



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Department for Education: Racial Discrimination

**Justin Madders (Labour)** [181043] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many complaints relating to allegations of racism were made to his Department in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

**Nick Gibb:** We are clear there is no place for racism in our society or education system. The Department does not keep a central record of all complaints made to us directly. However, from July 2020, the Department's School Complaints Unit began recording whether 'racial discrimination towards a pupil' has been cited as a factor in complaints made to, or about, local authority maintained school.

Subsequently, racial discrimination towards a pupil was cited as a factor in eight complaints about local authority maintained schools. At the time of their approach, none of the complainants had attempted to resolve their concerns locally, using the schools' own complaints procedure, so were advised to do so.

Whilst complaints about a school can be made to the Department, in most cases complainants should follow the local complaints procedure in the first instance. All schools are required to have a complaints procedure in place and we have published guidance on this for maintained schools, academies and independent schools:

Maintained schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>

Academies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-an-academies-complaints-procedure>

Independent schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulating-independent-schools>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-14/181043>

### Hate Crime: Asians

**Apsana Begum (Labour)** [184563] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on the use of the term Oriental by the Metropolitan Police in reference to hate crimes against people from East and South East Asia; and whether her Department plans to review the use of that term.

**Victoria Atkins:** From 1 April we have asked forces to use the below categories, in relation to recording the ethnicity of victims of hate crime:

- Asian
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any Other Asian Background
- Black
- Black Caribbean
- Black African
- Any Other Black Background
- Mixed
- White And Black Caribbean
- White And Black African
- White And Asian
- Any Other Mixed Background
- Not Stated
- Chinese and other
- Chinese
- Any Other Ethnic Group
- White
- White British
- White Irish
- Any Other White Background

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-20/184563>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Marriage and Religion

**Baroness Cox (Crossbench)** [HL15092] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, published on 14 March 2018, what progress they have made on exploring "the legal and practical challenges of limited reform relating to the law on marriage and religious weddings".

**Lord Wolfson of Tredegar:** As the Government has made clear, this is a difficult issue which requires careful consideration. The Law Commission is separately looking at aspects of the problem through their review of the law governing legal marriage ceremonies. The Law Commission has now consulted with a wide range of groups with an interest and is considering the responses received. The Government looks forward to receiving the Law Commission's final report and recommendations later this year and will give them careful consideration.

The Government is aware that a separate Nuffield Foundation study, launched in September 2020 and due to report later this year, is investigating why marriage ceremonies occur outside of the legal framework for weddings in England and Wales. The Government will also wish to consider its findings.

Any proposals affecting how religious groups are permitted to conduct marriages must be thoroughly assessed for their fairness.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-20/hl15092>

The Green Paper referred to above can be read at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/696993/Integrated\\_Communities\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf)

Information about the Law Commission review referred to above can be read at <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/>

Information about the Nuffield Foundation study referred to above can be read at <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/wedding-not-marriage-exploring-non-legally-binding-ceremonies>

### **El Sharq**

**Lord Marlesford (Conservative)** [HL15017] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the implications for national security of reports that the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated El Sharq television channel will relocate from Turkey to London.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government keeps under review the activities of those associated with the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK in accordance with the five commitments included in the former Prime Minister's statement to Parliament. The UK Government continues to assess the Muslim Brotherhood's activities when appropriate to ensure our position is based on the latest information available and we will consider action against the review's commitments if and where legal thresholds are met. Broadcasting regulation is a matter for Ofcom, the UK's independent media regulator. Ofcom sets clear rules and conditions for broadcasters who apply for a license to broadcast in the UK. The Broadcasting Code places standards around harmful and offensive material, incitement of crime, disorder, hatred or abuse, and responsible religious programming.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-16/hl15017>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Religious Practice: Islam**

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL15175] To ask Her Majesty's Government, in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, what plans they have, if any, to require services in mosques in the UK to be conducted in English.

