



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

## Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Ministry of Justice: Hate Crime

**Scott Benton (Conservative)** [8478] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what statistics his Department holds on hate crime.

**Chris Philp:** The Ministry of Justice publishes information regarding prosecutions, convictions and sentencing for hate crime offences specifically defined in legislation, i.e. 'racially or religiously aggravated' offences. The court outcomes for these offences can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/802314/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2018.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/802314/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2018.xlsx)

(using the pivot table, filter by 'Offence' for offences starting with 'racially or religiously aggravated...' and select all that appear).

Other hate crime offences are prosecuted under the specific offence in legislation that they fall under and the 'hate' element is an aggravating factor in that crime rather than the offence itself but these cannot be separately identified in the data.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8478/>

#### Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Reviews

**Angela Eagle (Labour)** [10303] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the titles of the reviews that his Department is undertaking.

**Jake Berry:** The Department is currently undertaking reviews in the following areas:

- The quality and effectiveness of the audit and financial reporting of local authorities in England, led by Sir Tony Redmond;
- How Government can best engage with faith communities, led by Colin Bloom;
- Antisemitism, led by Lord Mann; and
- Fair funding Review for how funding is allocated and redistributed between local authorities.

The Department has also recently undertaken a number of significant reviews. This includes Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, which the Government has committed to taking forward its recommendations. The Building Better Building Beautiful Commission also recently published its final report, which can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-30/10303/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Religious Hatred

**Lord Vinson (Conservative)** [HL728] Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to review the definition used by the Crown Prosecution Service and the National Police Chiefs' Council to identify religiously motivated incidents or crimes, in particular regard to the relevance of section 29J of the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** It is for the police, prosecutors and the courts to determine how to apply the legal provisions relevant to religiously motivated hate crimes.

The Law Commission has been commissioned by the Government to undertake a review of the legislation related to hate crime. The Law Commission are scheduled to conduct a public consultation this spring as part of this, and to report to Ministers in early 2021.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-22/HL728/>

*Section 29J of the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006, referred to above, can be read at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/1/schedule>*

*The review referred to above can be read at <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>*

### Schools: Admissions

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Conservative)** [HL603] Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to promote (1) racial, and (2) religious, integration in schools.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Education plays a vital role in promoting integration and preparing our children and young people for life in a modern and diverse Britain.

All schools must promote community cohesion and are required to actively promote our shared values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. Promotion of these values is part of Ofsted's inspection framework and the department has published guidance to schools on promoting these important values as part of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Schools are also required to comply with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

In 2016, the department also launched the Educate Against Hate website, through which we continue to provide free resources for teachers and school leaders to support their promotion of these values. This includes the department's Respectful School Communities toolkit; a self-review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline, helping to combat bullying, harassment and prejudice of any kind.

The department also funds a number of specific initiatives to support schools in addressing these issues. This includes the provision of over £2.8 million of funding

between September 2016 and March 2020 to four anti-bullying organisations, to support schools to tackle bullying – including projects focused on targeted bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate-related bullying, and projects which encourage children and young people to think about the importance of tackling prejudice and discrimination.

As part of our commitments in the Government's Integrated Communities Action Plan, the department is also funding an expanded national school linking programme, which seeks to encourage meaningful social mixing between different types of schools and foster understanding of those with different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs. In the last year, the Linking Network has worked with over 540 schools, leading to over 22,500 pupils taking part in activities supporting integration. As part of this same package, the department has also strengthened expectations for all new free schools on the promotion of community cohesion and integration, to make sure they are doing all that they can to ensure children and young people are able to participate fully in life in modern Britain.

The department is also introducing health education for pupils receiving state-funded primary and secondary education, alongside relationships education in all primary schools, and relationships and sex education (RSE) in all secondary schools. Mental wellbeing is a core component of the new health education curriculum, as well as being embedded in (RSE). Schools will be required to teach about a range of issues which will be relevant to wellbeing, including bullying, respectful relationships and online relationships.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-21/HL603/>

*The Educate Against Hate website, referred to above, can be read at*  
<https://educateagainsthate.com/>

*The Action Plan referred to above can be read at*  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/778045/Integrated\\_Communities\\_Strategy\\_Govt\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778045/Integrated_Communities_Strategy_Govt_Action_Plan.pdf)

### **Faith Schools: Islam**

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL646] Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 16 January (HL157), whether they assess what is being taught in madrasas in the UK; if so, how; and what plans they have to introduce inspections for such schools.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** As stated in my answer of 16 January, religious settings such as madrasas would generally be considered an out-of-school setting. As a large and diverse sector these settings are not captured by a single dedicated regulatory framework; and as such, are not subject to assessment or inspection by the department or Ofsted.

