhorrent and has no place in our society. Schools play a crucial role in helping young people understand the world around them and their place within it. All schools are legally required to have a behaviour policy with measures to prevent all forms of bullying and they have the freedom to develop their own anti-bullying strategies and monitoring approaches to best suit their environment.

Our guidance on preventing and tackling bullying

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>)

sets out that schools should develop a consistent approach to monitoring bullying incidents and evaluating the effectiveness of their approaches. It also directs schools to organisations who can provide support with tackling bullying related to race, religion and nationality.

The department asks teachers about the prevalence of different types of bullying in its regular school snapshot surveys. The latest survey is from July 2019:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-snapshot-survey-summer-2019>.

This survey suggests that, over the previous 12 months, 56% of school leaders and teachers had 'never' or 'rarely' seen any of the types of bullying mentioned. 18% reported seeing bullying linked to race and ethnicity 'sometimes' or more often.

On 7 June, we announced more than £750,000 for the Diana Award, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the Anne Frank Trust in order to help hundreds of schools and colleges build relationships between pupils and to increase their resilience as well as to continue to tackle bullying both in person and online

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-mental-health-support-for-pupils-and-teachers>).

The department has also made resources available through the website Educate Against Hate

(<https://educateagainsthate.com/>).

This website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with the information, guidance and support that they need to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-02/68454/>

Religious Buildings: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson (Conservative) [66200] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what financial support will be available for places of worship that have been adversely affected by the covid-19 outbreak to (a) continue their pastoral support in communities, (b) recover loss of income from rented spaces and (c) safely reopen.

Luke Hall: Faith communities have a long history of service supporting many of the most vulnerable members of our society. The rapid response during the current pandemic has been no different and the government values the work being done to support those in need.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government play a facilitative role in ensuring government understands the needs of faith communities and the challenges they may be currently facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to work closely with a range of faith groups to understand how government can support them in light of the pressures they face at this time.

Faith organisations can access a range of government-backed financial support measures. Places of worship may be eligible for payment under the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund. Local authorities are responsible for defining precise eligibility for this fund and may choose to make payments to organisations based on local economic need, subject to meeting the specific eligibility criteria.

The Government has also announced a range of funds available to charities, including the Coronavirus Community Support Fund to support organisations providing essential services for vulnerable people affected by the current crisis.

Further information about the range of financial support available and how to apply can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/financial-support-for-voluntary-community-and-social-enterprise-vcse-organisations-to-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19>.

The Government is also considering what else is needed to ensure that families and friends of those deceased get the support they need - particularly during this very difficult time. We are committed to ongoing engagement with the bereavement support sector and will continue to work closely to assess how we can support charities in doing their important work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of 4 July, places of worship are open for communal worship with social distancing in place. We are pleased to be able to allow weddings and other life cycle events to also now take place. We have published guidance detailing how this can be done safely which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-29/66200/>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Hezbollah

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [66826] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 62325 on Hezbollah, for what reasons her Department does not collect information on (a) investigations and (b) charges for displaying the flag or other symbols of (i) Hezbollah and (ii) other proscribed organisations.

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [66827] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2020 to Question 62325 on Hezbollah, if her Department will (a) collect and (b) publish information on the number of (i) investigations and (ii) charges for (A) displaying the flag or other symbols of and (B)

other promotion of (1) Hezbollah and (2) other proscribed organisations.

James Brokenshire: The Government takes proscription offences seriously. Investigations into the activities of proscribed organisations or individuals who may be members or supporters of proscribed organisations are an operational matter for the police and intelligence agencies. It would not be appropriate to publish data on intelligence related matters.

The Government publishes quarterly national statistics on the use of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent relevant legislation in Great Britain. This includes information on arrests, charges and convictions for proscription offences. The most recent publication up to year ending March 2020, was published on 11 June on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/operation-of-police-powers-under-the-terrorism-act-2000-financial-year-ending-march-2020>.

