



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following six questions all received the same answer

Internet: Blasphemy

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [58717] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made on whether online content that is considered to be blasphemous would fall within the remit of lawful but harmful content as defined within the Online Safety Bill.

Internet: Freedom of Expression

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [58716] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what protections his Department plans to place in the Online Safety Bill to ensure that nothing within the Bill shall be read or given effect in a way which prohibits or restricts discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, or insult of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of their adherents, or of any other belief system or the beliefs or practices of its adherents, or proselytising or urging adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system.

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [58718] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Online Safety Bill, whether it is his Department's policy that discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, or insult of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of their adherents are likely to have an adverse psychological impact on an adult of ordinary sensibilities.

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [58719] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Online Safety Bill whether he plans ordinary sensibilities to have any regard to the adult's membership of a class or group of people with a certain characteristic targeted by the content.

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [58720] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what consideration he has given in the drafting of the Online Safety Bill to the case of *Handyside v the United Kingdom* (1976) which concluded that expressions that offend, shock, or disturb are protected under Article 10 (2) of the European Convention

of Human Rights.

Crispin Blunt (Conservative) [58721] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that online content which is offensive and not harmful is not wrongly identified as harmful under the Online Safety Bill.

Chris Philp: The draft Online Safety Bill delivers the government's manifesto commitment to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online while defending free expression.

Regulation will not prevent adults from accessing or posting legal content, nor require companies to remove specific pieces of legal content. We recognise that adults have the right to upload and access content that some may find offensive or upsetting.

The largest and riskiest services will be required to set out their policies regarding content that is legal but harmful to adults and enforce these consistently. They will no longer be able to arbitrarily remove controversial viewpoints.

Users will have access to effective mechanisms to appeal content that is removed without good reason.

Our approach will empower adult users to keep themselves safe online, while ensuring children are protected and maintaining robust protections for freedom of expression.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-19/58717>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-19/58716>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-19/58718>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-19/58719>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-19/58720>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-19/58721>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-57499>

Hamas: Proscribed Organisations

Christian Wakeford (Conservative) [58575] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Government's proscription of Hamas.

Damian Hinds: Hamas' military wing was proscribed in the UK in 2001.

The investigation and prosecution of proscription offences is a matter for the police and Crown Prosecution Service. It would be inappropriate for the Government to comment further on such matters. Anyone that professes support for, or who is a member of Military Wing risks being investigated by the police for proscription offences.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-18/58575>

House of Lords Written Answer

Prisons: Church Services

Lord Hylton (Crossbench) [HL3162] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that all HM Prisons provide a weekly chapel service.

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Prison Service Instruction 05/2016, Faith and Pastoral

Care for Prisoners, states that all prisoners may participate in the main religious observance of the week for the faith in which they are registered should they wish to - safety, security and other concerns permitting.

This requirement was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic because of infection prevention and control measures. Alternative arrangements were put in place, including making available in-cell faith resources and the use of technology. Chaplains continued to make themselves available to prisoners on a daily basis and chapels have remained open for individual worship and pastoral care throughout the pandemic.

Establishments are reintroducing weekly collective worship or meditation taking into account Covid safety measures and security considerations, as well as other factors, such as available staffing in multi-faith chaplaincy teams and the physical space available.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-18/hl3162>

Welsh Government

National framework for the delivery of bereavement care

<https://gov.wales/national-framework-delivery-bereavement-care-html>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) [56730] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41609 on National Holocaust Memorial Centre and Learning Service, for what reason that Answer did not provide the figures requested for the quantity and proportion of the private funding required for the creation of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre that had been raised as of 2 September 2021.

Kemi Badenoch: The money is being raised by an independent charity.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-15/56730>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/41609>

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Israel

See also Commons written answer 58575 “ *Hamas: Proscribed Organisations*” included in the Home Affairs Section above.

House of Commons Written Answers

Iraq: Israel

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [60364] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to promote diplomatic normalisation between Israel and Iraq.

James Cleverly: The UK warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan. These are historic steps which see the normalisation of relations between friends of the UK. The United Kingdom will continue to encourage further dialogue between Israel and other countries in the region, to work towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for Israelis, Palestinians and citizens across the region.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-21/60364>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Dalal Mughrabi

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [60366] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 18 October 2017 to Question 107709 on Palestinians: Overseas Aid, whether the Government made representations to the Palestinian Authority on concerns over the naming of summer camps after Dalal Mughrabi; and what assessment she has made of the effect of those representations on the decision not to rename those the summer camps.

Salah Khalaf

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [60367] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 5 February 2018 to Question 125954 on Palestinians: Schools, whether the Government has made representations to the Palestinian Authority on concerns over the naming of a school after Salah Khalaf.

James Cleverly: We have been clear that incitement to hatred or violence is unacceptable from all parties. We will continue to raise concerns about this with the PA and continue to urge all parties to condemn incitement wherever and whenever it occurs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-21/60366>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-21/60367>

The answers referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2017-10-13/107709>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-01-31/125954>

Israel: Palestinians

Andrew Gwynne (Labour) [60365] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what cross-border peacebuilding projects the UK supports in Israel and the Palestinian Territories; and how much funding the Government has allocated to each of those projects.