There are currently a number of legal powers in place to protect children attending these settings – for example, child protection legislation, health and safety and fire safety law – and there are no plans by the department, at this time, to introduce a new system of regulation or inspection of these settings.

However, the department is taking forward a package of measures aimed at enhancing the safeguarding of children in this sector. This includes a £3 million pilot scheme outlined in my previous response, which will be used to inform the development of best practice on how existing legal powers, held by local authorities and other agencies, can best be used to identify and intervene in out-of-school settings of concern. This work started in summer 2018 and is due to conclude in March 2020.

Alongside this, we have also been developing a voluntary code of practice for out-

of-school setting providers to support them to understand what they need to do to run a safe setting. There is accompanying guidance for parents and carers to help them make more informed choices when considering out-of-school settings for their children, as well as understanding the steps they can take where they have concerns. We consulted on these documents last year and will respond and publish the final guidance in due course. The consultation can be found here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/regulatory-framework-unit/out-of-school-settings-voluntary-safeguarding-code/>

HL646\_guidance\_OSS

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-21/HL646/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-01-07/HL157/>

## Welsh Assembly Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

### **Burial: Faith and Belief Groups**

**Mark Isherwood (Conservative)** [WAQ79378] What plans does the Welsh Government have to update the October 2014 document; Planning a Muslim Burial once the Medical Examiner Service is fully in operation?

**Mark Isherwood (Conservative)** [WAQ79379] Does the Welsh Government intend to produce documents on the funeral requirements of other faith and belief groups, similar to its October 2014 document, Planning a Muslim Burial?

**Minister for Housing and Local Government:** There are no current plans to update the 'Planning a Muslim Burial' guidance or extend it to include the funeral requirements of other faith and belief groups.

However, the introduction of a Medical Examiner Service provides an opportunity to review the operation of the current arrangements to ensure, where appropriate, the needs of faith communities for prompt funerals will be met. I will ask my officials to work with the WLGA, who co-produced this guidance, to explore any opportunities to do so with the Faith Communities Forum.

<https://record.assembly.wales/WrittenQuestion/79378>

and

<https://record.assembly.wales/WrittenQuestion/79379>

TOP

## Israel

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### **Middle East Peace Plan**

9. **Philip Hollobone (Conservative):** What steps [the Minister] plans to take to encourage (a) his Israeli counterpart, (b) the Palestinian Authority and (c) other middle east states to discuss the potential merits of the US Administration's Peace to Prosperity plan. [900593]

11. **Wes Streeting (Labour):** What representations [has the Minister] made to his counterpart in the US Administration on the proposed peace deal for the middle east. [900595]

21. **Chi Onwurah (Labour):** What representations [has the Minister] made to his counterpart in the US Administration on the proposed peace deal for the middle east. [900606]

**The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and First Secretary of State (Dominic Raab):** We welcome the US proposals for peace talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians based on recognition of the two-state solution. We support this initiative to get both sides around the negotiating table.

**Philip Hollobone:** Does the Foreign Secretary agree that the United States' "Peace to Prosperity" plan is a set of serious and constructive proposals that deserves more than instant rejection, and that whatever the pros and cons of the plan, if we are to secure a lasting peace, the only way to do so is through direct talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis?

**Dominic Raab:** I thank my hon. Friend. This is a first step on the road back to negotiations. The absence of dialogue creates a vacuum that only fuels instability and leads to the drifting of the two sides further and further apart, so whatever the different views, we want both sides to get around the negotiating table to work to improve the plan and to get peace in the middle east.

**Wes Streeting:** A peace plan without Palestinian participation is not a peace plan—it is an annexation plan. Can the Secretary of State assure us that the Government will not accept either this plan or any unilateral annexation plan, and perhaps take the step now to recognise an independent Palestinian state before there is no state left to recognise?

**Dominic Raab:** I certainly agree with the hon. Gentleman that any annexation unilaterally would be contrary to international law, damaging to peace efforts, and cannot go unchallenged, but the answer is to get both sides around the negotiating table. That is why not only the UK but the French, the Italians, EU High Representative Josep Borrell, Japan, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Oman have all called for the parties, based on this initiative, to come back to talks.

**Chi Onwurah:** I am sure that the Secretary of State considers himself a friend of the people of Israel, as I do, and of America, and, I hope, of Palestine. Does he agree that it is the duty of real friends to speak the truth at difficult times? The truth is that this is no peace plan: worse, by making the Palestinians spectators in their own land, annexing illegal settlements and destroying hopes, it paves the way for further conflict. Will he speak that truth to Israel and America?

**Dominic Raab:** The hon. Lady is absolutely right that we need to speak candidly on all sides of this debate. I have spoken to the Americans. I also spoke to President Abbas on 27 January. The reality is that whatever concerns any side has about this set of proposals, they will get resolved and improved only with both sides around the negotiating table. Rejectionism—the current vacuum—is only making matters worse. We would like to see peaceful dialogue and a negotiated solution, and that must be based on the two-state solution and the principles of international law.

