



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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See also the Antisemitism Policy Trust report which is included in the Other Relevant Information section below.

House of Lords Written Answer

Universities: Antisemitism

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL5145 To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have made any assessment of the Community Security Trust's (CST) report Campus Antisemitism in Britain 2020–2022, published on 19 January, which shows a 22 per cent increase in university-related antisemitic incidents over the two academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22, compared to the two previous academic years; and whether they have raised its findings with universities in England.

Baroness Barran: The recent Community Security Trust (CST) report showing an increase in antisemitic incidents on campus over the last two years is deeply concerning. Universities should be safe and welcoming places for Jewish students, and they should do all they can to root out antisemitism.

The department has encouraged higher education (HE) providers to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, to have absolute clarity of what constitutes antisemitic behaviour. So far, 245 providers in England have adopted the IHRA definition, including the vast majority of universities. We would urge those providers that have not yet adopted the definition to do so, and those that have, to ensure that they are fully complying with the definition.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-26/hl5145>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/4/a/Campus%20Antisemitism%202020-2022.pdf>

Home Office

Government acts to overhaul Prevent in the fight against radicalisation

The Home Secretary has committed to delivering wholesale and rapid change across Prevent following a major independent review into the programme.

The Home Secretary will deliver on all 34 recommendations made by William Shawcross, who led the Independent Review of Prevent, ensuring a robust and proportionate focus on radicalising influences rather than wider issues such as mental health.

... the review makes clear that the threat from terrorism is becoming more complex, with the extreme right becoming an increasing concern, but Islamist terrorism remains our primary and deadliest threat.

The independent review highlights several areas where serious reform is required to ensure it is able to effectively identify and respond to the Islamist threat.

The independent review recognises the need for Prevent to better understand ideology and the individual agency of people who willingly support terrorism. The government's response will ensure that, in the face of an enduring terrorist threat to the UK, Prevent can adequately address the dangerous ideologies which underpin it.

Prevent will focus its activity where it will have the most impact, while remaining flexible enough to respond to evolving threats and all radicalisation risks. Greater emphasis will be placed on tackling Islamist ideology, which underpins the primary terror threat to the UK. ...

Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, said: ... Prevent will now ensure it focuses on the key threat of Islamist terrorism. As part of this more proportionate approach, we will also remain vigilant on emerging threats, including on the extreme right.

This independent review has identified areas where real reform is required. This includes a need for Prevent to better understand Islamist ideology, which underpins the predominant terrorist threat facing the UK.

I wholeheartedly accept all 34 recommendations and am committed to quickly delivering wholesale change to ensure we are taking every possible step to protect our country from the threat posed by terrorism.

Security Minister, Tom Tugendhat, said: ... This review strengthens and bolsters the Prevent programme. I am determined to deliver the improvements needed to accelerate our fight against radicalisation.

Ultimately, every community in our country deserves protection from threat of radicalisation and the violence that it brings.

To address the disparate terrorist threat, Prevent will move from a local model of delivery to a regional one, driving up Prevent delivery standards nationwide through increased join up between the police and regional partners. ...

It will ensure a greater understanding of antisemitism in Channel cases and ensure more effective disruption of extremists targeting Jewish communities. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-acts-to-overhaul-prevent-in-the-fight-against-radicalisation>

Independent Review of Prevent

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1134986/Independent_Review_of_Prevent.pdf

Government Response to the Independent Review of Prevent

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1134828/The_response_to_the_Independent_Review_of_Prevent.pdf

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

CPS action to understand disproportionality in charging decisions

... Disproportionality has long been recognised as a criminal justice system-wide issue, and the CPS is committed to ongoing examination of our work to ensure suspects and defendants are treated fairly.

The CPS commissioned the University of Leeds to examine the outcomes of our charging decisions and identify whether demographic factors led to disproportionate outcomes.

