



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answer

#### Prime Minister's Questions

**Matt Hancock (Independent):** Does the Prime Minister agree that the disgusting antisemitic, anti-vax conspiracy theories promulgated online this morning are not only deeply offensive but anti-scientific and have no place in this House or in our wider society?

**The Prime Minister:** I join my right hon. Friend in completely condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the types of comments we saw this morning. Obviously, it is utterly unacceptable to make such linkages and to use such language, and I am determined that the scourge of antisemitism be eradicated. It has absolutely no place in our society. I know the previous few years have been challenging for the Jewish community, and I never want them to experience anything like that again.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-01-11/debates/5C68A4D9-407C-4507-8B72-67DD6014B26E/Engagements#contribution-16E4B56B-0328-475B-82C6-1009326E4BEE>

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Sikhs

**Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [114759]** To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the Government's website entitled Ethnicity Facts and Figures, how many and what proportion of the datasets which appear on that site contain data which can be disaggregated in such a way as to provide specific information on the number of Sikhs in each category, in England and Wales.

**Stuart Andrew:** According to the Office for National Statistics' latest Equalities Data Audit (Nov 2022), 22 of the data sources used on Ethnicity facts and figures collect religion data as well as ethnicity. This is 29% of all the data sources used on Ethnicity facts and figures. There are 73 datasets (pages) in Ethnicity facts and figures that use data from these sources; this is 39% of all datasets. Sample sizes

for each source vary so it may not always be possible to provide reliable estimates when disaggregating data by both ethnic group and religion.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-20/114759>

The website referred to above can be read at

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/>

The Data Audit referred to above can be read at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/inequalitiesdataaudit>

## Senedd Written Answer

### Answers to questions not reached in Plenary: Faith Schools

**Sam Rowlands (Conservative)** [OQ58903] Will the Minister make a statement on the role of faith schools in North Wales?

**Minister for Education and the Welsh:** Faith schools across Wales offer parents the opportunity for their children to be educated in accordance with their beliefs. Local authorities should therefore aim for a balance of provision between the types of schools that they maintain, whilst ensuring high-quality teaching and learning and curriculum coverage for all learners.

<https://record.senedd.wales/QNR/13186>

## National Union of Students

### NUS publishes its action plan for tackling antisemitism following independent investigation

... In May 2022, NUS commissioned Rebecca Tuck KC to lead an independent investigation looking at recent allegations of antisemitism as well as historic matters and broader culture. NUS worked closely with the Union of Jewish Students throughout.

We are confident that the investigations have been thorough, fair and conducted to the highest standards throughout. There is no room for doubt that this process has been as robust as it gets.

The KC's report is a detailed and shocking account of antisemitism within the student movement. It is a truly difficult read for all of us but we welcome the clarity it brings to enable us to act with confidence to tackle antisemitism head on. There is no place for antisemitism within NUS and we are committed to ensuring that Jewish students feel safe and welcome in every corner of our movement. Antisemitism is an attack on our shared values of equality and solidarity. We have a proud history of fighting struggles alongside Jewish students. We must tackle antisemitism in all its forms with collective responsibility and in doing so restore our collective. We are stronger united.

Our priority now is to take forward the recommendations from Rebecca Tuck KC's independent report to tackle antisemitism in all its forms across the breadth and depth of NUS. We have developed an action plan which will help us achieve this, but it is vital that we listen and learn from others, which is why we are setting up an Advisory Panel to scrutinise this plan and oversee its implementation. We must shine a light on the realities of antisemitism and be transparent in our reporting of progress.

