



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### House of Commons Debate

#### **Macpherson Report: 20th Anniversary**

*col 102* **Alex Norris (Labour Co-op):** ... Twenty years ago yesterday, the Stephen Lawrence inquiry reported its findings. Last year saw the country mark a more tragic anniversary: it was 25 years since Stephen was killed in a brutal racist attack in Eltham, south London, on 22 April 1993. He was 18 years old. The chair of the inquiry, Sir William Macpherson, and his advisers later concluded: "Stephen Lawrence's murder was simply and solely and unequivocally motivated by racism." ...

**Clive Efford (Labour):** ... as time has gone by ... we have lost our focus on the lessons that Macpherson taught us. Some of our public services are not sufficiently aware of the issues surrounding racism and racial tension in some of our communities. ...

*col 103* **Alex Norris:** ... a real and clear audit against the recommendations for both the Metropolitan police and other organisations would be timely. ...

The phrase "institutional racism" is synonymous with the Macpherson report, which concluded that institutional racism existed in the Metropolitan Police Service, other police services and other institutions countrywide, citing factors such as the Lawrence family's treatment by the police, the disparity in stop-and-search figures, the under-reporting of racial incidents nationwide and the failure of the police to provide officers with racism awareness or race relations training. ...

**Diane Abbott (Labour):** Does my hon. Friend agree that sometimes people talk about the use of the phrase "institutional racism" as if people are saying every single person in the institution in question is a racist, whereas that phrase refers to the workings of institutions that turn out to the disadvantage of black people and others? ...

**Alex Norris:** I absolutely agree. ...

*col 104* Macpherson highlighted the importance of police forces representing the communities they serve ... and of recruitment and progression being prioritised. Today, the proportion of officers from BAME backgrounds is still half what it would be if it reflected the general population, so progress has been exceptionally slow. ...

*col 105* The Macpherson report criticised the disproportionality of stop-and-search ...

Again, I fear we have gone too quiet on that, not least because recent figures suggest that race disproportionality in stop-and-search is actually worse now than it was 20 years ago, although improved recording practices may well have had an impact on that. Still, the latest figures show that black people are nine and a half times more likely than white people to be stopped and searched. ...

*col 106* ... we are crying out for someone on the Government Front Bench to grab hold of the lessons learned from the Macpherson inquiry and to finish the job, audit progress, reconvene a steering group and drive this forward. ...

*col 107* **Tim Loughton (Conservative):** ... A report produced a few years ago by the all-party parliamentary group for children on the relationship between young people and the police made some recommendations which, to give them their due, the Government took up and changed the law. The shocking finding from that report was the lack of confidence in the police among young people, particularly those from BME communities. ...

**Alex Norris:** ... All young people have less confidence in the police than we do, on average, and that is a toxic situation. It means that reporting is not as strong as it could be, that people are not as willing as they should be to say when they are scared for their own safety, and that they are less likely to think of the police as a profession that is for them. ...

*col 108* **Douglas Ross (Conservative):** ... What would have happened had it not been for a very determined family? Baroness Lawrence and Neville Lawrence fought day in, day out to get justice for their son, but they should not have had to. They should have been grieving like any other parents would have been in those tragic circumstances, but they were not given the opportunity to grieve, because they had to fight for justice for their son. ...

I was privileged to serve on the Select Committee ... and to hear evidence from Baroness Lawrence. Right at the beginning of her evidence session, she said that it seems as though “nothing seems to have moved.”

We looked at the 70 recommendations from the Macpherson inquiry and judged whether they had been met, partially met or not met, and whether they had been met within any specific timescale. ... Baroness Lawrence was very critical and very clear in her view that they had not been met ...

I then looked back at the previous Home Affairs Committee report on this, “The Macpherson Report—Ten Years On”, which was published on 14 July 2009. It said that “67 of Macpherson’s 70 recommendations have been implemented fully or in part.”

How could one Committee think that, whereas at the very start of our inquiry, looking at the same report 20 years on, we are finding confusion and uncertainty on how to judge whether these recommendations have been enacted, followed and met, fully or in part? ...

*col 111* Whether training is for unconscious bias or to improve officers’ interactions or responses to racial incidents, it cannot simply be a tick-box exercise. We cannot simply say, “Go online, enter this portal, and at the end of it”—maybe five or 10 minutes later—“click the ‘submit’ button and suddenly you are racially trained,” or, “You are trained to deal with racial incidents,” or, “You are trained to deal with communities from BAME backgrounds.” I have a serious concern that those at the top of the police in all parts of the United Kingdom think that they are achieving what we want them to because they can say, “100% of our officers are trained in x,” or, “We have ensured that this is done at the policing training college,” ...

*col 113* I turn to other evidence that the Committee has received in our ongoing inquiry into the 20th anniversary of the Macpherson report. ... one response stood out for me and it was from someone called Mr Chris Hobbs, who wrote at the very top of his submission to the Home Affairs Committee:

“I have my doubts as to whether submissions from retired police officers such as myself, will be given due consideration or play any part in the HASC final report.”

That is a sad reflection. Mr Hobbs attached an article that he wrote for an online newspaper some years ago, but his view was, "I'm not even going to bother submitting this because the Home Affairs Committee won't be interested." He felt that we would not be interested in his views because he was not from a BAME background. The message has to get out very clearly that we want the Macpherson inquiry to improve policing for everyone, not simply those from BME groups. They are crucial in this, but unless we listen to everyone in the police force, more anger will build up among officers who do not come from BME backgrounds as well as those who do. ...

*col 115* **Marsha De Cordova (Labour):** ... But racism is not limited to Government Departments, or just to the Government. Although progress has been made, racism still exists in society. We saw that in the hostile environment policies that led to the Windrush scandal last year. When we introduce policies, it is important that they are fully tested and audited, with impact assessments carried out, because anything that disproportionately affects a particular group clearly is not right. ...

*col 117* **Edward Davey (Conservative):** ... the reason why we are not making progress in the police force is because we are not making progress in society, and I have to say that I feel that there is more racism today than there was a few years ago. I think we are going backwards, and that relates to how race is being portrayed in the media and ... to some of the issues that may have contributed to Brexit. Some of those things have unleashed feelings and voices that I do not think we heard a few years ago, and that is regressive. ...