**Khalid Mahmood (Labour):** The 22-member Arab League and the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Co-operation have both rejected the so-called Trump peace plan, because they recognise that it has no benefit for the Palestinian people, so why do the British Government continue to support it?

**Dominic Raab:** We support it along with—the hon. Gentleman failed to mention this—the Saudis, the Egyptians, the Omanis and Qatar. They have all given statements saying that it is a first step on the road to negotiations that can resolve the conflict. *[Interruption.]* They put out two statements. I heard the right hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry) chuntering from a sedentary position. The reality is that rejectionism—the vacuum that currently exists—will only make matters worse. We want to see a negotiated two-state solution. That will happen only if both parties come to the negotiating table.

### Middle East

**Caroline Ansell (Conservative):** Any unified and prosperous Palestinian state living peacefully alongside Israel is unrealistic as long as the Hamas terror group continues to be committed to the destruction of Israel. Will my right hon. Friend join me in calling for renewed international pressure on Hamas to renounce violence and to disarm?

**Andrew Murrison:** My hon. Friend is of course absolutely right. The renunciation of violence and the return to the political process are of crucial importance in trying to get towards what I think we all want in this House, which is a peaceful and amicable settlement that respects the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, and in particular a deal that gives refugees, of whom there are a huge number in the region, a proper future.

**Jack Lopresti (Conservative):** Does my right hon. Friend agree that one of the ways we can help to secure a long-lasting peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians is by working with our allies to support initiatives that promote dialogue and co-existence, such as the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace, as well as ensuring that UK taxpayers' money is not misdirected or misused but goes to the people who actually need it?

**Andrew Murrison:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There are of course a large number of projects and initiatives, many of them funded by the United Kingdom, that are aimed at promoting peace. He will be aware that we are one of the major contributors to the humanitarian situation—we hope, of course, pro tem—before we get a definitive political process that enables a viable Palestinian state to live alongside the state of Israel.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-04/debates/8F62FC3B-1718-401A-99A7-0936DF158CE1/MiddleEast#contribution-1AED866F-A846-4191-9FFB-E8B1F07A660A>

### Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

T5. **Caroline Ansell (Conservative):** Does the Minister share my view that unless and until peaceful co-existence is taught, championed and modelled in Palestinian schools, any peace deal with Israel will be short-lived? [900614]

**Andrew Murrison:** My hon. Friend is right, and she will be aware of the support that we give for health and education in the occupied Palestinian territories, pending the definitive political solution that we would like to see in the not-too-distant future, which remains a huge priority. She will also be aware of concerns about things such as teaching materials in schools, and of the active role that we have taken to ensure that no inappropriate material is used. I spoke recently to the Palestinian Education Minister. I know that this issue is at the top of his agenda, and in advance of the academic year in September, changes will be made.

T4. **Stephen Kinnock (Labour):** For those who believe in the international rules-based order, the Trump annexation plan is an utter disaster that ushers in the law of the jungle. If the British Government support this plan, surely they will also be giving a green light to Russia and China for their various annexation activities. If it is okay for Israel to do this, what will the Foreign Secretary say to Russia and China? [900613]

**Dominic Raab:** I think the hon. Gentleman has misunderstood the UK position. There is a proposal for peace talks, which would require a two-state solution, based on both sides agreeing. We have made it clear that we would disagree with and challenge any unilateral annexation on the basis of settlements.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-04/debates/68D0724D-D667-479F-9086-2A85C19B1337/TopicalQuestions#contribution-85CF34CB-50C4-49FD-8549-55E39839235E>

### Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Christian Matheson (Labour):** Does the Minister agree, with regard to the Trump so-called peace deal, that since no Palestinians were involved in negotiating it, it is not a negotiation or a deal but an imposition and that therefore an imposition is no basis for a lasting peace?

**Dominic Raab:** The hon. Gentleman is putting the cart before the horse. He is right that both sides will need to agree a two-state solution based on coherent, credible states on both sides and with the security considerations without any lateral annexation—*[Interruption.]* The right hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry) is again speaking from a sedentary position. There will need to be the resolution of all the key final status issues, including Jerusalem and refugees. But we have to get out of this vacuum and the only way we will do that is if both sides come to the negotiating table.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-02-04/debates/68D0724D-D667-479F-9086-2A85C19B1337/TopicalQuestions#contribution-6F5BBFAD-AD28-443B-B863-9105541E189C>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Palestinians: Politics and Government

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [8172]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority's pledge to renounce violence.