Our action plan has 5 key areas of work each with specific actions and deadlines for implementation, a summary of which is provided below:

1. A proud and unwavering commitment to understanding and tackling antisemitism in all its forms within NUS and the student movement
  - a.) Full transparency
  - b.) Advisory Panel to oversee the implementation of the plan for a minimum of 5 years

- c.) Training for all staff and elected leaders and advanced training for key individuals
- 2. Permanent formal representation for Jewish students within a wider Inclusion and Liberation Strategy for NUS
  - a.) Reinstate NUS' Anti-Racism Anti-Fascism Committee with dedicated representation for Jewish students
  - b.) Associate Membership for UJS
  - c.) A new Inclusion and Liberation Strategy for NUS
- 3. Changing culture through education, practice and dialogue
  - a.) Educational materials on constructive dialogue
  - c.) Guidance on minimising harm in activity relating to Israel and Palestine within student politics
  - d.) Strengthening community relations between key student groups
- 4. An enhanced Candidate Preparation Process for NUS elections
  - a.) Training
  - b.) Deal with historic conduct and 'digital footprint'
  - c.) Risk assessment and safety plan
- 5. Strengthen NUS's governance
  - a.) Clear boundaries between 'political' and 'operational' matters
  - b.) An external speakers policy
  - c.) Strengthened data retention

As we look to the future, our action plan will centre the voices of the Jewish students we are here to represent. However, it is essential that Jewish students alone are not expected to carry the burden of delivering change and identifying issues. We recognise that tackling antisemitism is the responsibility of everyone within NUS and across the Higher Education sector and therefore we will work in lockstep with others to bring about positive change. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.nus.org.uk/nus-publishes-its-action-plan-for-tackling-antisemitism-following-independent-investigation>

#### **Independent investigation into allegations of antisemitism within NUS**

[https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471780/Independent Investigation into Antisemitism Report NUS 12 January 2023.pdf](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471780/Independent%20Investigation%20into%20Antisemitism%20Report%20NUS%2012%20January%202023.pdf)

#### **NUS UK Antisemitism Action Plan**

[https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471793/NUS\\_Antisemitism Action Plan Jan2023.pdf](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471793/NUS_Antisemitism_Action_Plan_Jan2023.pdf)

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

<https://www.nus.org.uk/frequently-asked-questions>

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## **Holocaust**

### **House of Lords Library**

#### **International Holocaust Memorial Day 2023**

<https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/international-holocaust-memorial-day-2023/>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Bob Blackman (Conservative) [748] Holocaust Memorial Day 2023** – That this House notes that, on 27 January 2023, the UK will observe Holocaust Memorial Day, marking the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, where more than 1.1 million people died, including nearly one million Jewish men, women and children; commemorates the six million victims of the Holocaust and the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution; further notes that the House pays tribute to the commitment of Holocaust survivors and Kindertransport refugees who share their experiences with young people across the country; acknowledges the importance of the Holocaust Educational Trust's work in schools across the UK and in particular the Lessons from Auschwitz Project, which has so far given tens of thousands of students and teachers the opportunity to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau; welcomes the establishment of a permanent National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre adjacent to Parliament; pays tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for organising the national Holocaust Memorial Day event; and urges all Right hon. and hon. Members to observe this day so that the appalling events of the Holocaust are always understood by future generations.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60468>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### **Palestinians: Intelligence Services**

**Matthew Offord (Conservative) [112081]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2022 to Question 97558 on Palestinians: Intelligence Services, what the total value of UK aid is that the Government has contributed to the Palestinian Authority's Preventative Security Forces as of 16 December 2022.

**David Rutley:** The UK's goal in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is to preserve the viability of the two-state solution as the best way to bring stability to the region. To deliver this goal, the UK is helping to develop the institutions of a future Palestinian State to ensure it can effectively deliver services for Palestinian people, including security, and act as a partner for peace with Israel. Our support to the Palestinian Authority (PA) security sector is helping to improve the accountability and transparency of the security services. Building the capacity of the PA security sector is extremely important in helping lay the groundwork for a future Palestinian state and a lasting solution to the conflict in the region.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-16/112081>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-28/97558>

