



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

## Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

#### **Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities**

*col 867* **The Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch):** ... The Government are committed to building a fairer Britain and taking the action needed to promote equality and opportunity for all. We do, however, recognise that serious disparities exist across our society, and are determined to take the action that is required to address them. Following the events of last summer, our nation has engaged in a serious examination of the issue of race inequality, and the Government have been determined to respond by carefully examining the evidence and data. We need to recognise progress where it has been made, but we also need to tackle barriers where they remain. That was why, last summer, the Prime Minister established the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. It was tasked with informing our national conversation on race by carrying out a deeper examination of why disparities exist and considering how we can reduce them. After careful study, the commission made evidence-based recommendations for action across Government, the private sector and other public bodies. The commission was established with 10 experts drawn from a variety of fields, spanning science, education, economics, broadcasting, medicine and policing. With one exception, all are from ethnic minority backgrounds. ...

It is right to say that the picture painted by this report is complex, particularly in comparison with the way that issues of race are often presented. The report shows that disparities do persist, that racism and discrimination remain a factor in shaping people's life outcomes, and it is clear about the fact that abhorrent racist attitudes continue in society, within institutions and increasingly online. It calls for action to tackle this.

However, the report also points out that, while disparities between ethnic groups exist across numerous areas, many factors other than racism are often the root cause. Among these are geography, deprivation and family structure. ...

The report also highlights the progress that Britain has made in tackling racism, and the report's data reveal a range of success stories. ...

*col 868* Let me be clear: the report does not deny that institutional racism exists in the UK. Rather the report did not find conclusive evidence of it in the specific areas it examined. It

reaffirms the Macpherson report's definition of the term, but argues that it should be applied more carefully and always based on evidence. ...

This Government welcome legitimate disagreement and debate, but firmly reject bad-faith attempts to undermine the credibility of this report. Doing so risks undermining the vital work that we are trying to do to understand and address the causes of inequality in the UK, and any other positive work that results from it. For that reason it is necessary to set the record straight. This report makes it clear that the UK is not a post-racial society and that racism is still a real force that has the power to deny opportunity and painfully disrupt lives. ...

The Government even more firmly condemn the deeply personal and racialised attacks against the commissioners, which have included death threats. ...

It is, of course, to be expected that Members will disagree about how to address racial inequality and the kinds of policies that the Government should enact. However, it is wrong to accuse those who argue for a different approach of being racism deniers or race traitors. It is even more irresponsible—dangerously so—to call ethnic minority people racial slurs like “Uncle Toms”, “coconuts”, “house slaves” or “house negroes” for daring to think differently.

*col 869* Such deplorable tactics are designed to intimidate ethnic minority people away from their right to express legitimate views. ...

The commissioners' experience since publication only reinforces the need for informed debate on race based on mutual respect and a nuanced understanding of the evidence. ... In recognition of the extensive scope of recommendations, the Prime Minister has established a new inter-ministerial group to review the recommendations. It will ensure that action is taken to continue progress to create a fairer society. As sponsoring Minister, I will provide strategic direction with support from my officials in the Race Disparity Unit. The group will be chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. ...

**Marsha De Cordova (Labour):** ... Following the Black Lives Matter movement, the commission had an opportunity meaningfully to engage with structural racism in the UK. Instead, it published incoherent, divisive and offensive materials that appear to glorify slavery, downplay the role of institutional and structural racism, and blame ethnic minorities for their own disadvantage. If left unchallenged, the report will undo decades of progress made towards race equality in the UK. ...

*col 870* The Minister says that commissioners followed the evidence, but this report marks a major shift away from the overwhelming body of data on institutional and structural racism. The Office for National Statistics finds that the unemployment rate for black people is now 13.8%—triple the rate for white people—so why does the report conclude that young black people should “examine the subjects they are studying”, instead of addressing the systemic inequalities within the labour market? Black women are four times more likely to die in pregnancy and childbirth, but the report says that these numbers are so low that it is “unfair” to focus on this disparity. ...

