



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Debate

Draft Human Tissue (Permitted Material: Exceptions) (England) Regulations 2020

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-05-18/debates/6E5F70CA-2FDE-4069-A898-91205A6AE261/DraftHumanTissue\(PermittedMaterialExceptions\)\(England\)Regulations2020](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-05-18/debates/6E5F70CA-2FDE-4069-A898-91205A6AE261/DraftHumanTissue(PermittedMaterialExceptions)(England)Regulations2020)

The Human Tissue (Permitted Material: Exceptions) (England) Regulations 2020 can be read at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2020/9780111193372/contents>

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Hate Crime: Coronavirus

Bambos Charalambous (Labour) [46775] To ask the Secretary of State for the Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential risk of hate crime towards the Jewish community in the UK once the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are eased.

Bambos Charalambous (Labour) [46774] To ask the Secretary of State for the Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential risk of hate crime

Luke Hall: The Government takes hate crime and discrimination of any kind very seriously. We are alert to the risks that an easing of the lockdown restrictions presents and will not tolerate hate crime under any circumstances. We will not however speculate on potential future trends. We are a tolerant and welcoming multicultural society and we have one of the strongest legal frameworks in the world to report, record and prosecute hate crime. I would encourage anyone who experiences hate crime to report it to the police.

Government's Hate Crime Action Plan published in October 2018 sets out a comprehensive programme of work across Government and the police. We fund hate crime reporting platforms, including True Vision, and we continue to engage with communities of all backgrounds and local leaders including councils and the police to make sure we are aware of any concerns communities may have and can

provide targeted support.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-13/46775/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-13/46774/>

The Action Plan referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748175/Hate_crime_refresh_2018_FINAL_WEB.PDF

True Vision, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.report-it.org.uk/>

Hate Crime: Coronavirus

Bambos Charalambous (Labour) [46776] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she will take to prevent an increase in hate crime when the covid-19 lockdown is eased.

Victoria Atkins: The Home Office are working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), civil society partners and social media platforms to encourage victim reporting of online hate crime during the pandemic. We are also working with the NPCC to ensure that all police forces are providing reassurance to affected communities.

Government continues to work with communities around the country and the police to ensure people of all backgrounds have access to the latest information and are supported through this period

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-13/46776/>

Hate Crime: Coronavirus

Bambos Charalambous (Labour) [46778] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, what data has been collated through her Department's collaboration with Cardiff University and the National Police Chief's Council on incidences of online hate crimes committed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Atkins: The Home Office does not hold Covid 19-related hate crime data from this collaboration. The NPCC partnership is still in development and intended to design a tool for understanding trends in hateful sentiment online. It does not monitor instances of online hate crimes for criminal investigations.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-13/46778/>

Churches: Coronavirus

Luke Evans (Conservative) [45480] To ask the right hon. Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps is the Government taking to work with churches and dioceses to ensure the safe opening of churches for religious worship.

Andrew Selous: The Church of England is committed to the reopening of buildings in a phased way, in accordance with the rules, restrictions and timetable established by Government. On 5th May the House of Bishops issued guidance, which can be seen here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/house-bishops-backs-phased-approach-revising-access-church-buildings>

We are working with Government and with representatives of the heritage planning

sector to assess the need for building adaptations related to public safety in our cathedral and church buildings, and in particular temporary additions or changes that might need to be made to enable social distancing and proper hygiene. We are committed to enabling our churches and cathedrals to make such changes as might be needed to allow them to reopen safely.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-05-11/45480/>

TUC

Protecting Palestinian human rights: Supreme Court confirms investment decisions can be used to promote peace

In a blow to the government, the Supreme Court overturned regulations that banned local government pension schemes (LGPSs) from making investment decisions that differ from government foreign and defence policy ...

This is a landmark decision. Now members of local government pension schemes can choose to invest ethically or divest, as long as those decisions don't undermine the pension fund.

The regulations, brought in by the government in 2016, banned pension funds from divesting from companies or countries on ethical grounds. This meant that divestment from companies complicit in violating Palestinian human rights, or the rights of others, was not allowed.

In a campaigning victory - a judicial review brought by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and allies raised concerns about threats to freedom of expression, government overreach in local democracy, and the right of pension holders to have a say in the investment and divestment of funds. They won their case in the High Court, lost in the Court of Appeal, but now have won in the Supreme Court. ...

The TUC supports the use of disinvestment by pension schemes from companies that are profiting from the illegal Israeli settlements and the occupation of Palestinian land. As Amnesty International have pointed out, the settlements are illegal and a war crime because they violate international law. So any business activity there will unavoidably contribute to an illegal situation, and to a situation of systematic human rights abuses of the Palestinian people. ...

Any companies that choose to operate in annexed territories will be unavoidably complicit in human rights violations. ...

The UK government should be focussing its efforts on calling on the Israeli government to halt any annexation plans, and ban UK trade with the settlements and arms sales that are used to violate Palestinian human rights. The Prime Minister should call on President Netanyahu to respect Palestinian rights and international law, and to enter into peace talks to find a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/protecting-palestinian-human-rights-supreme-court-confirms-investment-decisions-can-be-used>

The Supreme Court judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2018-0133-judgment.pdf>

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Israel

See also *“Protecting Palestinian human rights: Supreme Court confirms investment decisions can be used to promote peace”* under the heading of *“TUC”* in the *Home Affairs* section above.

House of Lords Written Answers

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL3881] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the letter sent by 130 parliamentarians calling for sanctions to be imposed on the government of Israel should the annexation of the West Bank take place.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: This letter is currently being considered and the Government will respond in due course.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-05/HL3881/>

Jerusalem: Religious Freedom

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4103] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that Israeli authorities have prevented dawn drummers from operating during Ramadan in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made an assessment of these reports, we are committed to working with all parties to ensure that Jerusalem can remain a diverse city which affords all of its residents freedom of religion and belief and respects the status quo of the holy sites.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-05-06/HL4103/>

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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>

Genocide Determination Bill

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

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Protecting places of worship (closing date 28 June 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill (closing date 24 July 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115038.aspx>

Legislative proposals for religion, values and ethics [Wales] (closing date 28 July 2020)

<https://gov.wales/legislative-proposals-religion-values-and-ethics>

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