*col 121* **Joanna Cherry (SNP):** ... Baroness Lawrence said that if she were writing the report today, the thing she would focus on most is education, and the second would be the importance of training the police to do their job properly. ... During the course of the evidence session ... the Chair of the Committee raised a point about education, saying that "the figures show that black graduates are significantly less likely to achieve firsts or 2:1s than white graduates, even when you take account of prior attainment and A-levels and so on, and also are more likely to drop out. That sounds like a pretty big problem for universities."

That is a problem universities need to address. ...

... Stuart C. McDonald made the point during the Home Affairs Committee evidence session that although the term "institutional racism" has been very helpful in making us as a society understand what went wrong in the Lawrence case, it should not be used to absolve individuals from their culpability of what went wrong. That includes individuals within the police force, as well as those who originally perpetrated the crime.

It is worth pausing to note that this was a racist crime. There seems to have been language surrounding it that fits with the language of the far right. Let there be no doubt: the far right is on the rise again in the United Kingdom, and we must very much guard against that. ...

I want to say a little about the response in Scotland to the issues that came out of the Macpherson inquiry. Shortly after the report was published, the then Scottish Executive were quick to create an action plan to take forward the relevant Macpherson recommendations in Scotland. ... We must not ever be complacent about that, or assume that any Government or society has a monopoly on doing the right thing. Institutional racism can be found across our society, as can individual instances of racism. ...

*col 122* I am pleased to say that racially motivated crime in Scotland has, according to the statistics, decreased by 29% since 2011-12. ...

*col 123* **Diane Abbott (Labour):** ... There is no question but that the Macpherson inquiry changed the way that the state spoke about race. ...

*col 124* When the inquiry was set up, it was to be led by Judge Macpherson, and some of us asked, "Who is this establishment figure? What kind of report are we going to get?" In fact, it was an amazing report that transfigured the debate. ...

Chief Constable Jon Boutcher ... said: "Race is at the core of so much, we should always have race as a priority regarding representation and community confidence. Race has not

continued to be the priority that it should have over the last 25 years.” ...

There has been progress, and the narrative is different now. Phrases such as “institutional racism” can be used, and people understand what they mean. ... However, there has not been enough progress. ...

**col 125 The Minister for Policing and the Fire Service (Nick Hurd):** ... The debate connects us on a human level with the night of 22 April 1993 and a young black boy, 18 years old, standing at a bus stop in south-east London dreaming of being an architect murdered, apparently for the colour of his skin, with no provocation at all. It connects us with the story of an extraordinary family, Baroness and Dr Lawrence, and their journey from that point over so many years to pursue the truth, to pursue accountability and to pursue justice, not just for Stephen but for all victims of racism, and the extraordinary journey from 1993 to January 2012 when Gary Dobson and David Norris were finally tried and found guilty of the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence. ...

**col 126** We know from our experience in this place that reports come and go and few touch the sides or stand the test of time, but the Macpherson report does. ...

... there are things to feel positive about. Looking through the recommendations this morning, I could see that 68 of the 70 had been implemented either in part or in full, but I look forward to the process of scrutiny by the Home Affairs Committee. The Home Office will certainly listen carefully to whatever recommendations it might make on the ongoing transparency surrounding the implementation of the recommendations. ...

**col 127** I also see an increased sense of responsibility and professionalism in the police in terms of identifying hate crime and racially aggravated crime. ... So there is much to be positive about, but we must be very candid in recognising that there is so much more that needs to be done, not least to build confidence ... and trust in our criminal justice system. I actually genuinely believe that it is colour blind, but there are too many people in this country who do not. ...

I take pride that, under this Prime Minister, we are, I think, the first Government in the world to conduct a race disparity audit. This will provide an invaluable tool for this process in the form of transparency, data and evidence that is open to scrutiny, to comparison and to measurement of progress. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-02-25/debates/46D35D08-3CEF-4C4D-BC1B-2DE28F5D0E87/MacphersonReport20ThAnniversary>

*The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277111/4262.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf)

*The APPG on Children report referred to above can be read at*

[https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Policy\\_docs/appgc\\_children\\_and\\_police\\_report\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Policy_docs/appgc_children_and_police_report_-_final.pdf)

## Westminster Hall Debate

### Relationships and Sex Education

**col 4WH Helen Jones (Labour):** ... Crucially ... the guidelines say that schools must take into account the religious beliefs of their pupils when drawing up their programmes, and that faith schools may use their faith to inform their teaching. In fact, the guidance suggests that a dialogue should take place on issues regarded as contentious.

When I taught years ago, that is exactly what we did; it is not new in any way. I spent my teaching career in Catholic schools. We would teach—particularly our older children—what the Church taught and what others believed, and we would have a debate about it. There are good reasons for that. First, schools do not want to produce people who cannot

put forward a rational argument, and faith schools certainly do not want to produce children who cannot defend their faith. ...

**Ivan Lewis (Independent):** ... Because of Ofsted's powers and the way it deploys them, it is essential that we have total clarity about parental opt-outs and religious freedom. It is important in a debate such as this to understand that central to our unwritten constitution is the importance of religious freedom, as is the relationship between the state and parents. Because of those powers and their misuse in recent times by Ofsted, it is vital that the Government provide clarity. Does my hon. Friend agree?

**Helen Jones:** I do. As I said, all of this is about trying to reach a sensible and reasonable compromise between competing issues. ...

*col 5WH* ... it is true that parents have a right to request an opt-out from sex education for their child, which the guidelines say should be automatically granted in primary schools and should be granted except in exceptional circumstances in secondary schools. I was quite concerned about that, but I have actually been convinced by something sent to me by the Catholic Education Service, which supports the opt-out on the ground that it gives heads the opportunity to discuss with parents why the lessons are important and why it is much better for children to be there, rather than getting a garbled version from their friends in the playground. ...

*col 7WH* **John Howell (Conservative):** ... I am not one of those people who think that we should simply abolish all faith schools. Faith schools play a crucial role in our society and, at a time when we have gone a huge way to seeing what parents want—how they want their children to be taught—and allowing them to bring forward free schools, it is crucial that we acknowledge their rights to continue to have that with faith schools. ...