The quarterly publications establish transparency by ensuring that data is publicly available on the use of police powers in a consistently categorised way. As with all crime statistics published by the Home Office, the data published in the Terrorism statistics are offence based, where police provide a count of the number of offences recorded. Data providers are not required to provide further detail on events leading to the arrest, as to do so would place a disproportionate burden on the organisations responsible. This includes the National Counter-Terrorism Police Operations Centre, the Crown Prosecution Service's Counter-Terrorism Division, the Metropolitan Police Service and the National Counter-Terrorism Policing Headquarters. As with all Official Statistics, we continually review outputs taking account of user needs.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-30/66826/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-30/66827/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-22/62325/>

House of Lords Library

Letter from Baroness Goldie to Lord Sheikh regarding the proposal that Chaplains of all religions in the armed forces be made full-time officers

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2020-0402/Letter to Lord Sheikh.docx>

Home Office, Ministry of Justice

Government plan new changes to criminal records disclosure regime

The government has announced it intends to make changes to the criminal records disclosure rules to ensure the right balance is struck between rehabilitating offenders and protecting the public.

Today, the government has laid a Statutory Instrument to amend the filtering rules that govern what is automatically disclosed through standard and enhanced criminal records certificates issued by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The new legislation will remove the requirement for automatic disclosure of youth cautions, reprimands and warnings and remove the 'multiple conviction' rule, which requires the

automatic disclosure of all convictions where a person has more than one conviction, regardless of the nature of their offence or sentence. ...

Safeguarding Minister Victoria Atkins said: By making these adjustments we will ensure that vulnerable people are protected from dangerous offenders while those who have turned their lives around or live with the stigma of convictions from their youth are not held back. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-plan-new-changes-to-criminal-records-disclosure-regime>

The Statutory Instrument referred to above is not yet available online

Scottish Parliament First Minister's Statement

Coronavirus: Lockdown Restrictions

First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon): ... After careful consideration, we have decided that, from 15 July, places of worship can reopen for communal prayer, congregational services and contemplation. However, numbers will be strictly limited, 2m physical distancing will be required, and there will be a requirement to collect the contact details and time of attendance of those who enter a place of worship. Unfortunately, given what we know of transmission risks, singing and chanting will be restricted.

Detailed guidance is being finalised in consultation with our faith communities, but I hope that today's announcement will be welcomed by all those for whom faith and worship is important and a source of comfort.

In addition, and linked to that change, we will ease restrictions on attendance at services and ceremonies for funerals, weddings and civil partnerships. However, numbers will be even more limited than for worship generally and physical distancing will be required. I stress that that change applies only to services. Associated gatherings, such as wakes or receptions, must continue to follow the limits on household gatherings and hospitality. ...

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=12728&i=115096#ScotParlOR>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Schools: Racism

S5W-30063 Beatrice Wishart (Liberal Democrat): To ask the Scottish Government how (a) trainee, (b) probationary and (c) newly-qualified teachers are taught how to (i) address any issues of racism and discrimination in their schools and (ii) teach the social context of BAME people's experiences.

John Swimmey: As set out in the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) Standards for Professional Registration, teachers are expected at all stages of their careers to demonstrate professional values and personal commitment to social justice and cultural diversity by engaging learners in real world issues.

Teacher Education institutions will differ in the ways in which they deliver content to students on racism and discrimination, but all do. In terms of support provided to probation and post probation teachers, I refer the member to the answer to question S5W-30065 on 7 July 2020. ...

The National Framework for Inclusion has also been designed to ensure that all teachers are appropriately guided and supported throughout their careers towards gaining the required knowledge and understanding of inclusive education.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-30063>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-30065>

The GTCS Standards referred to above can be read at

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standards-for-registration-1212.pdf>

Schools: Racism

S5W-30065 Beatrice Wishart (Liberal Democrat): To ask the Scottish Government what professional learning is available to established teachers regarding how to (a) address any issues of racism and discrimination in their schools and (b) teach the social contexts of BAME people's experiences, and what information it has regarding the take-up of this, and what support is offered by Education Scotland.

John Swinney: As set out in the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) Standards for Professional Registration, all teachers in Scotland must have respect for social and cultural diversity at the heart of what they do, engage learners in real world issues and help them to embrace equality and social justice. The National Improvement Hub, managed by Education Scotland, already offers a range of materials to support professional learning and school improvement.

To support this, Education Scotland are developing new professional learning activities with a particular focus on diversity, anti-racist education and culturally responsive pedagogy.