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL15176] To ask Her Majesty's Government, in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, what discussions, if any, they have had with Islamic faith leaders to discuss the language in which services in mosques are conducted.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** HMG has no plans to mandate English language in any religious service as part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST. Everyone has a right to freedom of religion under Article 9 of the Human Rights Act and is one of the fundamental rights that we will always protect in this country

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/hl15175>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/hl15176>

### **Religious Practice: Islam**

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL14977] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 8 April (HL14593), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, (1) what assessment they have made of any Islamist teaching in (a) mosques, and (b) madrassas, in the UK, (2) what assessment they have made of the number of Imams in the UK who cannot speak English, and (3) what plans they have to require services in mosques in the UK to be conducted in English.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We look at and assess all evidence of those that radicalise others through their support for or justification of violence and will not tolerate those who spread divisive and harmful narratives.

HMG has made no assessment of the number of Imams present in the UK as part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST, nor of their language skills.

HMG has no plans to mandate English language in any religious service as part of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST. Everyone has a right to freedom of religion under Article 9 of the Human Rights Act and is one of the fundamental rights that we will always protect in this country.

As outlined in our previous response, the Immigration Rules governing T2 Minister of Religion roles require applicants to demonstrate a strong command of the English language in order to qualify for a visa.

Whether through Islamism or any other ideology, the Government is committed to tackling those who spread views that promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society, and that radicalise others into terrorism. We remain of the view that the propaganda used by Islamist extremists is a distortion of true Islam.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-15/hl14977>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-24/hl14593>

### **Out-of-school Education: Islam**

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL15177] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 4 February 2020 (HL646) and 13 February 2020 (HL1377 and HL1414) and by Baroness Berridge on 12 March 2020 (HL2002), and in pursuit of their anti-terrorism policies, what plans they have, if any, to allow Ofsted to inspect madrassas in the UK which provide teaching for fewer than 18 hours per week.

**Baroness Berridge:** As indicated in my answer to Question HL2002 on 12 March 2020, madrassas are generally considered to be out-of-school settings, which are not captured by a single dedicated regulatory framework, and therefore are not subject to inspections by Ofsted or the department.

However, as explained previously, the department is taking forward a package of measures to enhance safeguarding in out-of-school settings, safeguarding children from all forms of harm, including extremism and terrorism.

The main phase of this work concluded in March 2020. We are currently considering how the outputs can be used to help inform best practice on how existing legal powers, held by local authorities, the police, Ofsted and other departments and agencies, can best be used to address safeguarding and welfare concerns. We are also looking into what more we might need to do at a national level.

In addition to this, we have also published a voluntary code of practice for out-of-school setting providers, such as madrassas, to support them in understanding what they need to do to run a safe setting. This is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>

Accompanying guidance for parents and carers is also available to help them make more informed choices when considering out-of-school settings for their children, including the red flags to look out for and what steps to take where they might have concerns.

As indicated in my previous answer, if the department became aware of a setting where children were at risk of harm, we would work closely with relevant agencies, such as the local authority, Ofsted or the police to take action.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/hl15177>

*The answers referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-01-21/hl646>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-02-05/hl1377>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-02-06/hl1414>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-02-27/hl2002>

## Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

### **Speech by the chair of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, Dr Tony Sewell CBE**

This report is about how we really deal with the issue of race and social mobility. We know that education is the best vehicle for this. ...

Extra hours education is something that my own community, the Black Caribbean community, pioneered and their example is one we think the government should seek to emulate. To this day, it is the resourcefulness of Britain's many ethnic minority groups who ensure their children get a rounded educational experience. ...

It was by dropping the term BAME that allowed us to look at this data in a forensic way. We could now see that Black and White groups had differences within, this was particularly stark when comparing Black Caribbean with Black African. So we recommend the dropping of the term. ...

The public culture of Britain is a rich, diverse mosaic of different traditions. Each intricate segment tells its own unique story. But step away and you see that they are each a part of an overall chronicle which binds them together and gives them all a new meaning. ...

Linking the stories of different ethnic groups to a unifying sense of Britishness is an opportunity to remind children of our common destiny and foster more belonging to this country.

The report acknowledges that over 50 years things have significantly improved. Second that race is not the only factor in explaining racial disparities and third that some of the best strategies for change is when we find answers for everybody. ...

We want to appeal to everybody but specifically to those who have faced and continue to deal with the reality of racism. ... Yes we did find the racism that you experience and our report outlines that reality. Yes the Commission has found evidence that concurs with your pain. Our report not only acknowledges, what we call lived racism but it delivers key recommendations.