*col 8WH* **Maria Miller (Conservative):** My hon. Friend talks compellingly about the rights of parents and of faith schools. Does he not also think that children have the right to know what a good, healthy relationship looks like in this day and age and how to keep safe? Do children not have that right as well?

**John Howell:** ... Faith schools provide a lot of such education, or could provide a lot of it, if they were worked with and engaged with in a much more successful way. ...

*col 9WH* We are not asking for sacred religious texts to be rewritten or torn up. The role of Ofsted, which was mentioned earlier, is absolutely crucial in that respect. I urge the Government to instruct Ofsted to take a sensitive approach in recognising the nature of faith schools, and to work with the schools to deliver a better view of the way in which they deliver education. That means that schools need to be able to teach—they have a duty to teach—what is allowable under the law without having to approve it. That is the situation at the moment.

In making these remarks I have been advised by the Jewish Community Council and the Torah Education Committee, which run a number of Orthodox Jewish schools. It should be taken as a positive sign that they have reached out, because they are concerned about the effects of the regulations and would like to work with the Government to take them forward. Above all, it is important to remember that we are not asking them to tear up the Torah in order to take this forward. We are asking them to work with the Government to come to a proper solution. ...

*col 10WH* **Shabana Mahmood (Labour):** ... What does the Children and Social Work Act 2017 say in respect of mandatory relationships education for primary school pupils? Section 34 gives the enabling power to the Secretary of State to lay down the regulations and guidance, which I believe is the subject of the statement in the House today. It says that religious background and age appropriateness must be taken into account. That is the legislative protection for faith communities, so that children who are being educated in any part of the education system outside the faith school system are protected and have their religious background taken into account. ...

As a member of a faith community myself, I can tell the House that we are not all the same.

There are many differences of opinion between religious groups—between different groups of Muslims—on what is appropriate.

I welcome those from faith communities who are watching this debate from the Public Gallery. I hope they will not mind me noting that many are from the Orthodox Jewish community. There is an interpretation of religious texts within the Jewish community that leads people to what is described as an orthodox set of values and beliefs. There is also a self-described modern, progressive and reform end of the Jewish community, as there is in the Muslim and Christian communities—in all faith communities, in fact.

What happens when religious background is taken into account in a primary school setting in Birmingham and there are two groups of Muslim parents with full religious conviction, one of which says, “Actually, we think this is unacceptable,” and the other says, “No, this is perfectly acceptable.”? Who is the arbitrator when their rights collide? There is nothing in the guidance and no consideration of the fact that it is perfectly possible for religious groups to come to different views about what is appropriate. ...

*col 11WH* It has been a real problem for parents to get a fair hearing about genuinely held religious conviction in an atmosphere that sometimes does not feel tolerant of religious beliefs. Most of those parents absolutely sign up to the equalities agenda. Particularly in the Muslim community in Birmingham, Ladywood, we recognise that our status as a minority community demands that we stand up for the rights of other minority communities. It has to be possible to reconcile the differing perspectives on life of different minority communities. I consider it a failure of politics that we find ourselves in entrenched, polarised and divisive debates, where the rights of people are set against one another. ... The Equality Act sets out several protected characteristics. Nobody disagrees with the protection of those characteristics, but it is a fact of our modern politics—the culture war that we are all living through—that those protected characteristics conflict with one another in some cases.

*col 12WH* Who decides how we navigate that contested territory and draw a line that does justice by competing groups? It must be Parliament; it cannot simply be left to teachers or state officials acting in other capacities, such as in prisons or schools. ...

Without any arbitration mechanism or protection for those of us at the unfashionable end of the faith spectrum, in orthodox religious communities—I am an orthodox Muslim—whenever there is a conflict about rights, everybody feels it is okay to ride roughshod over orthodox communities and push them to one side. ...

*col 13WH* **Paul Scully (Conservative):** ... does my hon. Friend [Fiona Bruce] agree that it is important to take into consideration the views of the orthodox Jewish faith, which we have heard about, and of the Muslim faith ...?

*col 14WH* **Faisal Rashid (Labour):** ... I must also stress the need to safeguard the rights of both religious and parental beliefs during the implementation of these regulations. Does [Fiona Bruce] agree that, for that to happen, it is critical that the Government introduce these reforms in collaboration with parents and religious groups, by listening and responding to their concerns in more detail? ...

**Fiona Bruce (Conservative):** ... I agree that consultation and deliberation are good ... I do not believe it is right that parents should not be able to withdraw their children from sex education in senior schools ...

*col 15WH* We have the requirement of the ECHR to respect “the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.”

We also have primary legislation in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which states: “The regulations must provide that...when relationships education or relationships and sex education is given ... the education is appropriate having regard to the age and the religious background of the pupils.” ...

I am not convinced about the Government’s legal and policy case for diluting a parent’s

absolute right of withdrawal for an 11-year-old in year 6, compared with a conditional right for an 11-year-old in year 7. ...

**col 17WH Chris Green (Conservative):** ... The former Minister and former Member of Parliament for Crewe and Nantwich, Ed Timpson, said: “We have committed to retain a right to withdraw from sex education in RSE, because parents should have the right, if they wish, to teach sex education themselves in a way that is consistent with their values.”— [[Official Report, 7 March 2017; Vol. 622, c. 705.](#)]

**col 18WH** I believe that that is wholly right. It is a very good principle and approach. Religious schools have the right to teach RSE in accordance with their values and their guidance but children of the same religious or ethical perspective in a local authority school are not respected in the same way. It is incredibly important that that respect is universal and is not reserved for selective schools. It ought to be there for all schools. ...

**col 19WH Naz Shah (Labour):** ... Although there was clearly some debate about cultural and religious elements when the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 was passed, that Act did not apply to religious institutions: it merely aimed to provide everyone in our democracy with equal rights. The Act provided the right of marriage to those who were previously denied it; those with religious beliefs were unaffected by that change and were allowed to maintain their religious rights. We would not claim, nor should we claim, that by protecting the right to religious belief in that Act we were denying the rights of anyone else. This measure, however, is mandatory for everyone, without the right of exemption on the basis of belief. Many of my constituents, especially parents, have expressed concerns. They are not seeking a false right to be bigoted or to promote or incite bigotry, but they are concerned that the legislation engages with deeply personal matters that go beyond our purview as state legislators. ...

