



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Places of Worship: Hate Crimes

**John Howell (Conservative):** What steps [the Minister's] Department is taking to prevent hate crimes against places of worship. [904589]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Victoria Atkins):** We are committed to protecting places of worship from hate crimes through the places of worship protected security scheme. The funding for next year, at £3.2 million, is an uplift of nearly double the amount awarded last year. A public consultation on providing greater protection from hate crime for places of worship closed on 28 June. We are reviewing the responses and will respond in due course.

**John Howell:** There is a balance to be struck between worshipping openly and being provided with adequate security. Will the Minister say what success the Government's places of worship protective security funding scheme has had in achieving that balance?

**Victoria Atkins:** Very much so. I can assure my hon. Friend that the places of worship protective security funding scheme has been designed so that each place of worship can apply for practical security measures that suit their individual needs, ranging from CCTV to alarm systems. This allows each place of worship to remain open and accessible for worshippers, while providing greater security. We want to ensure that this scheme listens to worshippers and their communities when seeking to achieve the balance to which he rightly refers.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-07-13/debates/23BDC20B-701F-4BC7-9F77-EC4F9CADFD8A/PlacesOfWorshipHateCrimes>

Information about the funding scheme referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

#### Topical Questions: Home Office

**Aaron Bell (Conservative):** No one should be fearful of practising their faith anywhere, but there have been too many attacks, both at home and abroad, on all sorts of places of

worship. I thank the Minister for her earlier answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Henley (John Howell) about doubling the places of worship protective security fund to £3.2 million, and for the Home Office's consultation, which recently closed. Does the Home Secretary believe that those measures, put together, will limit the chances of future hate crime attacks in the UK? [904637]

**Priti Patel:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. This is valuable investment. What we have seen in terms of targeted attacks on places of worship is appalling; it is thoroughly unacceptable. It is that combined approach, along with law enforcement, that absolutely matters. We want to see crimes of this nature absolutely decrease, and we want to stamp this out.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-07-13/debates/29C7A5B3-69C7-4846-BC94-454A95D2D339/TopicalQuestions#contribution-153298EC-1A23-44CC-B1D0-9A7C98E8ADEF>

Information about the funding scheme referred to above can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Antisemitism

**Lord Jopling (Conservative)** [HL6485] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue guidance on how to criticise the government of Israel without being antisemitic.

**Lord Greenhalgh:** We became the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2016. The IHRA definition is an invaluable tool for public bodies and the wider public to understand how antisemitism manifests itself in the 21st century. The IHRA definition is already used in guidance for the Police and Crown Prosecution Service, providing examples of the kinds of behaviours which, depending on the circumstances, could constitute antisemitism.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-06/HL6485/>

### Hezbollah

**Lord Polak (Conservative)** [HL6248] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Hezbollah's involvement in (1) charitable, and (2) criminal networks, in the UK.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We do not comment on intelligence matters.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-29/HL6248/>

## Home Office

### Priti Patel proscribes far-right terrorist group

The Home Secretary has ... moved to outlaw the far-right terror group, Feuerkrieg Division. Priti Patel has asked Parliament for permission to proscribe the white supremacist group, which was founded in late 2018 and operates across North America and Europe. They advocate the use of violence and mass murder in pursuit of an apocalyptic race war and promote their ideology online, often using social media platforms to target teens and people in their early 20s. ...

Home Secretary Priti Patel said: This vile white supremacist group advocates violence and seeks to sow division, targeting young and vulnerable people online.

I am determined to do everything I can to stop the spread of extreme ideologies that encourage and glorify terrorism, which is why I have taken action to proscribe this group. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/priti-patel-proscribes-right-wing-terrorist-group>

## Scottish Parliament Written Answer

### Reopening of places of worship

**S5W-30266 Murdo Fraser (Conservative):** To ask the Scottish Government for what reason hospitality venues will be permitted to open to the public in July 2020, but not places of worship.

**Aileen Campbell:** We recognise how difficult it has been for Scotland's faith communities to be unable to come together in places of worship at this challenging time. This was of course necessary due to the pandemic and I appreciate the understanding and patience our faith communities have shown in abiding by restrictions, which have been vital to ensure safety and stop the spread of the virus. Working with our faith leaders and guided in particular by evolving scientific and health advice on transmission risks, we are confident that appropriate mitigations can be put in place to bring forward the reopening of places of worship to 15 July. This was announced by the First Minister on 9 July.

The Scottish Government has remained engaged with our faith communities and will continue to work closely with them as we develop guidance to support places of worship to re-open safely, with physical distancing and hygiene safeguards.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-30266>

*The announcement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.scot/news/moving-to-phase-3-of-lockdown-route-map/>

## Scottish Government

### Safe re-opening of places of worship

Places of worship will be able to re-open for congregational worship and prayer and religious life event ceremonies from 15 July and guidance has been published to help them prepare.