It is our job as elected representatives to level the playing field, so I want to end by giving the Minister the chance to reject this report and tell the House instead what she is doing to implement the 231 recommendations in the Timpson, McGregor-Smith, Williams, Angiolini and Lammy reviews. What is she doing to comply with the public sector equality duty, and why is she not publishing equality impact assessments? This is what her Government would be focused on if they were serious about ending structural racism. ...

*col 871 Kemi Badenoch:* ... I completely reject all the assertions that the hon. Lady has made—many of them false and many of them hypocritical. ...

We should go back to the substance of what this report is saying, rather than continuing to try to slander the people who have written it. ...

We will not withdraw the report. We will look at what recommendations to take forward. The Government have still not provided a response, but there are many issues around that structural inequality that we want to have dealt with. However, I

reiterate that, just because there is a disparity, it does not mean that discrimination is the cause. If we continue to identify discrimination right from the beginning without looking at the root cause, we will continue to offer solutions that do not improve the situation. ...

**col 872 Peter Bottomley (Conservative):** ... The commission had to put out a statement on 2 April contradicting most of the ill-informed criticisms. At the end, it said: “The 24 recommendations we have made will, in our view, greatly improve the lives of millions of people for the better if they are all implemented.”

The second sentence of the first paragraph said that the report “stated categorically that ‘we take the reality of racism seriously and we do not deny that it is a real force in the UK.’” That seems plain and clear. ...

**col 873 Kirsten Oswald (SNP):** ... A United Nations working group strongly rejected this report, saying that it “further distorted and falsified historic facts”, could fuel racism and twists data, among other pointed criticisms. The Minister just spoke about the lack of evidence of institutional racism, but the Runnymede Trust rightly points out that evidence of institutional racism was submitted to the commission. Twenty thousand people joined the Runnymede Trust and Amnesty International in calling for the report’s withdrawal, and 36 trade union general secretaries have repudiated the report. ...

How can the Minister justify a report that says policies such as the hostile environment were not deliberately targeted at the UK’s ethnic minorities? Leading clinicians have said the report will worsen systemic health inequalities. The NHS Race and Health Observatory has declared that institutional racism exists in the UK, the health and care system and across wider public bodies. In the light of those responses, will the Minister repudiate the report’s glossing over of the impact of covid on ethnic minority groups? ...

**Kemi Badenoch:** ... Regarding the statement by the UN experts, the group grossly misrepresented the commission’s report; the statement is clearly born of the divisive narratives perpetrated by certain media outlets and political groups that are seeking to sow division in our ethnic minority communities. ...

**col 874 Diane Abbott (Labour):** ... Nobody denies that there has been progress on racial justice in this country. ... However, this is widely seen—particularly by people who have been quoted and misquoted—as a shoddy, cynical report that, to quote the UN working group, “repackages racist tropes and stereotypes into fact, twisting data”. ...

... surely black and brown British people who have contributed so much to this country deserve better than this report. ...

**col 877 Wera Hobhouse (Liberal Democrat):** Ethnic minority communities have suffered disproportionate numbers of deaths from covid-19. The Sewell report fails to recognise that structural racism underlies many socioeconomic inequalities. There is an interconnectivity between different forms of disadvantage and discrimination but, at the heart of it, is structural racism. It is important for the Government to recognise that. ...

**col 880 Kemi Badenoch:** ... We need to focus on what works and why, as well as what does not and why, so that we can target our resources where they will be most effective. The report looks at why certain groups that are very similar end up with completely different outcomes, which is why institutional racism cannot be the defining reason. When black African and black Caribbean groups, and Indians and Pakistanis, have diverging outcomes, it is clear that something else is going on. ...