**col 22WH Ivan Lewis:** Will [Caroline Lucas] join me in welcoming the Chief Rabbi’s clarity in saying that all Jewish schools, including orthodox schools, must make it clear that there is zero tolerance of any bullying or discrimination against LGBT+ students? That moral clarity from religious leaders, especially orthodox religious leaders, is incredibly important in sending the right messages to schools. ...

**Caroline Lucas (Green):** I very much welcome the statement from the Chief Rabbi about stamping out bullying on any ground, including LGBT. That is an incredibly strong call, and it is very important. ...

**col 23WH Debbie Abrahams (Labour):** ... The reality is that hate crime, including against Jews, Muslims, disabled people, gay people and other minorities, is on the rise. There is evidence from Stonewall that nearly half of LGBT pupils are bullied at school for being LGBT. That has a dreadful effect on their mental health, which includes one in eight attempting to take their own life. We have seen some horrendous videos of Muslim schoolgirls having their hijabs pulled off by baying mobs of their peers. I have been told about adults shouting abuse at Jewish children as they make their way to school. ... RSE should be taught at school in partnership with children’s parents or guardians. RSE should be high-quality, age-appropriate and taught by well-trained staff following consultation and agreement between parents and schools. ...

**col 27WH Imran Hussain (Labour):** ... Parents are also concerned about the faith-appropriateness of the content that will be taught. Importantly, parents of all faith backgrounds are highlighting those concerns. It is not an issue for a single faith community, but one for the religious community as a collective. ... [Shabana Mamood] made some pertinent points about certain sections of faith communities feeling polarised and perhaps isolated in some contexts. Let us be clear: faith is, and should be, a protected characteristic that must be respected and considered whenever policy changes are made in any walk of life, including education. ...

**col 33WH Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... There is certainly an interesting comparison to be made with the right of parents to withdraw children from religious education and worship

at school. Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 states:  
“If the parent of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school requests that he may be wholly or partly excused—

(a) from receiving religious education given in the school in accordance with the school’s basic curriculum,

(b) from attendance at religious worship in the school, or

(c) both from receiving such education and from such attendance,

the pupil shall be so excused until the request is withdrawn.”

The right of withdrawal from religious education and worship has remained uncontested since 1998. I imagine that if the Government were proposing to remove that right from parents, colleagues of different parties—both those with or without a religious background—would be rightly outraged, yet the Government have deemed it appropriate to undercut the authority and the responsibility of parents on relationships and sex education. RSE includes some of the most contentious topics taught in school, and it is a perfect example of where parents will want to exercise their rights, as outlined in article 2 of the first protocol of the European convention on human rights, which the hon. Member for Bradford East (Imran Hussain) spoke about. It states: “In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.”

*col 34WH* That is what I believe the Government should be doing. These are issues of a personal nature—matters of morality, and it is best left for parents to decide how to raise their children. It is not for the state to decide the morality and standards of each family in the United Kingdom. It is for those families and parents to decide, and it should not be otherwise. ...

I understand that it is right that we do not press our faith or religion on others. That is why parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education—I understand, respect and accept that. I implore colleagues—particularly the Minister, whose responsibility it is to respond to our remarks—to understand that it is not right for headteachers or the state to press their values and morality on parents by not allowing them to withdraw their children from relationships and sex education. ...

*col 37WH Hannah Bardell (SNP):* ... We talk about religious tolerance and freedom, but every religion has a spectrum. I am always minded to mention Vicky Beeching, who is a champion of inclusion and diversity in the Christian faith. ... Vicky’s book, “Undivided” ... talked about the reading and interpretation of the Bible and religious texts, and how certain communities can, for their own ends, interpret texts in a certain way. As we move on, as society progresses and evolves, people read those texts in different ways. I am not about to preach to any religion about how to look at its texts, but it is interesting that someone such as Vicky from the Christian community can talk from a scholarly and theological perspective about the Christian faith and how some in that faith have interpreted what the Bible says about LGBT people. It is vital to ensure that in our schools and societies, we recognise how society has moved on. ...

*col 38WH Mike Kane (Labour):* ... The common good is the maximum utility for the most number of people, but always with a preferential option for those who cannot go along with the decisions. ... the same concept exists in Judaism—*tikkun olam*—and in Islamic social thought, but we need to think about what that is. ...

*col 43WH The Minister for Schools (Nick Gibb):* ... All schools, whether religious or not, will be required to take the religious beliefs of their pupils into account when they decide to deliver certain content, to ensure that topics are appropriately handled. However, it is of course vital that, by the time they become adults and participate in British society, pupils understand, respect and value all the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. The Department trusts schools to make the right decisions about what and when they

teach their pupils about topics, including equalities. ...

**Ivan Lewis:** ... who in the Government is responsible for assessing the cumulative impact on religious freedom of relationships and sex education, the regulation of private schools, and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance on schools' integration duties? Religious freedom is cast aside all too often in our society. That question is particularly important in circumstances where Ofsted takes a different view from a school. The guidance states that schools should be able to teach these things in a way that is consistent with their religious ethos, but who does a school consult when making decisions about what it is able to do in a way that is consistent with its religious ethos, without Ofsted intervening and making—certainly in some cases—inappropriate decisions?

**Nick Gibb:** ... We take these issues extremely seriously. We continually meet religious groups from right across the spectrum to discuss these very sensitive issues. He raised the issue of Ofsted. In common with other curriculum areas, Ofsted will not make a discrete judgment on the delivery of relationships education or RSE, but the proposed new Ofsted framework continues to set out the expectation that inspectors will consider the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils as well as a broad and balanced curriculum when informing the judgment of a school. We are of course in discussion with Ofsted the whole time to ensure that it enforces these rules in a sensitive way that reflects the religious background of the schools it inspects. ...