James Cleverly: The Cabinet Office publishes Conflict Security and Stability Fund annual programme summaries on GOV.UK at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conflict-stability-and-security-fund-programme-summaries>

They outline the annual budget, a short summary of the programmes, and a breakdown of the projects in the programme. The peacebuilding projects Constituencies for Peace and Support for Israeli NGOs continue to be funded in Financial Year 2021/2022 though exact spend figures are not yet available. Our future spending allocations will be set in the next Spending Review and full budgets for 2021 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts. CSSF spend by regional, cross regional and non-discretionary theme is reported in

the CSSF Annual Report. The CSSF Annual Report 2020-21 will be published on gov.uk.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-21/60365>

UNRWA

Tommy Sheppard (SNP) [903837] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the Government has to support the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

James Cleverly: The UK is a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). We recognise UNRWA's unique mandate from the UN General Assembly, to provide protection and core services including health and education to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. Budgets for 2020 were outlined in our Statistics in International Development report available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-on-international-development-final-uk-aid-spend-2020>

Our future spending allocations will be set in the next Spending Review and full budgets for 2021 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-20/903837>

Mohammed al-Khudari

Margaret Ferrier (Independent) [58911] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to her international counterparts on the case of critically ill cancer patient and Palestinian national Mr. Mohammed al-Khudari currently in prison in Saudi Arabia.

James Cleverly: The UK regularly engages with international partners. Our position is clear that all detainees should have access to adequate medical care and medical supplies.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-10-19/58911>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UK statement on Israel settlement construction

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa James Cleverly said: We urge the Government of Israel to reverse the decisions on 24 October and 27 October to advance the construction of settlement units in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. Settlements are illegal under international law and present an obstacle to peace and stability.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-statement-on-israel-settlement-construction>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Ross Greer (Green) [S6W-00208] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will bar the 112 companies identified by the UN Human Rights Office as being involved in activities related to illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine from receiving public grants, account management services or other support from the Scottish Government and the public bodies for which it is responsible.

Ivan McKee: The Scottish Government supports implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and agrees with others in the international community that Israeli settlements are illegal under international law;

making it harder for a peaceful two state solution to be reached.

In 2018, the Scottish Government published Guidance on Due Diligence: Human Rights [1], setting out how we, our executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies should undertake appropriate due diligence on companies, including their human rights record, before entering into an investment relationship with them. This list of 112 companies identified by the UN Human Rights Office as being involved in activities related to illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine, during the period from 1 January 2018 to 1 August 2019, is one piece of information to be considered in that due diligence process.

Existing policy guidance on procurement outlines actions that public bodies can take if they believe there are grounds to exclude companies active in any illegal settlements from bidding for public contracts [2].

I have asked officials to write to the Chief Executives of relevant public bodies to remind them of the policy guidance, make them aware of this UN list and ask them to provide information to officials on any relationships they have with companies on this list. Following this, I will write to any companies, thus identified, seeking an update on their activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and what they are doing to cease those specific activities as identified by the independent international fact-finding mission, which provided the basis for their inclusion in this list.

On account management services or other support, as noted in response to question S6W-00182, Scottish Enterprise is confident that it has acted in full accordance with their internal due diligence procedure, introduced in 2019. This procedure follows from the 2018 Scottish Government guidance.

As policies and procedures on due diligence and procurement are updated the Scottish Government takes account of the latest findings and recommendations of international bodies such as the UN.

All answers to written Parliamentary Questions are available on the Parliament's website, the search facility for which can be found at

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers>

[1] <https://www.gov.scot/publications/due-diligence-checks-good-practice-guidance/>

[2] <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20160106214501/http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Procurement/policy/SPPNSSPANS/policy-notes/SPPN2014/SPPN42014>

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-00208>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/written-questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-00182>

The Guiding Principles, referred to above, can be read at

https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf

The list of companies referred to above can be read at

<https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/43/71>

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Other Relevant Information

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights

UN expert criticises boycott of Durban Process, calls for urgent action against transnational racism

The UN's expert on racism has strongly criticised countries boycotting the Durban Declaration and called on them to recommit to the principles for combatting racial discrimination and intolerance agreed at the landmark World Conference against Racism held in Durban, South Africa, 20 years ago.

"The unequal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is the most recent reminder of how deeply entrenched racial, ethnic and national disparities remain in enjoyment of fundamental human rights," Tendayi Achiume, UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, told the General Assembly on Wednesday.

"The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), agreed two decades ago, offers a principled and practical blueprint for undoing discriminatory structures and achieving equality and justice for marginalized and exploited groups and individuals."

She urged countries reaffirm their commitment to the transnational fight against racism as she presented to the General Assembly her [report](#) highlighting the contributions of the Durban Declaration, with recommendations for fighting intolerance and structural inequality.

"Twenty years ago, the world stood at a crossroads in Durban," she said. "Now, despite the dedicated advocacy and grass-roots mobilization of the last two decades, the world stands at a similar crossroads. I urge UN Member States – and the entire international community – to reaffirm the commitments enshrined in the Durban Declaration and take concrete steps to realize the promise of transnational racial equality and racial justice."

She criticised countries that announced they would not participate in a recent General Assembly commemoration of the Durban Conference and the Declaration, or in the Durban process.

"Rather than using the DDPA to fight against racism, several States have instead signalled they intend to abandon the Durban process," Achiume said. "This group includes some of the greatest beneficiaries of colonialism, slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade."

"I call on States participating in any form of DDPA boycott to instead demonstrate their genuine commitment to racial justice and equality by implementing the DDPA and engaging in its follow-up mechanisms."

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27724&LangID=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

Charities Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Education (16 to 19 Academies) (Religious Character) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2946>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

The Scottish Government's international work (closing date 29 October 2021)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cteea/international-engagement-external-affairs/>

Labelling for Animal Welfare (closing date 6 December 2021)

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-welfare-market-interventions-and-labelling/labelling-for-animal-welfare/>

Proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally ill Adults (Scotland) Bill (closing date 22 December 2021)

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/proposals-for-bills/proposed-assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Animal Welfare – revision of EU legislation (Food Safety) (closing date 21 January 2022)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation/public-consultation_en

Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2022-2025

(closing date not stated)

<https://nihrc.org/news/detail/we-want-to-hear-from-you-about-our-strategic-planning-2022-2025>

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