



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Funerals: Judaism

Theresa Villiers (Conservative) [164387] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the rules which will allow 30 people to attend a funeral will also apply to the formal consecration of a tombstone as part of observance of Jewish faith traditions.

Eddie Hughes: The Roadmap out of lockdown published on 22 February set out the government's four-step roadmap by which Covid-19 restrictions would be lifted. The Jewish Stone Setting ceremony comes under the rules governing wakes and other post funeral commemorative events. As such, six people are permitted to attend such a service at present. When we reach step 2 (not before 12 April) that limit will increase to 15, while at Step 3 (not before 17 May) it will rise again to 30.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/164387>

The roadmap referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021>

Hate Crime

Julian Lewis (Conservative) [164330] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 February 2021 to Question 156232 on hate crime, subjectivity and equality before the law, whether the people conducting the review of hate crime legislation will have regard to the content of John Stuart Mill's essay On Liberty; what the principles underlying that review are; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins: The Law Commission is conducting the hate crime review. The terms of reference for the review ask it to review the adequacy and parity of protection offered by the law relating to hate crime and to make recommendations for its reform.

This includes:

- Reviewing the current range of specific offences and aggravating factors in

sentencing, and making recommendations on the most appropriate models to ensure that the criminal law provides consistent and effective protection from conduct motivated by hatred of protected groups or characteristics.

- Reviewing the existing range of protected characteristics, identifying gaps in the scope of the protection currently offered and making recommendations to promote a consistent approach.

Full details can be found at:

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

In the consultation that it issued in relation to this review, the Law Commission noted John Stewart Mill's essay in relation to discussing the principles of free expression.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/164330>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-22/156232>

"On Liberty", referred to above, can be read at

<https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/uqcm/3l13/mill/liberty.pdf>

Scottish Government

Hate Crime Bill passed

Victims and communities targeted by hate crime will have greater protection after Parliament voted to pass the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill.

The legislation will modernise, consolidate and extend existing hate crime law ensuring it is fit for the 21st Century. Through its passing, 'stirring up' of hatred offences will now apply to additional characteristics listed in the Bill: age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics. These new protections will add to the long-standing stirring up racial hatred offences, which have been in place since 1986 and have been retained in largely the same form within the Bill.

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf said: "Through the passing of this landmark Bill, Parliament has sent a strong and clear message to victims, perpetrators, communities and to wider society that offences motivated by prejudice will be treated seriously and will not be tolerated – I am delighted Holyrood has backed this powerful legislation that is fitting for the Scotland we live in.

"We must remember why this Bill is so necessary, every day in Scotland around 18 hate crimes are committed. The effects of these crimes are felt deeply by those targeted and this prejudice has a pernicious effect on the health of a society and its communities. Not only that, the toll hate crime takes on its victims, their families and communities, is immense. ...

"I look forward to overseeing the implementation of this legislation which will ensure Scotland's justice system can bring perpetrators to account and provide sufficient protection for individuals and communities harmed by hate crimes." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.scot/news/hate-crime-bill-passed/>

Welsh Parliament Written Answer

Universities: definition of antisemitism

Andrew RT Davies (Conservative) [WQ82179] Will the Minister confirm which Welsh universities have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, and what action will be taken against universities that have not done so?

Minister for Education (Kirsty Williams): As universities are autonomous bodies,

the Government does not hold such information centrally. However, higher education institutions have a duty to ensure freedom of speech and academic freedom, but they must carry out their functions in full recognition of their obligations under their Public Sector Equality Duty. I expect them to discharge those responsibilities fully and to have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure students and staff are safeguarded and that they act within the law. I also expect them to act swiftly to address any instances of hate crime, including antisemitism. Any action or campaign against individuals, groups or a country that can be construed as anti-Semitic is unacceptable.

<https://record.senedd.wales/WrittenQuestion/82179>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Jerusalem: Internally Displaced People

Stephen Timms (Labour) [164342] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on the conformity of the forcible transfer of Palestinian families from their homes in East Jerusalem with international criminal and humanitarian law; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly: We regularly make clear our concerns about the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem to the Israeli authorities. The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners on 25 February 2021. On 25 November 2020, the UK Consul General Jerusalem visited families at risk of eviction in Sheikh Jarrah, restating UK opposition to evictions of Palestinians from their homes. I raised the issue of evictions of Palestinians from their homes with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October 2020. Our position on demolitions and evictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is clear. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-08/164342>

House of Lords Written Answers

Palestinians: Terrorism

Lord Shinkwin (Conservative) [HL13716] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the Palestinian Authority contributed to the salaries of prisoners convicted of terrorists offences in 2020.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are clear that the prisoner payments system should be reformed. The UK has raised the need for reform at the highest levels of the Palestinian Authority (PA), including when the Foreign Secretary visited the Occupied Palestinian Territories in August 2020.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-25/hl13716>

Palestinians: Curriculum

Lord Shinkwin (Conservative) [HL13717] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that material inciting violence against (1) Israel,

and (2) Jews, has been included in the Palestinian Authority's school curriculum.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is concerned about allegations of incitement in Palestinian Authority (PA) textbooks and lobbied European partners to conduct a thorough, independent review of the textbooks. To ensure the final report is representative, the study has been extended to include a sample of textbooks introduced for school year 2020-21. Consequently, the study will be completed in early 2021. We have regular discussions with the EU to encourage them to finalise the report as soon as possible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-25/hl13717>

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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 3 Debate

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13191&i=119442#ScotParlOR>

Bill passed

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=13191&i=119467&c=2329613#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

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

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