The study found that there is evidence of disproportionality in the outcomes of legal decision making, with defendants from minority ethnic backgrounds significantly more likely to be charged for a comparable offence than White British defendants.

The limitations of the study mean it is not possible to identify what factors are causing this disparity, to determine what action may be needed as a result. To address this, the CPS has created an independent Disproportionality Advisory Group, made up of academics and third sector specialists, to oversee and provide expert scrutiny of a comprehensive programme of further research.

Max Hill KC, Director of Public Prosecutions, said: “A fair justice system is a vital part of any democratic society and the decisions we make at the CPS have a profound impact on suspects, defendants, victims and the wider public. Our decisions must be fair, consistent and transparent for justice to be done. ...

A summary of the University of Leeds research is published today. The study of almost 195,000 cases used regression analysis - the industry standard - to control for different variables such as age, sex, ethnicity and crime type to find any evidence of disproportionality in decisions that led to a charge, caution or no further action.

When ethnicity was isolated as a variable, the research found that ethnic minority defendants are significantly more likely to be charged for a comparable offence than White British defendants.

This pattern was relatively consistent across England and Wales with White British suspects having the lowest charge rate of 69.9 per cent, compared with Mixed Heritage suspects who had a charge rate of between 77.3 per cent and 81.3 per cent. ...

Susie Uppal, Chair of the Independent Disproportionality Advisory Group, said: “Significant further work is needed to identify the drivers behind the concerning findings of this initial research, and to design effective solutions. Independent scrutiny of both the research programme and any planned interventions will be key to addressing racial disparities.

“The Disproportionality Advisory Group brings together a breadth of expertise from the academic and third sectors. It will provide independent and robust challenge through the next phase of this vitally important work, to bring about real and lasting change.” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-action-understand-disproportionality-charging-decisions>

CPS charging decisions - examining demographic disparities in the outcomes of our decision making

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-charging-decisions-examining-demographic-disparities-outcomes-our-decision-making>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Written Answer

Nazi War Crimes

Charlotte Nichols (Labour) [903496] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the War Crimes Act 1991 at increasing the number of police investigations of suspected Nazi war criminals living in the UK.

Tom Tugendhat: In 1988 the Conservative Government set up the Hetherington inquiry, which led to the War Crimes Act 1991. This meant that for the first time, Nazi war criminals living in the UK could be prosecuted for war crimes.

Counter Terrorism Policing do not have any current investigations relating to grave violations of the laws and customs of war committed on German-held territory during the Second World War.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-31/903496>

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Israel

See also the Antisemitism Policy Trust report which is included in the Other Relevant Information section below.

House of Commons Written Answer

Occupied Territories: War Crimes

Nadia Whittome (Labour) [136788] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK supports the International Criminal Court's inquiry into allegations of war crimes in the West Bank and Gaza.

Leo Docherty: The UK is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court and we respect the independence of the Court. We do not consider that the ICC has jurisdiction in this instance as the UK does not currently recognise Palestinian statehood.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-01-31/136788>

United Nations

Palestinian People's Rights Committee Bureau Rejects Israeli Retaliation in Response to United Nations Decision Seeking International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion. Also Condemns Provocations, Renewed Violence and Killings of Palestinians

... The Bureau of the United Nations General Assembly's Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People rejects the punitive measures adopted by Israel, against the Palestinian Authority, for seeking the resolution of international disputes through legitimate and peaceful means, via the International Court of Justice, which is one of the principal organs of the United Nations, following the requests for an advisory opinion by the General Assembly on 30 December.

The Bureau calls for the immediate reversal of such unilateral punitive measures by Israel, the occupying Power, which could have severe consequences for the Palestinian

Authority's financial situation and the welfare of the Palestinian people. Such actions exacerbate tensions and undermine the prospects of peace in the region.