Key measures include:

- restrictions on capacity so that a safe distance of at least 2 metres can be maintained between individuals from different household groups. No place of worship should admit more than 50 people at any one time, regardless of its size or usual capacity, with a limit of 20 on weddings and funerals
- the retention of worshippers' contact details to share for Test and Protect if required
- no communal prayer books, prayer mats or other shared items
- faith leaders and those responsible for places of worship must take all reasonable measures to adapt faith-specific rites and rituals to ensure the safety of those present
- singing, chanting and the playing of wind instruments should be avoided pending further scientific and medical advice on the risks of transmission from such activities

Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell said: "I know it has been very difficult for our faith communities to be unable to come together in their places of worship during such challenging times. This was, of course, necessary due to the pandemic and I would like to thank everyone for their understanding and patience."

“We have continued to engage closely with and listen to our faith communities throughout this period and we understand the important role of congregational worship in supporting spiritual wellbeing. The updated guidance reflects the evolving scientific and health advice and has been developed in consultation with leaders and representatives of Scotland’s faith and belief communities.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/safe-re-opening-of-places-of-worship/>

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) Phase 3: guidance for the safe use of places of worship**

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>

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## Israel

**See also the House of Lords written answers “Antisemitism” and “Hezbollah” in the Home Affairs section above, and the House of Commons written answer “International Monetary Fund: Lebanon” in the Foreign Affairs section below.**

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Israeli Settlements

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [71146]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Government of Israel on humanitarian access to all parts of (a) the West Bank and (b) the Gaza strip in the event of annexation.

**James Cleverly:** We are concerned about the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and caution against anything that could exacerbate this. Our priority and focus is on preventing annexation. We continue to urge Israel not to take these steps. The Prime Minister has conveyed the UK’s opposition to unilateral annexation to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on multiple occasions, including in a phone call on 6 July and a letter in June. The Prime Minister also urged Israel not to proceed in an article in Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth on 1 July. The Foreign Secretary reiterated this message in his calls with Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Gantz and Foreign Minister Ashkenazi.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-08/71146/>

*The 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>

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Zeid Qaysiyah

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL6264]** To ask Her Majesty’s Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the death of Zeid Qaysiyah.

**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 are deeply saddened to

hear about the death of Zeid Qaysiyah after he was shot by Israeli forces. We have raised our concerns about the high numbers of Palestinians killed by the Israel Defense Forces with the Israeli authorities. 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.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-29/HL6264/>

*The statement to the Security Council referred to above can be read at*

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

### **Israeli Settlements**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6265] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to protect Palestinian-owned land near Bethlehem from any encroachment by the expansion of Efrat.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Our position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law and damaging to renewed efforts to launch peace negotiations. We urge Israel to halt settlement expansion immediately.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-29/HL6265/>

### **Jerusalem: Planning**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6267] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to protect people living in East Jerusalem from being discriminated against by planning laws.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We recognise that Palestinians face severe difficulty in securing building permissions for homes and infrastructure in East Jerusalem and Area C. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-29/HL6267/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL6268] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Palestinians are protected in the West Bank (1) now, and (2) in the future.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are committed to the objective of an independent, sovereign and prosperous Palestinian state, living side by side with a safe and secure Israel. That is why we put such emphasis on strengthening Palestinian institutions and fostering sustainable economic growth. Economic progress can never be a substitute for a political settlement, but it is vital in the interim that Palestinians see tangible improvements in their daily lives. We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution and are encouraging both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve. In terms of our programmes, we fund a number of projects that support Palestinian communities in the West Bank, from the effects of settlement expansion in particular. Our legal aid programme also supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or home eviction in both Area C and East Jerusalem.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-29/HL6268/>

## Palestinians: Recognition of States

**Lord Judd (Labour)** [HL6312] To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made to recognise the state of Palestine.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-30/HL6312/>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### International Monetary Fund: Lebanon

**John Howell (Conservative)** [71019] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2020 to Question 68305 on Loans: Lebanon, what risks of misuse the International Monetary Fund has identified for loan packages to Lebanon; and what plans he has for conditions on lending relating to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

**John Glen:** The IMF must establish adequate safeguards for use of its resources, consulting and updating the Board of Directors, as its policy develops. Safeguards can include for example: strengthening auditing or procurement rules, and wider Central Bank reform. The UK uses its seat on the IMF Board, in conjunction with other board members, to help ensure that programme conditions are consistent with the IMF's mandate.

There have not been formal discussions at the IMF board on Lebanon, though the IMF's spokesman has said recently that "there is significant scope to strengthen the transparency and accountability of economic policies, and public sector entities."

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-08/71019/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<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

**\*\* closes in 10 days**

**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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