**To read the transcript in full, see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-04-20/debates/1502466F-D06B-402A-B7C0-03452FFB1DA9/CommissionOnRaceAndEthnicDisparities>

*The report of the Commission for Race and Ethnic Disparities, referred to above, can be read at*  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974507/20210331\\_-\\_CRED\\_Report\\_-\\_FINAL\\_-\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974507/20210331_-_CRED_Report_-_FINAL_-_Web_Accessible.pdf)

The Timpson Review, referred to above, can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/807862/Timpson\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf)

The McGregor-Smith Review, referred to above, can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/594336/race-in-workplace-mcgregor-smith-review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/594336/race-in-workplace-mcgregor-smith-review.pdf)

The Williams Review, referred to above, can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/874022/6.5577\\_HO\\_Windrush\\_Lessons\\_Learned\\_Review\\_WEB\\_v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874022/6.5577_HO_Windrush_Lessons_Learned_Review_WEB_v2.pdf)

The Angiolini Review, referred to above, can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/655401/Report\\_of\\_Angiolini\\_Review\\_ISBN\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655401/Report_of_Angiolini_Review_ISBN_Accessible.pdf)

The Lammy Review, referred to above, can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643001/lammy-review-final-report.pdf)

The Commissioners' statement, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities-statement>

The UN working group statement referred to above can be read at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27004&LangID=E>

The Runnymede Trust letter referred to above can be read at <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/sewell>

## House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Universities: Antisemitism**

**Nickie Aiken (Conservative)** [179553] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of universities that have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

**Nickie Aiken (Conservative)** [179554] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to encourage a higher number of universities to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

**Michelle Donelan:** This government abhors antisemitism and has been clear that we expect universities to be at the forefront of tackling the challenge of antisemitism, making sure that higher education is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

The government has asked all English higher education providers registered with the Office for Students (OfS) to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. The IHRA definition is an important tool in tackling antisemitism. Adopting this widely recognised definition sends a strong signal that higher education providers take these issues seriously. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to higher education leaders most recently in October 2020 to reiterate the importance of the definition and to urge all providers to consider adopting it.

The government is pleased to report that at least 91 providers have now adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, with many more preparing to adopt. The decision on adoption of the definition rests with individual providers, but the government will continue to urge them to adopt the definition, and ensure that higher education is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

I am proud that so many providers have taken a positive step towards eradicating antisemitism by adopting the IHRA definition, but further progress is still needed to stamp it out. This is why, in the Secretary of State's most recent strategic guidance letter to the OfS, the government asked the OfS to undertake a scoping exercise, to identify providers which are reluctant to adopt the definition. The letter asked them to consider introducing mandatory reporting of antisemitic incident numbers by providers, with the aim of ensuring a robust evidence base, which the OfS can then use to effectively regulate in this area.

The Secretary of State also asked the OfS to ensure that, if antisemitic incidents do occur at a provider, they should consider if it is relevant in a particular case whether the provider has adopted the IHRA definition when considering what sanctions, including monetary penalties, would be appropriate to apply.

We will continue to work across government to ensure that racism and religious hatred of any kind is not tolerated anywhere, including in our world-leading universities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/179553>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/179554>

### **Religious Practice: Coronavirus**

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [180429] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to (a) ensure that police officers are aware of the covid-19 guidelines on religious services and (b) prevent religious services from being shut down unlawfully under those guidelines.

**Kit Malthouse:** The Government continues to work with the police to ensure that the law is being correctly enforced. The National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing develop and disseminate guidance for forces in England and Wales on enforcing the rules and this is updated as regulations are changed.

Enforcement of the restrictions is an operational matter for the police. As they have done throughout the pandemic, the police continue to utilise the 4Es approach: engaging with individuals who are not following the rules, explaining the rules to them, and encouraging them to comply before moving on to enforce the law. Police officers have received clear guidance that they should use their common sense, discretion, and experience in enforcing coronavirus regulations, and we expect enforcement activity to be proportionate and within the law.

Government guidance provides a set of key principles for both those wishing to attend a place of worship and venue managers, these principles enable a safe opening of these venues and allow individuals to congregate in a Covid-secure environment. Further information on guidance on attending and managing a place of worship can be found here;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december)

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-13/180429>

### **Slaughterhouses: Animal Welfare**

**Tulip Siddiq (Labour)** [179311] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) regulating the number of animals that can be slaughtered without being stunned and (b) banning the export of meat from animals that have not been stunned before slaughter.

