



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answers

Hate Crime

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Non-affiliated) [HL8604] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and with whom, about tackling hate crime.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The government continues to routinely engage with a wide range of national partners and other stakeholders about tackling all aspects of hate crime.

The Home Office and MHCLG are also 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 Covid 19 pandemic. This includes working with civil society partners and social media platforms to encourage victim reporting of hate crime.

The Government is also engaging with a range of Departments and civil society partners to explore possible approaches to tackling hate crime beyond the Hate Crime Action Plan 2016-2020.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-29/hl8604>

The action plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

Schools: Racial Harassment

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated) [HL8611] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the survey conducted by The Diana Award, published in September, which found that 32 per cent of the children surveyed had overheard racist comments at school.

Baroness Berridge: We are clear that there is no place for racism in schools and our wider education system. All children and young people deserve the opportunity to progress and fulfil their potential in an environment free from fear, prejudice or hate.

Departmental officials are aware of the findings you refer to from The Diana Award's recent survey, and these are being considered as part of our ongoing work to tackle

racism in schools. We are providing an additional £750,000 funding in the 2020-21 financial year to three anti-bullying organisations, including The Diana Award, to help schools continue to tackle bullying, such as through programmes that tackle prejudice and discrimination.

More broadly, schools play an important role in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. This involves supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and teaching about respect for other people and for difference. Schools and further education providers are also required to actively promote fundamental British values, including individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. The department has published advice for schools on promoting these values and has made resources available through the Educate Against Hate website. This website provides teachers, school leaders and parents with the information, guidance and support they need to challenge radical views, including racist and discriminatory beliefs. The website is available here: <https://educateagainsthate.com/>.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-29/hl8611>

The findings referred to above can be read at

<https://diana-award.org.uk/news/anti-bullying/new-research-carried-out-by-the-diana-award-for-anti-bullying-week/>

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

COVID-19: Updated guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>

COVID-19: Updated guidance for wedding and civil partnership receptions and celebrations

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-wedding-and-civil-partnership-receptions-and-celebrations>

Welsh Assembly Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Hate Crime Awareness Week 2020

219 Jane Hutt (Deputy Minister and Chief Whip): ... Through our regular meetings with police and Victim Support, we have seen hate crime reporting, on average, remain generally lower throughout the pandemic. While we can't be certain why, it is possible that it is a result of social distancing and a lack of interaction, or alternatively through reluctance to report hate crime due to not wanting to bother the police during this busy period. ...

224 The 2019-2020 national hate crime statistics for England and Wales ... showed an overall 2 per cent increase in recorded hate crime for Wales, compared to an 8 per cent increase across England and Wales as a whole. The statistics included a 10 per cent increase in transgender hate crime, a 2 per cent rise in disability hate crime, and a 2 per cent rise in hate crime where sexual orientation is the motivating factor. There was a 2 per cent decrease in race hate crime and a 3 per cent decrease in religious hate crime. We have not seen the same increases across all strands of hate crime as we did in the previous year. However, the statistics show that the rises we saw in 2018-19 have been sustained.

225 In addition, we know that there are still around half of self-reported hate incidents not being recorded as hate crime across the UK. This might range—the reasons for this—from

a lack of faith in the criminal justice system or due to people not knowing how to report hate crime. ...

234 Laura Anne Jones (Conservative): ... While it's likely that the increase in hate crime has been driven by the improvements in recording by the police, and there is a growing awareness of hate crime now, there is no doubt that the problem is escalating. ... Although the vast majority of these crimes were based on race or religion, there are disturbing increases in offences against LGBT and disabled people. ...

238 No person in Wales should have to tolerate prejudice or hate crime. I welcome the statement today and Welsh Government's commitment to making sure that all victims of hate crime are supported and that perpetrators are held to account. ...

243 Leanne Wood (Plaid Cymru): ... The Minister uses police figures, but caseload data from Victim Support's National Hate Crime Report and Support Centre Wales shows that cases of hate crime have increased by 70 per cent between April and September of this year. ...

The internet connection failed, and the session was therefore suspended.