*col 45WH* As with other aspects of the regulations and guidance, we have tested this position with expert organisations, including teaching unions, a wide range of faith groups and subject associations, including the Association of Muslim Schools, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the United Synagogue, Parentkind, the National Police Chief's Council, the NSPCC, Barnardo's, Mumsnet, Mencap, the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse, the Council for Disabled Children and many others. ...

Ultimately, decisions have to be taken about what the policy is for a school, but the school has to consult. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-02-25/debates/A071BEFC-6658-4276-B300-30B5ABC2E129/RelationshipsAndSexEducation>

## House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

### Relationships and Sex Education

**The Secretary of State for Education (Damian Hinds):** ... It is 19 years since the sex and relationships education guidance was last updated. The world that our children and young people face today is very different, and the way in which they build relationships, interact with their peers and manage their own mental and physical wellbeing has changed significantly. Along with all the positives of modern technology and new media come great risks, as children and young people are exposed to information, content and people that could and do cause harm. For many young people today, there is little distinction between their online and offline lives. That is why I believe that, now more than ever, it is necessary for us to give young people the knowledge that they need in every context to lead safe, happy and healthy lives.

During the passage of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, with strong cross-party support, the Government brought about the introduction of compulsory relationships education for all pupils in primary schools, and compulsory relationships and sex education for all pupils in secondary schools. In July I announced that, in addition, I would make health education compulsory for all pupils in state-funded schools. ... Today we have laid the regulations that, following debate, will finalise the process, and published the

accompanying statutory guidance for schools.

It is clear—this was also reflected in the consultation responses—that there are understandable and legitimate areas of contention. In reviewing responses and determining the final content of regulations and guidance, we have retained a focus on the core principles for the new subjects that Parliament endorsed through the Children and Social Work Act. Our guiding principles have been that these compulsory subjects should help to keep children safe, help to prepare them for the world in which they are growing up—including the laws relating to relationships, sex and health—and help to foster respect for others and for difference. Content must be appropriate in terms of age and developmentally, and must be taught in a sensitive and inclusive way with respect for the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils.

Parents and carers are the prime teachers for children on many of these matters, and schools complement and reinforce that role by building on what pupils learn at home. We have retained the long-standing ability for parents to request that their child be withdrawn from the sex education element of RSE. The school should respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, except in exceptional circumstances, up to and until three terms before the child reaches the age of 16. At that point, if the child wishes to take part in sex education lessons, the head teacher should ensure that they receive it in one of those terms. In response to the consultation, we have further clarified in the guidance how and when a pupil's special educational needs may be taken into consideration, and the fact that headteachers should document their decision-making process on the right to withdraw.

We believe that after reviewing the consultation responses, we have struck a balance between prescribing clearly the important core knowledge that all pupils should be taught, and allowing flexibility for schools to design a curriculum that is relevant to their pupils. We have made a small number of changes that we felt were important and would further strengthen the intent of the guidance. For example, we have made changes to the content on puberty to reflect the need for menstruation and menstrual wellbeing to be taught in all primary and secondary schools.

Given the lack of distinction that young people make between online and offline contexts, we have expanded teaching about internet safety and harms to include content on the potential risks of excessive screen time, and on how to be a discerning, discriminating consumer of information and other content online. We have included teaching about rape, female genital mutilation and forced marriage in secondary RSE, and we have amended the content on organ and blood donation to include the science relating to stem cell donation. We are committed to ensuring that every school will have the support that it needs to deliver those subjects and maintain a high and consistent quality by September 2020. We will be investing in tools that will improve schools' practice, such as a supplementary guide to support the delivery of the guidance, targeted support for materials, and training. For the financial year about to begin we have allocated up to £6 million to invest in the development of those tools.

We will also continue to encourage as many schools as possible to start teaching these subjects from September 2019 ...

*col 38* **Angela Rayner (Labour):** ... There are a number of questions that I hope that Secretary of State can address. He said there would be a £6 million budget to support schools. With over 23,000 schools in England, this amounts to about £250 per school ...

On the guidance itself, giving children a voice in this part of their education is hugely important, and I welcome the Secretary of State's recognition of that vital point. However, can he explain why, since the curriculum will always be age-appropriate, he will not allow children to opt in at a younger age? He referred to "exceptional circumstances" in which the opt-out will not be allowed; can he tell the House what such circumstances might be? The Secretary of State will know the horrifying figures on bullying and mental health

problems that affect young LGBT people. Addressing these issues in the curriculum would be a milestone in ensuring that they and others can grow up understanding more and living in a safer environment. At his last statement, I told the Secretary of State that these issues must not be an annexe to the rest of the curriculum, so I am glad that the draft guidance says they must be fully incorporated into the curriculum and not taught separately. However, paragraph 37 of the guidance says this only has to be taught “at the point at which schools consider it appropriate.”

I know the Secretary of State’s Department has said it expects all pupils to be taught LGBT content, but how will he address the risk that some might be excluded?

Paragraph 21 of the guidance allows schools to “teach about faith perspectives”, and schools with a “religious character” to teach a “distinctive faith perspective on relationships”, and it says that “balanced debate may take place about issues that are seen as contentious.”

The Secretary of State will know there are concerns, particularly in the Jewish and Muslim communities, about both his Department and Ofsted, and I am sure we both want our education system to reflect the diversity of our country and provide the opportunity to learn more about it. But can he also be absolutely clear that his guidance does not permit teaching that could be hostile or damaging to LGBT young people in particular? ...

*col 39* **Damian Hinds:** ... The hon. Lady asked about LGBT content. Schools should address that, as they do other subjects, in an age-appropriate way. ... We expect this education to happen, at least in secondary schools, so that by the time someone finishes school they have covered that content, but it could happen in primary school as well. Of course, it should not be hostile to any group, and we need schools to be sensitive to the different kinds of families that children might come into contact with. That is partly about LGBT people, but it is also about other types of family. For example, children might be growing up with foster parents, grandparents or single parents, and schools need to be sensitive to whatever the set-up might be. ...