**Victoria Prentis:** We would prefer all animals to be stunned before slaughter, but we respect the rights of Jews and Muslims to eat meat prepared in accordance with their religious beliefs.

We have recently concluded a review of the welfare of animals at time of killing legislation and this identifies potential improvements that might be made. We are carefully considering the issues raised in the review.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/179311>

*The review referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/955031/welfare-animals-time-of-killing-regs-2015-post-implementation-review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955031/welfare-animals-time-of-killing-regs-2015-post-implementation-review.pdf)

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Social Security Benefits: Children**

**Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru)** [181197] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the comparative effects of the two child limit on (a) universal credit and (b) child tax credit support between (a) Wales, (b) Scotland, (c) England and (d) Northern Ireland since 2017.

#### **Social Security Benefits: Wales**

**Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru)** [181198] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many additional children in Wales have been affected by the two-child limit on universal and child tax credit since March 2020.

#### **Social Security Benefits: Ethnic Groups**

**Hywel Williams (Plaid Cymru)** [181199] To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the comparative effects of the two-child limit on (a) universal credit and (b) child tax credit support on different ethnic groups in (a) Wales and (b) the rest of the UK since 2017.

**Will Quince:** The Government has committed to annual statistics releases related to the operation of the policy to provide support for a maximum of two children. Statistics related to the period up to April 2020 were published in July 2020 and can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/child-tax-credit-and-universal-credit-claimants-statistics-related-to-the-policy-to-provide-support-for-a-maximum-of-2-children-april-2020>

Statistics related to the period up to April 2021 will be published in the summer.

The government's published Impact Assessment noted that ethnic minority households may be more likely to be impacted by the policy. This is because they are, on average, more likely to be in receipt of CTC and UC, and on average have larger families. However, the government does not collect sufficiently robust data on the ethnic background or religious beliefs of benefit claimants to enable a fuller assessment of the impact of the policy on particular ethnic or religious groups. The Government has assessed the impact of the policy from an equality and human rights perspective, meeting our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, and ensuring compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-15/181197>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-15/181198>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-15/181199>

*The impact assessment referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/impact-assessments/ia15-006e.pdf>

**TOP**

## House of Commons Oral Answers

### Israel and the Palestinians: Supporting Peace

**Andrew Selous (Conservative):** What diplomatic steps he is taking to support peace between Israel and the Palestinians. (914438)

**Nicola Richards (Conservative):** What diplomatic steps he is taking to support peace between Israel and the Palestinians. (914446)

**Rosie Cooper (Labour):** What steps his Department is taking to support the creation of the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace. (914459)

**Sheryll Murray (Conservative):** What diplomatic steps he is taking to support peace between Israel and the Palestinians. (914462)

**The Minister for the Middle East and North Africa (James Cleverly):** The UK is actively encouraging the parties back to dialogue. We support the decision of the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel to resume co-operation. We are now pushing for deeper co-operation on health and economic issues, including the re-establishment of the joint economic committee, to rebuild trust and move towards a lasting solution. We support the objectives of the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace and will continue to engage with the Alliance for Middle East Peace and President Biden's Administration to identify further opportunities for collaboration. We are working with regional partners and the United States Administration to seize on the positive momentum of normalisation, alongside improving Israeli-Palestinian co-operation, to advance the prospects of a two-state solution.

**Andrew Selous:** I am pleased to hear what my right hon. Friend says. Does he agree, though, that a just and lasting peace must be built on the rule of law, with severe consequences for systematic breaches whoever commits them, and that all Palestinians, including those in East Jerusalem, must have the right to vote on 22 May?

**James Cleverly:** We regularly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law, and we have regular conversations on this issue. We also encourage the Palestinian leadership to work towards democratic institutions based on the rule of law, and we welcome President Abbas's announcement of dates for elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and will work closely with the Palestinian Authority to support that. We have called for elections in East Jerusalem; my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has done so, and I did so with the Israeli ambassador in a meeting that we had just yesterday.

