



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answer

#### Business of the House

**Robert Halfon (Conservative):** May we have an urgent statement on antisemitism at Bristol university? Jewish students have demonstrated at the Bristol university campus about the alleged actions of Professor David Miller; he has allegedly described Zionism as “the enemy” and referred to the Union of Jewish Students as an “Israel lobby group” which makes Arab and Muslim students unsafe. It is also alleged that he criticised Jewish students for manufacturing a “charade of false anti-Semitism allegations”.

The university management cares nothing, sees nothing and does nothing about this; they appear to regard Jewish students as an inconvenience and a nuisance, and refuse to take serious action. Jewish students are clearly not welcome; they do not feel safe or valued at this university, and, sadly, history teaches us where this ends. I have written to the vice-chancellor of Bristol university this week and urge my right hon. Friend to ask the Minister for Universities to intervene.

**Jacob Rees-Mogg:** My right hon Friend raises a deeply concerning issue. There is absolutely no place for antisemitism, and it is appalling to hear that Jewish students have reported antisemitism at Bristol university. My hon. Friend the Member for Bury South (Christian Wakeford) raised this matter with me last week and I have passed it on to the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister for Universities. We expect higher education providers to be at the forefront of tackling antisemitism, making sure that higher education is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone. Providers ought to have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law to investigate and swiftly address hate crime, including any antisemitic incidents reported. I say to my right hon. Friend that, in light of the history of the last century, it seems to me that, of all prejudices, antisemitism is the most wicked; it has no place in our society, and universities must be part of ensuring that antisemitism ceases to exist.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-03-04/debates/4E33DAA8-242B-44B6-86A9-7047C3BA2085/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-170C617D-8F4A-4DE3-BE2A-4A29051AB27E>

The exchange with Christian Wakeford referred to above can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-02-25/debates/2102257000001/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-DEA627EA-0F6C-4590-900E-DED997A289A7>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Community Security Trust: Finance

**Bambos Charalambous (Labour)** [160765] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will renew her Department's funding of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant for the Community Security Trust.

**Kevin Foster:** The protection of all our faith communities is a priority for Government, delivered in collaboration with the on-going work of the police. Future funding through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant and the Places of Worship Security funding scheme are currently under consideration.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-01/160765>

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## Israel

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Gaza: Coronavirus

**Yasmin Qureshi (Labour)** [160595] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the reported delay by Israel to the transfer of the first shipment of covid-19 vaccines to Gaza, what recent representations he has made to the Government of Israel to encourage that country to meet its duties under international humanitarian law with regards to access to vaccines in the occupied Palestinian territory.

**James Cleverly:** We welcome the steps that the parties have taken so far to coordinate responses to COVID-19, including the arrival of the first shipment of vaccines from the Palestinian Authority into Gaza on 17 February, with the approval of Israel. We encourage further cooperation and dialogue in this regard.

The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised the issue of vaccines with the Israeli Authorities on 24 February, encouraging the Government of Israel to continue to facilitate the transfer of vaccines to the Palestinian Authority when required. The British Embassy in Tel Aviv and the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem are in regular contact with the Israeli and Palestinian authorities respectively, and will continue to raise timely and appropriate access to COVID-19 vaccines.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-01/160595>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### West Bank: Schools

**Lyn Brown (Labour)** [160590] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to help prevent demolitions of schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

### Occupied Territories: Schools

**Lyn Brown (Labour)** [160591] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the number of schools in the Occupied Palestinian Territories at risk of demolition in the next six months.

**James Cleverly:** The UK opposes Israel's proposed demolitions of Palestinian schools and calls on Israel to reconsider its plans to do so. The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners on 25 February 2021. I called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised my concerns about the demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, including the potential demolition of schools, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October 2020. Data shared with us by our partners in the Education Cluster of relevant NGOs operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, estimates that 45 schools are at risk in Area C and 8 in East Jerusalem. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-01/160590>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-01/160591>

*The Minister's call to stop demolitions, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1357723513940045824>

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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>

Notice of amendments

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/stage-3/marshalled-list-of-amendments-at-stage-3.pdf>

### **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

**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>

**Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS): Documenting the Lives of Ethnic and Religious Minorities in a Time of Crisis** (closing date 11 May 2021)

[bit.ly/evensurvey](http://bit.ly/evensurvey)

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