



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Social Media: Antisemitism

Robert Halfon (Conservative) [151667] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of advising Ofcom as the Government's intended social media regulator to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism and ensure that social media companies comply with it to help tackle the increase in online antisemitic attacks.

Caroline Dinenage: The Government is committed to tackling racism, including the spread of antisemitic content online. In December 2020, we published the Full Government Response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation, which sets out new expectations on companies to keep their users safe online. Under a new legal duty of care, in-scope companies, including social media, will need to tackle illegal antisemitic content and activity on their services.

In addition, companies providing high-risk, high-reach services will need to set clear terms and conditions stating what legal but harmful material they accept (and do not accept) on their service. This may include antisemitic hate speech, which does not meet the threshold of a criminal offence. Companies will need to enforce these terms and conditions consistently and transparently, and could face enforcement action if they do not. All companies in scope will be required to have effective and accessible user reporting and redress mechanisms.

The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework outlined in the Full Government Response, including the appointment of Ofcom as the regulator, will be ready this year. There are no plans to specify the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-09/151667>

The Government response referred to above can be read at

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

Coronavirus: Funerals

Barry Sheerman (Labour Co-op) [144932] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps funeral directors need to take to remain compliant with the law on mourner limits when helping families organise funerals, in addition to complying with guidance published by the National Association of Funeral Directors.

Nadine Dorries: Those responsible for organising a funeral must take all reasonable steps to ensure the event takes place in a safe and secure way that complies with all relevant legislation, including around attendance. A funeral director should notify the police if they reasonably believe that the numbers attending are likely to breach the legal limits despite their best efforts to prevent this or the numbers in attendance have unexpectedly exceeded the legal limits.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-28/144932>

House of Lords Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Social Media: Racial Harassment

Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated) [HL13042] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the way in which social media companies deal with racist abuse directed at footballers.

Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated) [HL13043] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the cooperation of social media companies with the police on incidents of online racist abuse.

Baroness Barran: The Culture Secretary and Sports Minister recently led a roundtable discussion with current and former players from the Premier League, English Football League (EFL), Women's Super League (WSL) and Women's Championship, which discussed online racist abuse and players' perspectives on tackling discrimination in the game.

We are clear that the online racist abuse of football players is unacceptable. We must do all we can to tackle it. We are taking steps through the online harms regulatory framework to ensure that online abuse, whether anonymous or not, is addressed. Under a new legal duty of care, companies will need to remove and limit the spread of illegal content, including illegal online abuse. All companies will need to take swift and effective action against such content.

The police have a range of legal powers to identify individuals who attempt to use anonymity to escape sanctions for online abuse, where the activity is illegal. The government is working with law enforcement to review whether the current powers are sufficient to tackle illegal anonymous abuse online. The outcome of that work will inform the government's future position in relation to illegal anonymous online abuse

Companies providing high-risk, high-reach services will also need to undertake regular risk assessments to identify legal but harmful material on their services. These companies will need to set clear terms and conditions which explicitly state what categories of legal but harmful material they accept (and do not accept) on their service. Companies will need to enforce these terms and conditions consistently and transparently and could face enforcement action if they do not. The Online Safety Bill, which will give effect to the regulatory framework, will be ready this year.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/hl13042>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-08/hl13043>

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Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answers

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service: Location

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL13245] To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) consultation, and (2) site comparison, they undertook in relation to the proposed National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre between 13 January 2016 when the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation recommended a location for that centre and the Prime Minister's announcement on 27 January 2016 that the chosen location was Victoria Tower Gardens.

Lord Greenhalgh: The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation conducted a very extensive comparison of possible sites before recommending Victoria Tower Gardens. The Government agreed with the Foundation that Victoria Tower Gardens is the most fitting site. Public consultations were held once designs for the proposed Memorial were available: initially on ten shortlisted designs, and then on the detailed proposals which were put forward for planning consent.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-10/hl13245>

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL13246] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their report Britain's Promise to Remember: The Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission Report, published in January 2015, what progress they have made on implementing the recommendation that a physical campus with a lecture theatre, classrooms and offices should be developed as part of the "world-class learning centre" co-located with the National Holocaust Memorial.

Lord Greenhalgh: Proposals for a national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre at Victoria Tower Gardens, including space for lectures and seminars, are the subject of a planning application which is currently under consideration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-10/hl13246>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398645/Holocaust_Commission_Report_Britains_promise_to_remember.pdf

World War II: Genocide

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL13247] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their report Britain's Promise to Remember: The Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission Report, published in January 2015, what progress they have made on implementing the recommendation of that report (1) to set up an endowment fund to secure the long term future of Holocaust education, and (2) create a professorial chair on Holocaust education.

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government has committed up to £75 million towards the establishment of the national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, including £25 million which is to be matched by donations from the Holocaust Memorial Charitable Trust. The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation will continue to consider all the recommendations made in the Commission's report and the best way to deliver them.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-10/hl13247>

The report referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398645/Holocaust_Commission_Report_Britains_promise_to_remember.pdf

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2622>

Assisted Dying Bill

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

Domestic Abuse Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2709>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

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

Freedom of Speech (Universities) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2820>

Genocide Determination Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

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

Marriage (Approved Organisations) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2537>

Marriage (Authorised Belief Organisations) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2795>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

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

Scottish Parliament

Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/domestic-abuse-protection-scotland-bill>

**** Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

Stage 2, Justice Committee

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13129&i=118825#ScotParlOR>

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 tomorrow**

Introduction of a statutory opt-out system for organ donation for Northern Ireland
(closing date 19 February 2021)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/organ-donation>

**** closes in 4 days**

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill – Freedom of Expression Amendments

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/117116.aspx>

Human Rights Act Review (closing date 3 March 2021)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/93/human-rights-joint-committee/news/138635/call-for-evidence-the-governments-independent-human-rights-act-review/>

The future of the [Welsh Government] Equality and Inclusion Funding Programme

(closing date 30 March 2021)

<https://gov.wales/future-equality-and-inclusion-funding-programme>

Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19

(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

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