*col 40* There is a parental right to request the withdrawal of their child from sex education, but we have carefully balanced that with the right of the child as they get older and become competent to make their own decisions. I think that we have struck the right balance there. The hon. Lady asked about exceptional circumstances. It is difficult to codify exactly what those exceptional circumstances could be—by definition, because they are exceptional—but the guidance sets out how headteachers should go about discussing these matters with parents. That is good practice, and they should honour that right to request withdrawal until three terms before the child reaches the age of 16. More broadly, we encourage schools to work with parents, and there is an obligation to consult parents on the content of these subjects and to publish that consultation on the internet. The hon. Lady asked specifically about faith groups, and it is correct to say that in the guidance we set out that the core content must be covered, but beyond that faith-based schools can reflect the teachings and traditions of their faith to help to build on that. ...

*col 41* **Carol Monaghan (SNP):** ... It is important that parents remain the primary educators of their children, and that there is a partnership between schools and parents. Although I respect the right of parents to withdraw their children from these lessons, I make an appeal to those parents: children talk, so would it not be better that children and young people are taught by trained professionals, in a safe environment, where questions can be answered accurately and with sensitivity, rather than their getting half stories in uncensored chat in the playground? ...

*col 42* **Lucy Powell (Labour Co-op):** ... there will be those who say that they want exceptions or want to exclude their children, or that their school is somehow different. I have visited many schools, as I am sure he has, where the majority of children are Muslim or of other faiths. They deliver teaching on LGBT bullying, LGBT awareness and all those

issues extremely well, resulting in very well rounded children ...

**col 44 Edward Leigh (Conservative):** As far as I am concerned, the best form of sex education is—to coin a phrase—to respect and love your neighbour as yourself whatever their sexuality, just as you would respect and love them regardless of their race, ethnicity or anything else. How boring life would be if we were all the same. This very diversity sums up why all previous Conservative Governments have recognised that religious people, and indeed non-religious people, have their own justifiable formal belief about the best way to teach sex education. All previous Conservative Governments, therefore, have given an untrammelled right to parents to remove their children from sex education, but here, in certain circumstances, that right has been transferred to the headteacher—a fundamental shift of power to the state. ...

**Damian Hinds:** ... I do not think I can do any better than read word for word from the guidance: “Once those discussions”—that is to say, those on the request to withdraw—“have taken place, except in exceptional circumstances, the school should respect the parents’ request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the school should make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.”

But the right continues to exist up until the three terms before the child reaches 16. ...

**Julian Lewis (Conservative):** ... I remember Edward Timpson categorically saying that parents would have the right to withdraw their children if they wanted to. The Secretary of State has made a very strong case for the three terms before the age of 16 exception, but he keeps adding the words, “unless there are exceptional circumstances”. Why have those words been added? In what circumstances would a headteacher overrule a parent? Is not the likely effect of this going to be that in some cases, instead of children getting necessary sex education in schools, more parents are going to keep their children out of school?

**col 45 Damian Hinds:** We do not want parents to keep their children out of school. I hope I can reassure my right hon. Friend that the intention is to say that the long-standing right to withdraw children from sex education does not apply to relationships education or the subject of human reproduction in the science curriculum, but that there is that right to request when it comes to sex education. The request is put to the headteacher, and the guidance that we issue to headteachers clearly says that the headteacher should comply with that request up to three terms before the child reaches the age of 16. Why three terms before the age of 16? Because 16 is the age of consent, so the child should be able—if they wish—to have some sex education for at least a term before they reach that age. ...

**col 46 Matthew Offord (Conservative):** The issue of relationships and sex education is causing a huge amount of concern in my constituency. I took a delegation to meet Lord Agnew, who said that his Department set the direction but that the interpretation was being implemented by Ofsted. Now, there are some Members here who feel that the state knows better than parents themselves, but the last time I looked the Conservative party believed in freedom of choice and the freedom for people to decide their own future. Will the Secretary of State agree to meet a delegation of my constituents so that he can hear their concerns at first hand?

**Damian Hinds:** ... I and colleagues have met representatives from a range of different viewpoints, including a range of different religious groups. There is a balance to be struck, and I think we have struck it. We get criticism from both sides—both from groups who think that this is too liberal and from groups who think that it is too restrictive—and the job of the Government is to try to get a good balance that respects that. Faith is also one of the protected characteristics, and it is right that we acknowledge that and absolutely have due respect for it. We need to make sure that as children are growing up and, sometimes, coming to terms with

themselves and the world around them, we support them and make sure that they are equipped as they enter the adult world. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-02-25/debates/FF1A7445-8BE4-4FD3-AAA3-BCD6C2699B4A/RelationshipsAndSexEducation>

## House of Lords Ministerial Statement and Q&A

*The statement made in the House of Commons by Damian Hinds, and copied above, was read in the House of Lords.*

**col 71 Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Labour):** ... I understand the Government's position on the parental opt-out for relationships and sex education, but I have to ask why they would not give a child the right to be included in those lessons at any age instead of selecting what appears to be an arbitrary age at which point the child's voice will be heard. The Statement says that the parental opt-out could be overruled in "exceptional circumstances". Could the Minister give examples of what he believes would amount to such exceptional circumstances? ...

**col 73 Lord Agnew of Oulton:** ... On "exceptional circumstances", I think the term is what it is. It is extremely difficult to predict what these circumstances might be. We will see from our soft rollout starting in September if circumstances arise which are sensitive and need addressing. However, our view is that we want schools to make the judgments based on what is age appropriate and relevant to their own communities. Clearly, a metropolitan school might have a different kind of child who is more advanced in their understanding of the world than a child in a rural area. We have to be flexible on that. ...

**col 75 The Lord Bishop of Oxford:** ... The Church of England's chief education officer has in particular welcomed the stronger impetus on teaching faith perspectives relevant to people of all faiths and none, irrespective of the kind of school that they attend, which is key to combating religious prejudice. ...

**Lord Cormack (Conservative):** My Lords, many parents will have strong religious beliefs, be they Christian, Jewish, Muslim or others. Following up on what the right reverend Prelate said, can my noble friend assure me that at all stages the leaders of all the major faiths, both locally and nationally, will be consulted and referred to so that they can have an input? There is a passing reference in the Statement to respecting, "the backgrounds and beliefs of pupils", but we need something rather more than that.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** I reassure my noble friend that faith is a protected characteristic and we have been clear that schools have flexibility over how they deliver these subject so that they can develop an approach that meets the needs of their local community and/or religious beliefs. All schools will be required to take into account the age and religious backgrounds of their pupils when teaching these subjects. ...