**Andrew Murrison:** The British Government strongly condemns all forms of violence. Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and actions that could incite violence or hatred.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-27/8172/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Stephen Morgan (Labour) [10456]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions has he had with his counterpart in the Israeli Government on allegations of torture committed by Israeli government interrogators against journalism student Mays Abu Ghosh.

**Andrew Murrison:** We have not made representations to the Government of Israel about the case of Mays Abu Gosh. We have concerns about mistreatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons, and about Israel's respect of its obligations as an occupying power, under applicable international law. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have raised the treatment of Palestinians in Israeli prisons with the Israeli authorities. We emphasise the importance of treating prisoners and detainees humanely and in accordance with international law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-30/10456/>

### Israel: Human Rights

**Stephen Morgan (Labour) [10457]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions has he had with his counterpart in the Israeli Government on allegations of human rights abuses committed by Israeli military forces.

**Andrew Murrison:** We have repeatedly made clear to Israel our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defense Forces police non-violent protests and the border areas, including the use of live ammunition and excessive

force. We call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest and to investigate allegations of use of excessive force. We have also stressed the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. We will continue to do so.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-30/10457/>

### **Israel: Occupied Territories**

**Afzal Khan (Labour)** [10465] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with reference to the statement made by the Israeli Prime Minister on 28 January 2020 on applying Israeli sovereignty to the Jordan Valley, the northern Dead Sea, and Israeli settlements in the West Bank, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the legality under international law of those proposals.

**Andrew Murrison:** The UK position is clear. Any move to unilaterally annex territory, without an agreement negotiated by the parties, would be contrary to international law and damaging to peace efforts.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-30/10465/>

## **United Nations**

### **Elections Crucial for Renewed Legitimacy, Secretary-General Tells Palestinian Rights Committee, While Stressing That Jerusalem Remains Final-Status Issue**

... Last December, the General Assembly adopted all the resolutions on the question of Palestine recommended by the Committee, including the one on its mandate. This is a reaffirmation of how the work of the Committee is firmly rooted in the United Nations Charter and international law. ...

The position of the United Nations on the two-State solution has been defined, throughout the years, by relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions by which the Secretariat is bound. The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements and realizing the vision of two States – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. ...

We also have repeatedly stated that Jerusalem remains a final status issue; the city's future can only be resolved on the basis of international law and through negotiations between the parties. Meanwhile, we must never forget the human suffering that persists throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the plight of the 2 million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip who continue to live under dire socioeconomic conditions. ...

On its own, no amount of humanitarian or economic support will resolve either the situation in Gaza or the broader conflict. ...

I call on Palestinian leaders to engage constructively with Egypt and others to advance intra-Palestinian reconciliation. ...

The holding of long overdue general elections in the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, will be a crucial step towards giving renewed legitimacy to national institutions and reuniting the Palestinian people under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian national Government. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sqsm19959.doc.htm>

## **Palestinian Rights Committee's Work All the More Urgent Due to Proposed New United States Plan for Middle East Peace, Members Say**

Permanent Observer for State of Palestine Mentions Plans for Proposal's Rejection

... Riyadh Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, thanked the Committee – known formally as the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People – for its firm support, particularly since the beginning of the “onslaught of the [United States President] Trump Administration against the rights of the Palestinian people”.

He went on to outline efforts to combat that political aggression — which began with Washington's 2018 decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem, and now also entails support for Israel's annexation efforts — emphasizing that such policies ignore long-standing international efforts in support of a two-State solution.

Underlining the right of Muslims and Christians to exercise their religious freedoms in Jerusalem, and of Palestinians to a sovereign State, he said there are efforts to unify around a rejection of President Trump's proposal. The League of Arab States recently convened in Cairo and rejected it, he recalled, adding that it is not, in fact, a plan for peace but aims instead to perpetuate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among other things, such an approach would give Israel licence to annex at least 30 per cent of the occupied West Bank, he pointed out, stressing that efforts are under way to unify and mobilize Palestinians against the proposal. There are plans to dispatch a high-level Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) delegation to continue that discussion in Gaza, he added. Meanwhile, President Mahmoud Abbas will soon travel to New York to address the Security Council, he continued. ... the State of Palestine will seek a draft resolution “with the strongest possible language” but also the broadest possible support, for adoption as soon as early next week, he said. ... “We know it will be defeated by a veto, but we want to show that the entire international community supports a common position.” He added: “This is only the beginning.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/gapal1429.doc.htm>

TOP

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/assisteddying.html>

#### **Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/divorcedissolutionandseparation.html>

#### **Education (Assemblies) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/educationassemblies.html>

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

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageandcivilpartnershipminimumage.html>

## Scottish Parliament

### Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

TOP

## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education** (closing date 27 March 2020)

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/76f6bdd3-bb14-4956-b089-cd1598323d55/consultation-on-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct-in-higher-education.pdf>

TOP

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