The Bureau expresses its deep concern that 2023 continues the dangerous cycle of violence on the ground amidst increased political tension and a stalled peace process. Ongoing unlawful unilateral measures and provocations, including at the holy sites in East Jerusalem, are the primary causes of the recent and rising levels of violence and instability. The Bureau stands firmly for preserving the historic status quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. It takes note of the Israeli Prime Minister's stated commitment to upholding the status quo and demands tangible action.

The Bureau further condemns the renewed Israeli military attacks against the Jenin Refugee Camp in the occupied West Bank that killed innocent Palestinians. The Bureau condemns the revenge killing of innocent Israelis by a Palestinian in East Jerusalem. The Bureau calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its obligation under international humanitarian law, including to ensure the protection, security and welfare of the Palestinian people living under its occupation. It urges the international community to intervene so as to stop the circle of violence and ensure accountability in accordance with international law.

The Bureau firmly believes in supporting an immediate and unconditional end to Israel's illegal, half-century-old occupation and establishing a two-State solution, with the achievement of the independence and sovereignty of the Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gapal1448.doc.htm>

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Other Relevant Information

Antisemitism Policy Trust

Antisemitism in Pro-Palestinian / Anti-Israel Demonstrations in the UK

<https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/6648-Anitsemittism-Trust-Chants-Report-v4.pdf>

Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Renewed efforts to counter anti-Semitism across the region are essential

... "Hatred and intolerance cannot be fought with more hatred or intolerance, but only through active promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; all this backed by the power of democracy and the rule of law," underlined Chairman-in-Office Osmani.

"The OSCE has ... been at the international forefront in addressing anti-Semitism through a number of Ministerial Council Decisions. ... We can also all be proud of the cutting-edge tools and dedicated support programs developed and delivered by ODIHR ...

"While there has been much progress in the understanding of the importance of combating anti-Semitism over the last two decades, we continue to observe with great concern how anti-Semitic hatred, Holocaust denial and distortion and age-old disinformation about Jews continue to spread and multiply across the OSCE region," stated the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Matteo Mecacci. "To

make a real difference, we need a commitment to dedicate resources to strengthen existing programmes, as well as an innovative approach from governments and civil society alike to tackling the roots of anti-Semitism.”

“In some places, the lessons of the Holocaust have been so universalized that its basic message—that left unchecked, anti-Semitism can in only a few short years lead to genocide—is entirely absent. Finally, the history of those darkest twelve years in the twentieth century must not be separated from learning about the centuries of Jewish life and its contributions to Europe that preceded the Holocaust and the revival of Jewish life in the decades that have followed it,” stated Rabbi Andrew Baker, the Personal Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.osce.org/chairpersonship/537119>

Council of Europe

The Netherlands should strengthen the use of Frisian, Limburgish and Low Saxon, and support Romanes and Yiddish

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages has published its seventh report on the Netherlands, highlighting how the use of Frisian, Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romanes and Yiddish should be strengthened. ... The report stresses the importance of guaranteeing the teaching in/of regional and minority languages in the school curriculum. ... Financial support is given to schools teaching Yiddish. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/the-netherlands-should-strengthen-the-use-of-frisian-limburgish-and-low-saxon-and-support-romanes-and-yiddish>

Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: Seventh Evaluation Report on the Netherlands

<https://rm.coe.int/netherlandsecrml7-en/1680aa18ee>

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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>

Ping Pong: Commons consideration of Lords amendments

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-02-07/debates/6FDA116B-63D1-4FBB-81A2-9D88C67F5952/HigherEducation\(FreedomOfSpeech\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-02-07/debates/6FDA116B-63D1-4FBB-81A2-9D88C67F5952/HigherEducation(FreedomOfSpeech)Bill)

Notice of amendments

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-03/0219/highered_ccla_day_0207.pdf

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

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

Online Safety Bill

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

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

Equality and Human Rights Commission Statutory Review (closing date 1 March 2023)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-statutory-review>

Draft guidance: charities use of social media (closing date 14 March 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-guidance-charities-use-of-social-media>

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