



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Hate Crime

Dawn Butler (Labour) [27042] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking in advance of the publication of the Law Commission's final report in respect of its Hate Crime review, due to be published in 2021.

Dawn Butler (Labour) [27043] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that all protected characteristics are treated equally under hate crime legislation in advance of the Law Commission's final report in respect of its Hate Crime review.

Victoria Atkins: In 2018, the Government asked the Law Commission to undertake a review of current hate crime legislation, including whether additional protected characteristics, such as sex, gender and age, should be included.

The Law Commission is due to publish its recommendations later this year, following which the Government will formally respond.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-05/27042>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-05/27043>

Information about the Law Commission review referred to above can be read at

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>

Churches: Music

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [28114] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing worshippers to sing in church prior to 19 July 2021.

Eddie Hughes: Places of worship play an important role in providing spiritual leadership and bringing communities together. However, their communal nature can make them particularly vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus.

Congregational singing has been suspended due to the increased risk of

transmission through small droplets and aerosols.

This means that those taking part in such activities are at higher risk of transmitting the virus and spreading infection.

However, in line with Government's proposals to move to Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown, congregational singing indoors, with or without masks, will be able to resume from 19 July.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-06/28114>

The following five questions all received the same answer

Hezbollah

Diana Johnson (Labour) [29746] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to tackle the domestic operations of Hezbollah since its full proscription in February 2019.

Diana Johnson (Labour) [29747] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of UK citizens who are members of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah: Islamic Resistance Support Organization

Diana Johnson (Labour) [29748] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the relationship between Hezbollah and the Islamic Resistance Support Organisation.

Hezbollah: Finance

Diana Johnson (Labour) [29749] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle sources of financial assistance to Hezbollah in the UK.

Hezbollah: Lebanon

Diana Johnson (Labour) [29750] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Foreign Secretary on tackling Hezbollah activity in Lebanon.

Kevin Foster: The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters.

Hizballah is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK and membership is therefore a criminal offence. Since the extension of Hizballah's proscription in 2019, the Government has also extended the UK's domestic financial sanctions designation to cover the group in its entirety.

Investigations into the activities of proscribed organisations, or individuals who may be members or supporters of proscribed organisations, are an operational matter for the police and intelligence agencies. It would not be appropriate to comment or publish data on these matters.

The Government publishes quarterly national statistics on the use of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent relevant legislation in Great Britain. This includes information on arrests, charges and convictions for proscription offences.

The Home and Foreign Secretaries routinely discuss global counter-terrorism matters, both bilaterally and at Cabinet during meetings of the National Security Council.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-08/29746>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-08/29747>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-08/29748>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-08/29749>

and

Israel

See also Commons written answers 29746-50 relating to Hezbollah, included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Commons Written Answers

Travel: Coronavirus

Nickie Aiken (Conservative) [27311] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the update on international travel published by his Department on 24 June 2021 and official correspondence on covid-19 and Israel between 2020 and 2021, for what reason Jerusalem is referred to in addition to Israel rather than being considered included in the naming of that state.

James Cleverly: The position of the UK Government has remained constant since April 1950, when the UK extended de jure recognition to the State of Israel, but withheld recognition of sovereignty over Jerusalem pending a final determination of its status. We recognise Israel's 'de facto authority' over West Jerusalem. But in line with Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) and subsequent Council resolutions, we regard East Jerusalem as under Israeli military occupation.

A final determination of the status of Jerusalem should be sought as part of a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. It must ensure Jerusalem is a shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian states, with access and religious rights of both peoples respected.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-05/27311>

The travel update referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Arms Trade

Alyn Smith (SNP) [29903] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the value was of exports of arms and military equipment to (a) Iraq, (b) Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, (c) Libya, (d) Mali, (e) Myanmar, (f) Nicaragua, (g) Pakistan, (h) Russia, (i) Saudi Arabia, (j) Somalia, (k) South Sudan, (l) Sri Lanka, (m) Sudan, (n) Syria, (o) Turkmenistan, (p) Uzbekistan, (q) Venezuela, (r) Yemen and (s) Zimbabwe in 2020.

Ranil Jayawardena: Such exports require an export licence, which are assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the "Consolidated Criteria").

HM Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations on GOV.UK containing detailed information including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences. The most recent publication was on 13th July 2021.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-08/29903>

The statistics referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-export-controls-licensing-data>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-defence-and-security-export-figures>

Arab States: Israel

Gregory Campbell (DUP) [29734] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will hold discussions with his US counterpart on helping to further improve relations in the Middle East between Israel and other Arab nations.

James Cleverly: The UK warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Sudan. These are historic steps which sees the normalisation of relations between friends of the UK. The changing regional context and converging Arab and Israeli interests presents an opening to make progress on the Israel-Palestine issue. We need to build on this momentum through further dialogue and compromise to move towards a two state solution and a lasting solution to the conflict. We look forward to working with the US, alongside regional partners, and the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships, to pursue that goal.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-08/29734>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Ethnic Groups: Human Rights

Marsha De Cordova (Labour) [27306] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the OHCHR report entitled Agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality, published in June 2021, whether the Government supports the proposals to establish a new international expert mechanism to further that agenda in the context of law enforcement globally.

Nigel Adams: The United Kingdom is committed to combatting all forms of racism, including antisemitism, both at home and abroad. We believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different religious and racial groups is to encourage all states to uphold their human rights obligations. We have received the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and are reviewing it, including the proposal for a new international mechanism.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-07-05/27306>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/53>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UN Human Rights Council 47: Explanation of position on the resolution on racial justice and equality

... The British Government will continue to condemn racism in all its forms. We work domestically to create a fairer society in which all people, regardless of ethnic origin or background, are valued and can reach their full potential.

We strongly believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle disparities and advocate for respect among different racial and ethnic groups is to encourage countries to uphold

their human rights obligations. The United Kingdom is strongly committed to tackling the global scourge of racism, including through important instruments such as the International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The UK actively supports the majority of what is contained in this resolution, and the need for international action to address racism.

However, we do not support recent proposals on this agenda, including some priorities set out in the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' report, and her proposal for an "Agenda towards Transformative Change for Racial Justice and Equality". The proposals for reparations for colonialism and slavery divert focus from the pressing challenges of tackling contemporary racism. Contemporary racism is a global challenge affecting all regions.

Likewise, given the large number of mechanisms which already exist in the UN to look at the issues raised by this draft resolution, we do not see the need to create yet another Expert Mechanism ...

We believe that the most effective way for the UK today to respond to the cruelty of the past is to ensure that current and future generations do not forget what happened, and to address modern day slavery. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-47-explanation-of-position-on-the-resolution-on-racial-justice-and-equality>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/53>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

Charities Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Education (16 to 19 Academies) (Religious Character) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2946>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 2 days**

Curriculum for Wales Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance (closing date 16 July 2021)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-05/consultation-document-curriculum-for-wales-religion-values-and-ethics-guidance.pdf>

Animal welfare [EU legislation] (closing date 3 August 2021)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12950-Animal-welfare-revision-of-EU-legislation_en

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