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** I visited the site of a European and UK donor-funded school facing demolition in Masafer Yatta today. The UK [British flag] continues to urge Israel [Israeli flag] to desist demolitions and evictions that cause unnecessary suffering and are illegal under IHL in all but most exceptional circumstances.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613523390891016194>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** Fascinating tour of Royal Plastics Factory, an impressive factory in Hebron supplying goods to Palestinians and Israelis. A two-state solution needs a strong Palestinian economy, and the UK [British flag] continues to support Palestinian businesses through programmes such as Tasdeer.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613499589402796032>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** At @UNRWA school in Hebron, I met the school's inspirational youth Parliament. I also announced £3.7m funding for UNRWA to provide much needed emergency food assistance in Gaza. This will support the provision of food assistance for 1.2 million of the most vulnerable Gazans.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613493758972026880>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** An honour & privilege to spend time at the holy Al Aqsa Mosque this morning with the Director of Jerusalem Waqf Department Sheikh Azzam Al Khatib. I emphasised the UK's [British flag] unwavering support for Jordanian Custodianship of Jerusalem's Holy Sites & for the Status Quo.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613447133360979971>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** I heard about the immense challenges facing businesses in the OPTs [Palestinian flag] with top #business leaders. UK [British flag] programming is seeking to lift barriers to Palestinian trade. I also discussed how the UK can help increase women's economic participation in the OPTs.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613228686286934017>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** Important in depth discussion with Mahmoud Al Habbash about how to restart the peace process and what role faith and faith leaders can play in bringing about peace. I emphasised that the UK is ready to support any dialogue between the Palestinians and Israelis.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613224677727473673>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** A useful meeting with Palestinian Foreign Minister Malki in Ramallah following our discussion in London last month. I stressed our commitment to the Palestinian people & the bilateral relationship, & emphasised our concern at recent violence in the OPTs that fuels instability.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613174544323473412>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** Pleased to be back in East Jerusalem after 4 years. Looking forward to a busy programme of key meetings and seeing the impact of the work of @UkinJerusalem for Palestinians across the OPTs, including here in East Jerusalem.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613156800081330176>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** A productive first meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister @elico1 [Israeli flag]. We agreed on the need to tackle the threat posed by Iran, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the importance of the #AbrahamAccords, and I reiterated support for a two-state solution.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613123855798640640>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** The UK [British flag] is strongly committed to our trade & investment relationship with Israel [Israeli flag], one of the region's most dynamic and innovative economies. Good meeting with @NirBarkat where we discussed the new Free Trade Agreement which will take our trading relationship to new heights.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1613087303416553473>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** I had an informative meeting at the ESIL innovation and venture lab [microscope] learning about cutting edge start-ups and joint UK [British flag]-[Israeli flag] Israeli collaboration to develop innovative solutions to environmental challenges and climate related issues [recycling symbol].  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1612805100807806977>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** The UK [British flag] is proud to support the Arab community in Israel [Israeli flag] and promote a more inclusive industry through innovation. It was great to meet with the entrepreneurs in Haifa and the GO Hasoub that paves the way for the next generation of Arab tech-entrepreneurs.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1612789584718356483>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** Fantastic to visit @TechnionLive - Israel Institute of Technology University and learn more about the vibrant Israeli innovation scene. I met Professor Uri Sivan and with Professor Hossam Hayek, a [British flag]-[Israeli flag] BIRAX recipient who created the groundbreaking 'Alzheimer's breath test'.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1612760637284945922>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** The Holy Baha'i Gardens in Haifa are simply beautiful. I met David Freeman and Ariane Sabet and discussed the history of Baha'i Faith and the role that Haifa has played at the heart of the Bahai community.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1612739659137785856>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** Fascinating meeting at the Mahmoud Mosque in @Haifacity with Mohammad Sharif Oudeh and Mayor @EINATkalisch as well as Jewish, Christian and Druze religious leaders. Encouraging to see the unique and successful inter-religious coexistence in Israel [Israeli flag].  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1612723390137212928>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** Delighted to be back in Israel, one of the UK's closest friends [British flag] [shaking hands emoji] [Israeli flag]. Much to see and discuss over the next 2 days @ukinisrael.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1612700816061698050>