To read the full transcript see

<https://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/6594#C322061>

The hate crime statistics referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925968/hate-crime-1920-hosb2920.pdf

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Israel

House of Commons Oral Answers

Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel

Andy Slaughter (Labour): With reference to the resolution of the House of 13 October 2014, what steps the Government are taking to recognise the state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel, as a contribution to securing a negotiated two-state solution. [907437]

Caroline Ansell (Conservative): What diplomatic steps he is taking to help secure peace between Israel and the Palestinian people. [907441]

The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly): The UK is a strong supporter of Palestinian state building efforts. In 2019, we spent £81 million in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Part of that contribution is helping to build Palestinian state institutions; fostering private sector-led sustainable economic growth; and providing technical assistance to strengthen the Palestinian Authority's financial management. However, such progress can never be a substitute for a political settlement, which is why the Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in August actively to encourage Israel and the Palestinian leadership to renew co-operation and work together. I also discussed this matter with UN special co-ordinator Mladenov on 1 October.

Andy Slaughter: That is not an answer. Six years ago today, this House voted by 274 votes to 12 to recognise the state of Palestine. Three years ago, the Prime Minister, then Foreign Secretary, said that "you have to have a two-state solution or else you have some kind of apartheid system".

How can there be a two-state solution without two states? The UK's recognition of the state of Israel shows that we respect its non-negotiable rights. Why should our recognition of the state of Palestine be a matter for negotiation? Are Palestinians entitled to less respect and fewer rights than the Israelis?

James Cleverly: As I have said, the UK Government have supported the Palestinian Authority in putting in place the building blocks for a future Palestinian state, which we recognise. We have been very vocal that our preferred option is a safe, stable two-state solution, with a prosperous and peaceful Palestinian state neighbouring a prosperous and peaceful Israeli state.

Caroline Ansell: The middle east is changing before our eyes and the significance of Israel's peace agreements with the UAE and Bahrain cannot be overstated. Does my right hon. Friend agree that this new development between Israel and her Arab neighbours changes the narrative, creates a new dynamic in the region, and gives rise to new hope for a peace deal?

James Cleverly: The normalisation of relations represents a move towards peace in the region, and the UK strongly welcomes that. We encourage other states to choose the same path, but, 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. We do hope that normalisation can encourage dialogue between the parties and the UK stands ready to support such efforts.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-13/debates/878C39E5-2B28-4075-AFFE-A23C92CB8BE3/OccupiedPalestinianTerritoriesAndIsrael>

The debate relating to the resolution of the House referred to above can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2014-10-13/debates/14101322000001/PalestineAndIsrael>

Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Imran Ahmad Khan (Conservative): The merger of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development is a welcome acceptance that the UK's outward-facing Departments should merge to best employ all the tools at our disposal. I detect, however, a concerning trend in the new FCDO for diplomacy and development to be regarded as separate and equal. Assimilating DFID's obtuse culture into King Charles Street is dangerous and will cripple the Foreign Office's ability to achieve its objectives. We must, above all, regard development as a foreign policy tool. Can the Foreign Secretary assure the House that the current reform programme at the Foreign Office ensures that our development programme supports our diplomatic activities, rather than transcends and undermines them? [907495]

Dominic Raab: I reassure my hon. Friend that the raison d'être of the merger is to bring together our aid clout and heft with our diplomatic reach and muscle. If he looks at the visit I made to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, he will see the support we provided for the Palestinians in dealing with covid alongside our diplomatic support for a two-state solution; if he looks at the situation in Yemen, he will see that we are doing the same; and he will see the same in our response to the explosion in the port of Beirut. I think he will find that we are practising what we preach, which brings together the aid—taxpayers' money—with our diplomatic muscle to make a real difference on the ground.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-13/debates/E71E58F4-573F-4C55-A6F1-F08AEE999719/TopicalQuestions#contribution-C1A3DDA7-3478-4413-A864-3327AE1C471B>

House of Lords Written Answer

West Bank: Housing

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL8615] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 24 September (HL8094), what advice they have given to the Palestinian Authority about what steps can be taken to prevent the

government of Israel from building settlement housing on Palestinian land in the West Bank.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As previously stated, our longstanding position on settlements is that they are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. We have a regular dialogue with both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel in which we reiterate the need for both sides to abide by International Humanitarian Law and to promote peace, stability and security. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to avoid actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-29/hl8615>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-09-14/hl8094>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2592>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2579>

Genocide Determination Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2621>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2608>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2584>

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

Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Specified Type B Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations
(closing date 20 November 2020)

<https://consult.gov.scot/population-health/consultation-specified-type-b-procedures/>

Getting Married: A Consultation Paper on Weddings Law (closing date 3 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/#weddings-consultation-paper>

Hate crime laws (closing date 24 December 2020)

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

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