**Nicola Richards:** Despite assurances that, after countless delays, the EU review of Palestinian textbooks would be published in March, there is still no sign of the report. UK taxpayers' money pays the salaries of Palestinian teachers who use material inciting violence against Israel and Jews, making peace harder to achieve. What more will my right hon. Friend do to ensure that UK aid does not prolong the conflict?

**James Cleverly:** I thank my hon. Friend for her question. I remind the House that the UK does not fund the textbooks used in Palestinian schools. We understand that the EU review is in its final stages. We are not able to comment on the content of that report until it is released. We regularly engage with the EU at senior level to push for timely publication, and we regularly liaise with the Palestinian Authority to try to bring about the improvements that my hon. Friend has highlighted.

**Rosie Cooper:** It is now five months since the US Congress passed a \$250 million Act to create the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace, the largest ever investment in peace building. In November, our Ministers promised to examine the feasibility of the UK taking up one of the international seats on the fund's board. Will the Minister tell us the results of that assessment and confirm that the UK will use the G7 summit to step up and

help to lead this exciting new project with the United States?

**James Cleverly:** We always engage positively with any steps that push towards greater peace and reconciliation between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and we have engaged with this process. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said, we are currently going through a programme of work assessing what we will do with our overseas development aid, but we will continue to engage with the Biden Administration, the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to pursue what has been the long-standing UK goal: a peaceful, prosperous, meaningful two-state solution.

**Sheryll Murray:** I draw attention to my declaration in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, because I have been to Israel with the Conservative Friends of Israel.

With the G7 coming to Cornwall, we should underline our commitment to international institutions and multilateral co-operation. We welcomed the US middle east partnership for peace Act in December, but does the Minister agree that it is now time for the UK to take a board seat on the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace?

**James Cleverly:** I thank my hon. Friend for her question, which I partially answered in my prior response to the hon. Member for West Lancashire (Rosie Cooper). We have no current plans, but we always take a keen interest in any initiatives that encourage peace and co-operation between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority, and indeed, the Israeli people and the Palestinian people. We will continue to work along-side Governments in the region and the US Administration in pursuit of that objective.

**Wayne David (Labour):** The International Criminal Court has decided to conduct an investigation into alleged war crimes by Palestinian armed groups and Israeli forces in the occupied territories. The FCDO has stated that the UK respects the independence of the ICC. However, the Prime Minister said that the investigation is a "prejudicial attack", so does the Minister believe that the court is independent or not?

**James Cleverly:** We absolutely respect the independence of the International Criminal Court. We do expect it to comply with its own mandate. The UK will remain a strong supporter of the ICC.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-04-20/debates/23433A61-1771-4239-A7F9-E4199ACE9FFA/IsraelAndThePalestiniansSupportingPeace>

#### **Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

**Theresa Villiers (Conservative):** The 2001 UN conference against racism in Durban degenerated into hatred, antisemitism and criticism of Israel that was excessive, disproportionate and unfair, so will the UK Government boycott Durban IV, which marks the 20th anniversary of that disgraceful 2001 conference? (914495)

**Dominic Raab:** We will obviously attend the UN General Assembly in September. In relation to the Durban declaration and its anniversary, let me reassure my right hon. Friend that—as we demonstrated at the Human Rights Council recently on the approach that we took to items 7 and 2—we will not support any partisan or political attacks on Israel. I reassure her that the Government are absolutely crystal clear in our condemnation of and opposition to any and all forms of antisemitism.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-04-20/debates/D9B5056B-249B-49AA-81FA-3235207F6F40/TopicalQuestions#contribution-8D312F0E-DA7C-4394-815F-72FBBC0D5E34>

#### **Topical Questions: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

**John Lamont (Conservative):** It is brilliant to see the UK and Israel working so closely together in the roll-out of our world-leading vaccination programmes. Israel has vaccinated almost half its population with both doses of the covid vaccine, so will the Minister provide an update on the status of discussions with Israel on establishing a travel corridor arrangement? (914507)

**James Duddridge:** ... We welcome the success of the Israeli vaccination programme, and the co-operation between the UK and Israel on covid continues throughout the pandemic. On 17 May, the Prime Minister will announce further travel measures and which countries will fit into which traffic-light categorisations. We are looking to see how we can share health data, and we are all looking forward to hearing from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster following his visit, to get some real-life examples on what we can do here in the UK.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-04-20/debates/D9B5056B-249B-49AA-81FA-3235207F6F40/TopicalQuestions#contribution-436384CA-D81B-4139-8B69-3EC08FC6D8E6>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Claudia Webbe (Independent)** [148963] To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on the covid-19 vaccine rollout of the British Medical Journal report, Covid-19: Reports from Israel suggest one dose of Pfizer vaccine could be less effective than expected, published on 22 January 2021.

