



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Internet: Antisemitism

John Howell (Conservative) [92857] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to tackle antisemitism online, including on social media.

Chris Philp: Services in scope of the draft Online Safety Bill will need to protect users from illegal abuse, including illegal antisemitic abuse. Services in scope which are likely to be accessed by children will need to protect them from harmful or inappropriate content.

Major platforms will also need to address legal but harmful content for adults. These companies will have to set out clearly what legal content is acceptable on their platforms and enforce their terms and conditions consistently and transparently. If platforms fail in their duties under the Bill, they will face tough enforcement action including fines of up to 10% of global annual qualifying turnover.

The draft Bill has been subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee which reported its recommendations on 14 December. We are considering the Committee's report and will introduce the Bill as soon as possible.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-14/92857>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt5802/jtselect/jtonlinesafety/129/129.pdf>

Racial Discrimination: Islam

Anneliese Dodds (Labour) [94509] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what her Department's policy is for (a) describing and (b) communicating incidences of racism targeting expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

Kemi Badenoch: This Government remains committed to stamping out anti-Muslim hatred and all forms of religious prejudice. It is unacceptable for anyone to feel unsafe while practicing their religion and we continue to take a zero-tolerance

approach to anti-Muslim hatred. The adoption of a definition of Islamophobia by the Government remains under consideration.

In 2020-21 DLUHC provided £1.8million in funding for the Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant Scheme which supported established community groups and civil society organisations to run short projects that champion the Government's commitment to building a diverse and tolerant society for all faiths and races.

The Government's new Hate Crime Strategy will be published shortly and will build on the successes of the previous Action Plan in tackling all forms of hate crime.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-16/94509>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Karen Bradley (Conservative) [93758] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has held with her US counterpart on the establishment of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

James Cleverly: UK officials remain in close contact with the US Government regarding the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA) and we look forward to hearing more about their objectives and the projects it will support. Once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration.

We are also in contact with the Alliance for Middle East Peace (ALLMEP) organisation regarding their concept of an International Fund. I spoke at ALLMEP's Annual Gala on 13 December and reiterated the UK's support for increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-15/93758>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Iran: Nuclear Power and Terrorism

Robert Jenrick (Conservative) [93764] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in (a) Bahrain, (b) Saudi Arabia and (c) United Arab Emirates on the strategic challenges posed by Iran's (a) nuclear programme and (b) support for terror groups.

Arab States: Iran

Robert Jenrick (Conservative) [93765] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the potential (a) global and (b) regional effects of Iran's activities in (a) Iraq, (b) Lebanon, (c) Syria and (d) Yemen.

James Cleverly: The government regularly assesses the impact of Iran's continued destabilising activity throughout the region, including its political, financial and military support to several militant and proscribed groups, including Hizballah in

Lebanon and Syria, militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen. Such activity compromises the region's security, its ability to prosper and escalates already high tensions, with consequences for the international community. The UK regularly engages with partners in the region on Iran, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and UAE. Most recently, on 20 December the Foreign Secretary hosted representatives from the Gulf Co-operation Council, including those three states, at Chevening. Iran's nuclear programme and its destabilising regional activity were discussed. We regularly discuss our concerns at Iran's nuclear escalation with our partners. Iran's nuclear programme is more advanced than it has ever been and is undermining regional and international security. We are clear that Iran should halt all activities in violation of the JCPoA without delay and to seize the opportunity in front of them in current JCPoA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. If a deal is not swiftly concluded, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal. In this scenario, we would carefully consider all the options in partnership with our allies.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-15/93764>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-15/93765>

Iran: Nuclear Power

Robert Jenrick (Conservative) [93766] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the IAEA Director General reportedly stating that the JCPOA nuclear deal signed in 2015 is no longer applicable to the current state of Iran's nuclear programme.

James Cleverly: Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) commitments since 2019 and its nuclear programme is more advanced now than it has ever been.

