



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs
Israel

Relevant Legislation

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Music: Coronavirus

Thangam Debbonaire (Labour) [73889] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps is taking to enable singing in (a) choirs, (b) audiences, and (c) congregations as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Thangam Debbonaire (Labour) [73891] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on what date he plans to enable singing in (a) choirs, (b) audiences and (c) religious congregations as covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Caroline Dinenage: We are committed to getting the performing arts sector fully back up and running as soon as it is safe to do so. It is a priority of my department to work with the arts and cultural sectors to address the challenges of reopening. We have released guidance to support the performing arts sector resume activity in line with the roadmap announced by the Secretary of State last month. In addition, the Government is supporting a number of studies that are currently underway to understand more about the risks associated with these activities. The findings from these studies will inform further changes in the guidance.

Singing, especially in groups, such as in choirs or in audiences - in religious settings or otherwise, is considered a higher risk activity because of the potential for aerosol production and the absence presently of developed scientific analysis to assess this specific risk. The evidence is being developed rapidly. Whilst further evidence is being developed, we advise that non-professional groups should not sing in at this stage and should only do activities in line with government guidance on social mixing.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-14/73889/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-07-14/73891/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Hate Crime and Theft: Prosecutions

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated) [HL6904] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) hate incidents, and (2) cases of burglary and theft, have been recorded by the police in each of the last five years; and how many of the cases of burglary and theft have resulted in a successful prosecution.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office routinely publishes data on the number of hate crimes burglary and theft offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. This is published as part of the 'Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables', which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for prosecutions data and publishes information on the number of prosecutions, and the number of these which resulted in a conviction by offence types, including theft and burglary. These can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888344/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx

Information on the number of hate crimes that have been prosecuted are published by the Crown Prosecution Service and can be found here:

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/publication/hate-crime-data>
[PPRC user guide](#)

[HO code tool principal offence 2019](#)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-15/HL6904/>

Community Security Trust

Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2020

Today CST has published its *Antisemitic Incidents Report* for January-June 2020, which shows that 789 antisemitic incidents were recorded by CST across the UK in the first six months of this year. This is a 13 per cent fall from the 911 incidents recorded in the first half of 2019, but is still the third-highest number of incidents CST has ever recorded in the January to June period of any year. ...

The lowest monthly totals in the first half of 2020 were April and March, with 98 and 102 antisemitic incidents respectively. April 2020 was the first month since December 2017 in which CST recorded fewer than 100 antisemitic incidents. These months correlate with the period when coronavirus lockdown measures were most forcefully communicated and enforced: the instruction to close down religious premises, schools, restaurants, pubs and other venues was issued towards the end of March, while messaging was relaxed in May. April was also the month in which the UK reached what is for now a peak number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths. It is likely that all of these factors - and the way the public reacted to them - contributed to the reduction in reports of antisemitic incidents in March and April. ...

The pandemic also influenced the way antisemitism manifested during this period. In the first half of 2020, CST received ten reports of educational or religious online events being hijacked with antisemitic content or behaviour. CST also recorded 26 incidents that contained antisemitic rhetoric alongside references to the pandemic, such as conspiracy theories accusing Jews of inventing the Coronavirus 'hoax', or of creating and spreading COVID-19 itself, for various malevolent and financial purposes; or simply wishing that Jewish people catch the virus and die. ...

CST recorded a 45 per cent decrease in the number of violent antisemitic assaults, from

85 in the first six months of 2019 to 47 in the first half of 2020. One of these violent incidents was classified by CST as 'Extreme Violence', meaning it involved potential grievous bodily harm (GBH) or a threat to life. ... There were 28 incidents of Damage & Desecration of Jewish property ... 673 incidents of Abusive Behaviour, including verbal abuse, antisemitic graffiti, antisemitic abuse via social media and one-off cases of hate mail; 36 direct antisemitic threats; and five cases of mass-mailed antisemitic leaflets or emails. ...

Even though the overall incident total for January to June 2020 is less than over the same period in 2019, the number of reported online antisemitic incidents increased by four per cent from 332 to 344 incidents. This is the highest number of online incidents ever recorded by CST in the first half of a year ...

Home Secretary Priti Patel said: "Antisemitic hatred and abuse are completely abhorrent. In April, the Home Office announced funding of up to £14 million through the Jewish Protective Security Grant to help keep members of the Jewish community safe as they go about their daily lives. I will always stand with the Jewish community against the threat of antisemitism."

Shadow Home Secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds said: "These figures show that the scourge of antisemitism continues in our society. Keir Starmer has committed to tearing out the poison of antisemitism by its roots from the Labour Party, and I stand should to shoulder with him in that aim. We must do all we can to eradicate it wherever it manifests itself. ..."

HM Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism, Lord Mann, said: "Although there has been a 13% drop on last year's figures, the rise in antisemitism in some regions shows how it affects every Jewish community in our country. ..."

National Policing Lead for Hate Crime, Deputy Chief Constable Mark Hamilton said: "... The COVID-19 outbreak has understandably created much fear in our society and racists have used this to promote their divisive ideologies. As ever, this includes antisemitic conspiracy theories that are unfounded, but are nonetheless widespread on the Internet. The greater the challenges we face, the more important our partnerships become and none are more important to us than the contribution of the Community Security Trust. Not only in their support of victims and the contribution to improving hate crime reporting levels, but also the invaluable analysis and research that help us to assess the threats faced by our communities. ..."

CST Chief Executive David Delew said: "Any reduction in antisemitism is welcome, but it is worrying that even during a national lockdown antisemitic incidents only fell by 13 per cent and new antisemitic lies have emerged to add to old hatreds. History tells us that antisemitism grows at times of great social upheaval and we need to ensure the same is not happening here."

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2020/07/30/antisemitic-incidents-report-january-june-2020>

Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2020

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/c/5/Incidents%20Report%20Jan-Jun%202020.pdf>

TOP

[Israel](#)

House of Commons Written Answers

Khalil Tafakji

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL7059] To ask Her Majesty's Government what

representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that Khalil Tafakji was arrested without a stated reason.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made representations on this case.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-20/HL7059/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL7063] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that the rights of Palestinian detainees, including children, are being routinely violated in prisons in Israel.

Lord Admad of Wimbledon: The UK has concerns about the continued reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees, including minors, in Israeli military detention. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention in Israel and continue to make representations to the Israeli authorities on this issue. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv did so most recently on 18 June, when they raised our concerns about the impact that COVID-19 could have on prisoners and detainees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-20/HL7063/>

Israel: Foreign Relations

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL7064] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the responses they receive from the government of Israel when they have raised reports of violations of (1) human rights, and (2) international law, by that government with that government; what assessment they have made of the UK Government's policy of raising concerns directly with that government about such reports; and what steps they are taking, if any, to review that policy.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is a close friend of Israel and we enjoy an excellent bilateral relationship, built on decades of cooperation between our two countries across a range of fields. While we do not hesitate to express disagreement with Israel whenever we feel it necessary, we believe that open and honest discussions best support our efforts to help progress in the peace process and achieve a negotiated solution. There is frequent high-level engagement between the UK and Israel and we have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation at all levels. We will continue to do so.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-20/HL7064/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

TOP

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>

TOP

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