**Nadhim Zahawi:** The Government has not made an assessment of the named British Medical Journal report.

An independent assessment of the data from Israel, published by the Norwich Medical School, concluded that estimated vaccine effectiveness is zero 14 days after vaccination, this rose to about 90% at day 21, before levelling off. Further information is available at the following link:

[www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.01.21250957v1.full](http://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.01.21250957v1.full)

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has not undertaken a specific assessment. The JCVI's position is that there is high efficacy with the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. The JCVI continues to advise two doses of the vaccine, with a three to 12 week interval.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-02-03/148963>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/372/bmj.n217.full.pdf>

### International Criminal Court: Jerusalem and Occupied Territories

**Jack Lopresti (Conservative)** [174813] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what assessment he has made of the International Criminal Court's determination that it has jurisdiction over East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza; and what assessment he has made of the potential legal implications of that determination for UK armed forces.

**James Cleverly:** As the Prime Minister said in his letter to the Conservative Friends of Israel, the UK is a strong supporter of the ICC and we respect the independence of the Court. In this instance we do not consider that the ICC has jurisdiction. We continue to closely follow the ICC's work and are looking at the implications of this decision.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-14/174813>

### Middle East: Armed Conflict

**Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat)** [181371] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help end conflicts in the Middle East.

**James Cleverly:** The UK is a leading diplomatic actor and humanitarian donor in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). As announced in the Integrated Review

in March 2021, the UK will establish a more integrated approach to government work on conflict and instability, including in MENA. We will work with partners to manage the internal tensions that might lead to conflict, to increase their resilience to external interference, to mitigate the humanitarian and human rights impacts of existing conflicts, and to reduce the threats to our security that conflicts can cause - always in ways that are in concert with the international system and compliant with international humanitarian law. We use our UN Security Council seat and global partnerships to push for resolution to conflict, including those in Yemen, Libya and Syria. The UK's longstanding position on the Middle East Peace Process is also clear: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-15/181371>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Palestinians: Coronavirus**

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [178701] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the use of covid-19 vaccinations that have been made available to the Palestinian Authority.

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [178703] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Palestinians residing in East Jerusalem that have received the covid-19 vaccination from the Government of Israel.

**James Cleverly:** The UK is committed to global equitable access to effective vaccines as demonstrated by our £548 million contribution to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment - the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines. We were pleased to note that the first shipment of over 60,000 doses from the COVAX scheme arrived in the OPTs on 17 March and that over 21,000 were sent to Gaza.

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/2021-04-12/178701>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/178703>

#### **Palestinians: Textbooks**

**Marco Longhi (Conservative)** [178714] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress has been made on the international review of the content of Palestinian Authority school textbooks.

**James Cleverly:** We understand the review is in the final stages and the final report is due to be completed shortly. We continue to engage with the EU at a senior level and push for timely publication. We will review the findings carefully before deciding on any next steps.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/178714>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Palestinians: Detainees**

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat)** [179476] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the reported detention of an eight-year-old and a ten-year-old by Israeli forces while the two children were playing near their house, what recent representations he has made to the Government of Israel about the detention of Palestinian children under the age of twelve.

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat)** [179477] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports and video documentation of the arrest of five young Palestinian children aged 9-13 years who were reportedly interrogated and detained for approximately eight hours.

**James Cleverly:** We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/179476>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/179477>

TOP

## 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>

TOP

## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

### **New Plan for Immigration** (closing date 6 May 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration>

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

(closing date not stated)

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

TOP

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