In addition, Education Scotland are also currently developing a race equality resource in collaboration with partners BEMIS and CRER. This is an outcome of the work of the race equality resource group which met as part of delivering the Race Equality Action Plan. This resource will comprise of a set of guiding principles for promoting race equality in education settings and a series of case exemplars. Curriculum mapping to support a whole school approach to race equality education is at the early stages of development.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-30065>

The GTCS Standards referred to above can be read at

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/the-standards/standards-for-registration-1212.pdf>

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

<https://tinyurl.com/wkvvtuh>

Scottish Government

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Framework for Decision Making – Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis Phase 3 Update

... Wednesday 15 July: Places of worship can re-open for congregational services, communal prayer and contemplation with physical distancing and limited numbers. ...

Easing of restrictions on attendance at funerals, marriage ceremonies and civil partnership registrations with physical distancing (limited numbers). Associated receptions are subject to restrictions on hospitality and household meetings. ...

<https://tinyurl.com/ybwgtzmw>

National Records of Scotland

Analysis of deaths involving coronavirus (COVID-19) in Scotland, by ethnic group

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/covid19/ethnicity-deceased-covid-19-june20.pdf>

Welsh Government

Guidance to local authorities and places of worship on marriages and civil partnerships: coronavirus

<https://gov.wales/guidance-marriages-and-civil-partnerships-coronavirus-html>

Guidance to members of the public on marriage and civil partnership ceremonies: coronavirus

<https://gov.wales/guidance-members-public-marriage-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-coronavirus-html>

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Israel

See also the House of Commons written answers on the subject of “Hezbollah” that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and “International Monetary Fund: Lebanon” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

House of Commons Written Answers

Israeli Settlements

Owen Thompson (SNP) [66936] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what plans he has to respond to the Israeli annexation of the West Bank since his statement on 31 January 2020.

James Cleverly: As the Prime Minister made clear in the House of Commons on 16 June, we are concerned by reports that the new Israeli Government coalition has reached an agreement which may pave the way for annexation of parts of the West Bank. I reiterated this as our position in a statement to the UN Security Council on 24 June. 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. The United Kingdom will not recognise any unilateral attempt to change the border. Such a step would go against the rules-based international order and the UN Charter. We urge Israel to reconsider. The Prime Minister did so in an article in Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth on 1 July.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-30/66936/>

The Minister’s statement, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/possible-israeli-annexation-of-the-west-bank-foreign-secretary-statement>

The Prime Minister’s comments in the House of Commons referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-06-16/debates/20061637000001/GlobalBritain#contribution-4DBC7ED1-8193-4718-9D42-B9B8E167381B>

The Minister’s statement to the UN Security Council, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/urging-a-negotiated-two-state-solution-between-israelis-and-palestinians>

The Prime Minister’s article, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/as-israels-friend-i-urge-you-not-to-annex-pm-boris-johnson>

Israel: Palestinians

Sara Britcliffe (Conservative) [67001] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to help secure peace between Israel and Palestine.

James Cleverly: 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. We continue to work closely with international partners strongly advocating a two-state solution and encouraging a return to meaningful negotiations. The Foreign Secretary did so most recently in a meeting with French and German Foreign Ministers on 19 June. The Foreign Secretary also 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 and Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 2 June.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-30/67001/>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

International Monetary Fund: Lebanon

John Howell (Conservative) [68305] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to advocate that any International Monetary Fund loan package to Lebanon includes conditions on political restructuring to restrict Hezbollah's state capture abilities and prevent its control of government spending.

John Glen: For all IMF programmes, the UK uses its seat at the IMF's Board to engage in the process of programme design and stipulation of conditions on lending. We utilise the expertise of our embassy network to ensure that programme conditions reflect the domestic political situation while remaining consistent with the IMF's mandate.

IMF programmes in general are subject to strict policies of oversight and monitoring, underpinned by well-established mechanisms.

Under its Articles of Agreement, the IMF must establish adequate safeguards for the use of its resources. IMF lending requires safeguards covering key areas of governance and control to help mitigate the risks of misuse of Fund resources and misreporting of data. These safeguards may include limits on how much can be borrowed, conditions on the loans, measures to deal with misreporting or arrears, and safeguard assessments of central banks. The UK also uses its seat at the Board to help shape these policies and ensure that they are applied across all the IMF's lending arrangements.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-02/68305/>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/assisteddying.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

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

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