**col 77 Lord McCrew of Magherafelt and Cookstown (DUP):** My Lords, will the Minister confirm that the Government will firmly adhere to the promise made in the Statement, that they have retained the long-standing ability for parents to request that their children be withdrawn from the sex education element of RSE? When it comes to exceptional circumstances, who decides what these are?

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** To reiterate, the right to withdraw is in the parent's gift until the three terms before the child is 16. It is extremely difficult to predict what an exceptional circumstance would be, but paragraph 41 shows how clearly it is entrenched in this guidance:

"Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from some or all of

sex education delivered as part of statutory RSE. Before granting any such request it would be good practice for the head teacher to discuss the request with the parent and, as appropriate, with the child to ensure that their wishes are understood and to clarify the nature and purpose of the curriculum”.

Schools will want to document this process to ensure that a record is kept. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-02-25/debates/B0A03D32-6E6D-40F7-9543-F1ACCF7EA86/RelationshipsEducationRelationshipsAndSexEducationAndHealthEducation>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Antisemitism: Crime

**Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat)** [223246] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many antisemitic crimes have been reported to the police in the last 12 months.

**Nick Hurd:** The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of Hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. Data on religious hate crimes are published in Table B1 in the Hate crime Data Tables and can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/748083/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018-tables.ods](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748083/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018-tables.ods)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-19/223246/>

### Antisemitism

**Virendra Sharma (Labour)** [223838] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department taking to (a) monitor and (b) tackle levels of antisemitism in the UK.

**Heather Wheeler:** We work closely with the Community Security Trust and other representative community partners through the Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Antisemitism. The Working Group is held up as an example of best practice internationally for cooperation between government and minority communities. Through the Working Group we have funded projects to highlight and counter antisemitism directed at women, and to combat the dissemination of antisemitic tropes in society.

We have also worked with the police to improve the recording of hate crime. This includes a requirement to record the targeted faith or belief in incidents of religiously motivated hate crime. The first set of statistics reflecting this new requirement with disaggregated figures for religiously motivated hate crime were published in October 2018. These statistics can be found at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748598/hate-crime-1718-hosb2018.pdf).

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-20/223838/>

## Home Office

### Hizballah to be banned alongside other terrorist organisations

A draft order, laid in Parliament today, will proscribe Hizballah in its entirety alongside Ansaroul Islam and JNIM who operate in the Sahel region in Africa.

Subject to Parliament's approval, from Friday when the order comes into effect, being a

member, or inviting support for Hizballah, Ansaroul Islam and JNIM will be a criminal offence, carrying a sentence of up to 10 years' imprisonment.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said: My priority as Home Secretary is to protect the British people. As part of this, we identify and ban any terrorist organisation which threatens our safety and security, whatever their motivations or ideology which is why I am taking action against several organisations today.

Hizballah is continuing in its attempts to destabilise the fragile situation in the Middle East – and we are no longer able to distinguish between their already banned military wing and the political party. Because of this, I have taken the decision to proscribe the group in its entirety.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said: We are staunch supporters of a stable and prosperous Lebanon. We cannot however be complacent when it comes to terrorism – it is clear the distinction between Hizballah's military and political wings does not exist, and by proscribing Hizballah in all its forms, the government is sending a clear signal that its destabilising activities in the region are totally unacceptable and detrimental to the UK's national security.

This does not change our ongoing commitment to Lebanon, with whom we have a broad and strong relationship.

All three groups have been assessed as being currently concerned in terrorism.

Hizballah's External Security Organisation and its military wing including the Jihad Council were already proscribed in 2001 and 2008 respectively.

The government has taken the decision to proscribe Hizballah in its entirety on the basis that it is no longer tenable to distinguish between the military and political wings of Hizballah.

Hizballah was established during the Lebanese civil war and is committed to armed resistance to the state of Israel. It continues to amass weapons in direct contravention of UN Security Council Resolutions, putting the security of the region at risk. Its involvement in the Syrian war since 2012 continues to prolong the conflict and the regime's brutal and violent repression of the Syrian people. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hizballah-to-be-banned-alongside-other-terrorist-organisations>

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## Israel

**See also “Hizballah to be banned alongside other terrorist organisations” under “Home Office” in the Home Affairs section above.**

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Trade Agreements

**John Hayes (Conservative)** [222809] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps his Department has taken to ensure the UK is able to make trade agreements after the UK leaves the EU.

**George Hollingbery:** Delivering the deal negotiated with the EU remains the Government's top priority. The political declaration recognises the development of an independent UK trade policy beyond the economic partnership with the EU. Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, the UK will be free to negotiate, sign and ratify new trade agreements during the time-limited implementation period, and to bring them into force from January 2021.

We have consulted on our first four free trade agreements (FTAs), with the United States, Australia, New Zealand and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). We plan to publish the Government's response to these consultations before entering into any formal negotiations.

In addition, we are building stronger relationships with large economies – such as China, India, and Brazil – through a series of Joint Trade Reviews (JTRs).

While we are looking to forge new agreements, the Government is also seeking continuity for our existing EU trade agreements as we leave the European Union.

We have made good progress, signing trade continuity agreements with Switzerland, Chile, the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) states, the Faroe Islands, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-18/222809/>

#### **UNRWA: Finance**

**Stephen Crabb (conservative)** [223209] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with her US counterparts on their decision to withdraw funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

**Alistair Burt:** I discussed the US withdrawal of funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Near East (UNRWA) with the US President's Middle East Envoy, Jason Greenblatt, on 28 September 2018. The UK has been clear that we are concerned about the impact of US cuts to UNRWA on regional stability and services to Palestinian refugees. UK officials continue to engage with the US on this matter, and we will continue to work with UNRWA and other donors to help place the Agency on a more secure financial footing.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-02-19/223209/>

## **House of Lords Written Answers**

#### **Israel: Elbit Systems**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13675] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on human rights of Elbit Systems UK's sale of drones subsequently used in attacks in Palestine.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Export licence applications to all countries, including Israel, are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Our key test for licensing to Israel is Criterion 2 – whether there is a clear risk that exports might be used for internal repression or in the commission of a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law. We continue to monitor the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories closely, and if extant licences are found to be no longer consistent with the Criteria, those licences will be revoked.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-12/HL13675/>

#### **Overseas Trade: Israel**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13676] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to update their advice to those wishing to do business in Israel following research by Rabbis for Human Rights, published on 29 January, which found that "Israel's rule over the West Bank is a unique and severely discriminatory regime".