**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon** My pleasure to meet the Ambassador @MansoorAbulhoul to advance the [Palestinian flag] and [British flag] bilateral relationship and the ties that unite us. Look forward to working together to strengthen this important relationship @UAEEmbassyUK.  
<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1612502257299329024>

## British Embassy, Tel Aviv

### UK's Minister of State for the Middle East on his first official visit to Israel

Lord Ahmad, the UK's Minister of State for the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, the UN and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, has undertaken a two-day official visit to Israel during which he met interfaith leaders, members of the tech sector and held bilateral talks with Government of Israel Ministers.

On Tuesday, the Minister visited Ahmadia Mosque, ... and discussed co-existence in Haifa. Lord Ahmad then continued on a tour to the Baha'i Gardens, to hear about the history of the Baha'i faith and the role Haifa has played as the heart of the Baha'i community.

The Minister visited the Technion – The Israeli Institute of Technology - where he was briefed about Israel's top tier scientific innovation. ...

Lord Ahmad also met with leading stakeholders in the Arab-Israeli tech ecosystem before visiting the ESIL innovation and venture lab ...

Today (Wednesday) Lord Ahmad held bilateral meetings with the Israeli Foreign Minister, Eli Cohen, and the Economy Minister, Nir Barkat. Lord Ahmad and Minister Cohen discussed regional security issues including Iran, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the opportunities presented by the Abraham Accords. Lord Ahmad and Minister Barkat discussed the ongoing Israel-UK free trade agreement negotiations and the possibilities held for Israeli companies in the UK.

At the end of his visit, Lord Ahmad said: I am pleased to be back in Israel and meet with members of the new government. Israel is a valued partner for the UK, and I am excited to continue strengthening our bilateral relations and trade partnership and taking it to new heights.

With counterparts, I discussed the UK and Israel's shared security threats, including Iran's destabilising actions in the region and Russia's unprovoked, premeditated invasion of Ukraine.

I also encouraged all efforts to avoid provocative unilateral actions in Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which only serve to undermine prospects for a lasting and peaceful solution.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-minister-of-state-for-the-middle-east-on-his-first-official-visit-to-israel>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Iran: Hezbollah

**Karen Bradley (Conservative)** [113264] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of Iran's financial support for Hezbollah.

**David Rutley:** The Government regularly assesses the impact of Iran's destabilising activity throughout the region, including its political, financial and military support to several militant and proscribed groups, including Hizballah. Such activity compromises the region's security, its ability to prosper and escalates already high tensions, with consequences for the international community. It is for this reason that we currently have over 300 sanctions in place against Iran, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in its entirety and support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to non-state actors in the region, including to Lebanese Hizballah (UNSCR 1701).

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-12-19/113264>

*The UN Resolution referred to above can be read at*

[https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/581053/files/S\\_RES\\_1701%282006%29-EN.pdf?ln=en](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/581053/files/S_RES_1701%282006%29-EN.pdf?ln=en)

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Bill of Rights Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

#### **Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

#### **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

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

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

#### **\*\* Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Notice of amendments

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0209/amend/onlinesafety\\_rm\\_rep\\_0112.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0209/amend/onlinesafety_rm_rep_0112.pdf)

#### **Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

#### **Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

#### **Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

#### **Schools Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

### **Scottish Parliament**

#### **Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

#### **Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 8 days**

**Assisted dying/assisted suicide** (closing date 20 January 2023)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/81/health-and-social-care-committee/news/174845/mps-launch-new-inquiry-on-assisted-dyingassisted-suicide/>

**\*\* NUS UK Antisemitism Action Plan** (closing date 27 January 2023)

[https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471793/NUS\\_Antisemitism Action Plan Jan2023.pdf](https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471793/NUS_Antisemitism_Action_Plan_Jan2023.pdf)

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