



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Racial Discrimination

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL7561] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the study by Number Cruncher Politics, published on 16 July, which stated that 55 per cent of ethnic minorities said that racism has stayed the same or has got worse during their lifetimes.

Baroness Berridge: This Government is committed to tackling prejudice, racism and discrimination - and to improving the quality of data and evidence about the types of barriers faced by people from different backgrounds to help drive effective and lasting change. That is why we have established a new Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. This cross-government commission will examine all aspects of continuing racial and ethnic inequalities in Britain. The Commission aims to set out a new, positive agenda for change – balancing the needs of individuals, communities and society, maximising opportunities and ensuring fairness for all. It will build on the work of the Race Disparity Unit. The Commission will carry out a deeper examination of what the causes of these disparities are, and seek to establish what works to address them effectively.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-29/HL7561/>

The findings of the study referred to above can be read at

<https://www.ncpolitics.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/07/itv-has-britain-changed-tabs-ethnic-minority.pdf>

and

<https://www.ncpolitics.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/07/itv-has-britain-changed-tabs-white.pdf>

Racial Discrimination

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL7560] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, if any, with UK newsrooms about addressing racism.

Baroness Barran: Racism or any form of discrimination has no place in the media or society.

The media plays a vital role in British society and it has an important responsibility to reflect modern Britain. This can only be achieved through a representative, and diverse workforce.

The government is committed to working together with industry to support greater diversity, and to ensure that everyone regardless of their background should have the same opportunity to go as far as their talents and hard work take them.

In broadcast journalism, Ofcom, who are the independent communications regulator, publish an annual diversity report which provides diversity monitoring data for the main broadcasters and includes information on the diversity initiatives of their news teams. In the print media a number of national newspapers are running diversity schemes. These include the Daily Mail's Stephen Lawrence Scholarship and BAME internships at the Guardian. The National Council for the Training of Journalists also runs a diversity fund.

The Government does not wish to interfere in any way with editorial freedoms, operations or decision making in news organisations, but we encourage industry to do more to increase diversity in journalism.

DCMS ministers and officials regularly meet with a range of stakeholders to discuss a range of issues and the Government is committed to ensuring that equality and diversity are a key feature in all of our interactions with industry.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-07-29/HL7560/>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Funeral Services

S5W-30834 Monica Lennon (Labour): To ask the Scottish Government whether it will publish the evidence it used to determine that 20 people are permitted to attend a funeral service, while 50 are permitted to attend other church services in the same location with the same safety measures in place.

Joe FitzPatrick: Funerals are highly emotional and incredibly difficult events in our lifetimes. They are unique and intimate. Unlike most other gatherings, those in attendance are likely to know or be close to many others in attendance. Because of this, it is much more likely that vital public health measures to help mitigate or break chains of transmission of COVID-19, such as observing strict 2 metre physical distancing between households, will be forgotten. This is completely understandable at a time of grief, when people need the support of their close family and friends more than ever.

This has been the basis for us taking a much more cautious and careful approach when it comes to funeral services when compared to other gatherings, as we continue to seek to suppress the virus.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-30834>

Scottish Government

Coronavirus (COVID-19): updated guidance for funeral services

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funeral-services/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): updated guidance for burial and cremation authorities

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-burial-and-cremation-authorities/>

Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary statement: Israel-UAE agreement

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said: This is an historic step which sees the normalisation of relations between two great friends of the UK. We welcome both the decision by the UAE to normalise relations with Israel, as well as the suspension of plans for annexation – a move the UK has opposed as it would have been counterproductive to securing peace in the region.

Ultimately, there is no substitute for direct talks between the Palestinians and Israel, which is the only way to reach a two state solution and a lasting peace.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-israel-uae-agreement>

United Nations

Secretary-General Welcomes Joint Statement Suspending Israel's Plans to Annex West Bank, Expresses Hope for Renewed Talks towards Two-State Solution

The following statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres:

Today's joint statement by United States President Donald J. Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, suspends Israeli annexation plans over parts of the occupied West Bank, something the Secretary-General has consistently called for. Annexation would effectively close the door for a renewal of negotiations and destroy the prospect of a viable Palestinian State and the two-State solution.

The Secretary-General welcomes this agreement, hoping it will create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations that will realize a two State-solution in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

Peace in the Middle East is more important than ever as the region confronts the grave threats of COVID-19 and radicalization. The Secretary-General will continue to work with all sides to open further possibilities for dialogue, peace and stability.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sgsm20205.doc.htm>

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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