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We routinely update our guidance to British

businesses on the Overseas Business Risk website. We advise British businesses to bear in mind the British Government's view on the illegality of settlements under international law when considering their investments and activities in the region.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-12/HL13676/>

*The report referred to above is only available in Hebrew, and can be read at*

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HN\\_JygdubsKTYbzbD5DvNzH5DGN1Z0IU7vLazECm5co/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HN_JygdubsKTYbzbD5DvNzH5DGN1Z0IU7vLazECm5co/edit)

*An English press release about the report can be read at*

<https://rhr.org.il/eng/2019/01/new-research-ranks-israels-rule-over-west-bank-3rd-most-discriminatory-regime-globally/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13677] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made, or intend to make, to the government of Israel about the conditions for Palestinian prisoners following the death of Fares Mohammad Baroud.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We regularly raise the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-12/HL13677/>

### **Gaza: Israel**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13678] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 5 February (HL13138), whether they will now raise with the government of Israel the matter of the spraying of herbicides in Gaza.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We will raise this matter with the Israeli authorities in due course.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-12/HL13678/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-01-24/HL13138/>

### **Palestinians: Elections**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL13711] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Palestinian Authority about elections for the assembly.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While they did not discuss elections, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, discussed the resignation of the Palestinian Administration with the Palestinian Foreign Minister on 4 February. Along with EU partners, we have encouraged the Palestinian leadership to continue their work towards genuine and democratic elections for Palestinians.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2019-02-13/HL13711/>

## **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

**Trade and Partnership Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the State of Israel**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781440/CS\\_Israel\\_1.2019\\_Trade.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781440/CS_Israel_1.2019_Trade.pdf)

**Explanatory Memorandum on the Trade and Partnership Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the State of Israel**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781559/EM\\_CS\\_Israel\\_1.2019.odt](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781559/EM_CS_Israel_1.2019.odt)

**Interim Political, Trade and Partnership Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781389/MS\\_14.2019\\_IPTP\\_PLO.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781389/MS_14.2019_IPTP_PLO.pdf)

**Explanatory Memorandum on the Interim Political, Trade and Partnership Agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and Gaza Strip of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781563/EM\\_MS\\_14.2019\\_PLO.odt](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781563/EM_MS_14.2019_PLO.odt)

## Department for International Trade

**Continuing the United Kingdom's trade relationship with Israel**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781446/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-israel.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781446/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-israel.pdf)

**Continuing the United Kingdom's trade relationship with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/781450/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-the-palestinian-authority.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/781450/continuing-the-uks-trade-relationship-with-the-palestinian-authority.pdf)

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## Other Relevant Information

### Court of Justice of the European Union

**The Organic production logo of the European Union cannot be placed on meat derived from animals that have been slaughtered in accordance with religious rites without first being stunned**

Such a practice fails to observe the highest animal welfare standards.

... The Court finds that the EU legislature declares on several occasions in the legislation at issue its desire to observe a high level of animal welfare in the context of that production method, which is consequently characterised by the observance of enhanced standards with regard to animal welfare in all locations and at all stages of production where it is possible further to improve that welfare, including during slaughter. The Court recalls that scientific studies have shown that pre-stunning is the technique that compromises animal welfare the least at the time of killing.

The Court goes on to note that the practice of ritual slaughter as part of which an animal

may be killed without first being stunned, which is authorised by way of derogation in the European Union and solely in order to ensure observance of the freedom of religion, is insufficient to remove all of the animal's pain, distress and suffering as effectively as slaughter with pre-stunning, which is necessary to cause the animal to lose consciousness and sensibility in order significantly to reduce its suffering.

The Court points out, in that regard, that, while slaughter without pre-stunning requires an accurate cut of the throat with a sharp knife to minimise the animal's suffering, the use of that technique does not, however, allow any suffering to be kept to a minimum. Therefore, the Court concludes that particular methods of slaughter prescribed by religious rites that are carried out without pre-stunning are not tantamount, in terms of serving a high level of animal welfare at the time of killing, to slaughter with pre-stunning which is, in principle, required by EU law.

Finally, the Court points out that the objective of the EU's rules on the labelling of organic products is to maintain and justify 'consumer confidence in products labelled as organic' and notes that it is important to ensure that consumers are reassured that products bearing the Organic logo of the European Union — which is, in fact, the logo that the referring court is referring to — have actually been obtained in observance of the highest standards, in particular in the area of animal welfare. Consequently, the Court finds that the rules of EU law do not authorise the placing of the organic production logo of the European Union on products derived from animals which have been slaughtered in accordance with religious rites without first being stunned.

<https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2019-02/cp190015en.pdf>

*The full judgement can be read at*

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=04F778E9E402766912DA19C63A5C89DD?text=&docid=211049&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&oc c=first&part=1&cid=1088175>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

#### **International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/internationaldevelopmentassistancepalestiniannationalauthoritieschools.html>

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

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Online Forums Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.html>

#### **Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

## **Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/palestinianstatehoodrecognition.html>

## **Scottish Parliament**

### **Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 2 days**

**Racial harassment in higher education** (closing date 28 February 2019)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/racial-harassment-higher-education-our-inquiry>

**Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission – Draft Strategic Plan 2019-22**

(closing date 15 March 2019)

<http://www.nihrc.org/news/detail/ni-human-rights-commission-draft-strategic-plan-2019-2022-consultation>

**Scottish charity law** (closing date 1 April 2019)

<https://tinyurl.com/y9ln88df>

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