We strongly urge Iran to halt all activities in violation of the JCPoA without delay and to seize the opportunity in front of them in the current JCPoA Vienna negotiations to restore the nuclear deal. The JCPoA is not perfect but it currently represents the only framework for monitoring and constraining Iran's nuclear programme. The diplomatic door is firmly open to Iran to conclude a deal, and there is a fair and comprehensive offer on the table which would benefit the Iranian people and economy. Iran's nuclear escalation means we have weeks, not months, to restore the deal before the JCPoA's core non-proliferation benefits are lost and the deal collapses.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-15/93766>

Iran: Nuclear Power

Robert Jenrick (Conservative) [92856] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of Iran's compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

James Cleverly: Iran has been in non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) commitments since July 2019. Iran has taken steps that have permanently upgraded its nuclear capabilities, including by producing Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU), which is unprecedented for a state without a nuclear weapons programme. Since February 2021, Iran has also curtailed monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The longer that the Agency's access is reduced, the greater the opportunity for Iran to divert resources from declared activities and the less the international community knows about the status of the Iranian programme.

We have consistently demonstrated our commitment to the JCPoA, and to restoring

the deal. Our priority is to see the US return to the deal and Iran return to compliance with its commitments. If a deal to return to the JCPoA is not swiftly concluded in Vienna and Iran continues its nuclear escalation, Iran will be responsible for missing the opportunity to restore the JCPoA and for bringing about the collapse of the deal.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-14/92856>

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Other Relevant Information

European Court of Human Rights

Gay-marriage-cake case declared inadmissible

The applicant, Gareth Lee, is a British national who was born in 1969 and lives in Belfast ... He is associated with QueerSpace, an organisation for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in Northern Ireland. ... In 2014, Mr Lee ordered a cake for a gay activist event ... from Asher's bakery. The cake was to have an image of Bert and Ernie (popular children's television characters), the logo of QueerSpace, and the slogan "Support Gay Marriage". He paid in advance. The following day the bakery called him to say it would not fulfil his order because it was a "Christian business". The bakery apologised and refunded his money. Mr Lee brought an action for breach of statutory duty in and about the provision of goods, facilities and services against the bakery and its owners. In response, the bakery and its owners invoked their rights under Articles 9 (freedom of thought conscience and religion) and 10 (freedom of expression) of the Convention. The County Court found that the failure to fulfil the order had been direct discrimination on the grounds of the applicant's sexual orientation and his religious beliefs or political opinions ... The County Court accepted that the bakery owners' Article 9 rights were engaged but held that they were not entitled to manifest their religious beliefs in the commercial sphere if this would be contrary to the rights of others. ... The Court of Appeal upheld that decision, noting the possibility for arbitrary abuse if businesses were free to choose what services to provide to the gay community on the basis of religious belief. The Supreme Court overturned the decision. It held that there had been no less favourable treatment on the grounds of religious belief because the bakery owners had not refused to serve the applicant because he was gay, but rather because they objected to being required to promote a message that they profoundly disagreed with. ...

The [European] Court [of Human Rights] reiterated that in order for a complaint to be admissible, the Convention arguments must be raised explicitly or in substance before the domestic authorities. The applicant had not invoked his Convention rights at any point in the domestic proceedings. By relying solely on domestic law, the applicant had deprived the domestic courts of the opportunity to address any Convention issues raised, instead asking the Court to usurp the role of the domestic courts. Because he had failed to exhaust domestic remedies, the application was inadmissible.

To read the full press release see

<https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/app/conversion/pdf/?library=ECHR&id=003-7221182-9819040&filename=Decision%20%20Lee%20v.%20the%20United%20Kingdom%20-%20Gay-marriage-cake%20case%20declared%20inadmissible.pdf>

To read the full judgement see

[https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng/#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-214966%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng/#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-214966%22]})

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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 (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>

Second Reading, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-01-05/debates/5565C246-FDC7-4A38-86E8-52825DE21125/NationalityAndBordersBill>

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

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

Outdoor marriages and civil partnerships (closing date 24 January 2022)
<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/outdoor-marriages-civil-partnerships/>

Marriage Law (Northern Ireland) (closing date 18 February 2022)
<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/public-consultation-marriage-law>

Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights (closing date 8 March 2022)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>

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