So today I call on the government to accept our first recommendation to strengthen the hand of the equality watchdog to strike down racial discrimination. ...

Our recommendations provide much of the prose for a new, open-minded, proudly multi-ethnic chapter of the British story. One that doesn't shy away from what more needs to be done to address racial inequalities ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/speech-by-the-chair-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities-dr-tony-sewell-cbe>

*The report 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)

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## House of Commons Written Answers

### Occupied Territories: Overseas Aid

**Anna McMorrin (Labour)** [186207] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the 2021-22 reduction in official development assistance on (a) the humanitarian response, (b) health, (c) poverty alleviation, (d) food security and nutrition and (e) conflict resolution in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**James Cleverly:** The FCDO's aid budget has been allocated in line with the UK strategic objectives set out in the Integrated Review, amid the challenging financial climate of COVID. We have prioritised our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world. Allocation decisions took into account a range of factors, including qualitative and quantitative analyses of draft business plans and sectoral analysis of key trends. Impact on beneficiaries of UK aid, supply partners and equalities were all considered.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-23/186207>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Rupa Huq (Labour)** [186193] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on reports of the ill-treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli detention.

**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. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised the issue of Palestinian children in detention on 23 February with the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

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. 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 remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-23/186193>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Marsha De Cordova (Labour)** [186252] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last made representations to the Government of Israel on the reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors and Palestinian human rights defenders in Israeli military detention.

**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 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. 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 remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention.

The UK is aware of the challenges facing human rights defenders (HRDs) and organisations operating in Israel and the OPTs.

The UK continues to urge the Israeli Government to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), of which the FCDO is a fervent champion everywhere. We have been clear that a strong, vibrant civil society is in Israel's own interest and have raised concerns with the Palestinian Authority about the treatment of HRDs in the West Bank. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised the issue of HRDs on 23 February with the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-23/186252>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Caroline Lucas (Green)** [185339] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the targeting of 58 Palestinian structures and subsequent displacement of 81 people, including 42 children, by the Israeli authorities in March 2021.

**James Cleverly:** The UK regularly raises the demolition of Palestinian property with the Government of Israel. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity. 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 efforts to promote peace.

I continue to maintain an active dialogue with regional partners on the matter of demolitions, and frequently raise our objections in bilateral conversations with my Israeli counterparts. The UK urged the Government of Israel to end demolitions of property in the West Bank at the UN Security Council on 25 March 2021. On the same day, the British Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners. I called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised my concerns about the demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/185339>

*The UK speech at the UN referred to above is not currently available online.*

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

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

### **West Bank: Demolition**

**Caroline Lucas (Green)** [185340] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many UK-funded humanitarian aid structures in the West Bank including East Jerusalem have been demolished or seized by the Israeli authorities since 1 January 2020.

**James Cleverly:** The UK regularly raises the demolition of Palestinian property with the Government of Israel, including over the repeated confiscation and demolition of donor-funded assistance and structures at Humsa al Bqai'a. We continue to monitor the situation in Humsa al Bqai'a closely. Officials from the British Consulate General in Jerusalem most recently visited on 16 February. UK and European UN Security Council members delivered a joint statement on 25 February, calling for unimpeded access for the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to the community. The UK Ambassador alongside European Ambassadors urged an end to demolitions in Humsa Al-Baqai'a in a meeting with Israeli authorities on 25 February. There have been no further demolitions or confiscations in the community since 22 February.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-21/185340>

The joint statement referred to above can be read at

<https://onu.delegfrance.org/middle-east-we-reiterate-our-call-on-israel-to-halt-demolitions-and>

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Updated: Israel economic factsheet**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/982181/Israel-april-2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/982181/Israel-april-2021.pdf)

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

**\*\* Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill**

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

*Third Reading, House of Lords*

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-04-28/debates/7B39D3D3-B3FF-4D25-AE91-A2E38ECB78D9/AnimalWelfare\(Sentencing\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2021-04-28/debates/7B39D3D3-B3FF-4D25-AE91-A2E38ECB78D9/AnimalWelfare(Sentencing)Bill)

**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>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 7 days**

**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/>

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