



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Oral Answer

#### Topical Questions: Department for Work and Pensions

**Mike Kane (Labour):** What assessment has the Secretary of State made about how the two-child benefit cap negatively affects faith communities, where larger families are more prevalent?

**Thérèse Coffey:** The hon. Member and I are both practising Catholics, and I am conscious of the point he is making. However, I am also conscious that the benefit cap takes into account the amount of benefits available to a family compared with median income. It is important that we keep that approach, recognising in particular that the cap can be lifted when people earn, I think, about £605 a month.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-07/debates/7DCCAB2C-2613-4037-A30A-22C2829E45B8/TopicalQuestions#contribution-1099E108-AF2A-4121-968A-7092FA4503A3>

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Hate Crime

**Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench) [HL5647]** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the article by Dr Richard Norrie and Hardeep Singh 'Meet the SAGE of hate crime', published in The Critic on 13 January, and (2) the transparency and impartiality of their Independent Advisory Group on hate crime.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** In April 2020, the Home Office briefly took over full responsibility from the Ministry of Justice for the oversight of the Independent Advisory Group on hate crime.

The Home Office had some concerns about the transparency and impartiality of the IAG, and planned to work with the group to resolve these issues. However, during the summer of 2021, the IAG moved under the oversight of the NPCC and is consequently no longer a Government-affiliated body. The IAG now serves as a body solely to inform and support policing requirements on hate crime.

The minutes of the meetings have been made available in response to a freedom

of information request. I will send a copy to the Noble Lord.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/hl5647>

*The article referred to above can be read at*

<https://thecritic.co.uk/meet-the-sage-of-hate-crime/>

*The Minutes referred to are not currently available online.*

### **Radicalism: Islam**

**Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-affiliated)** [HL5588] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Barran on 18 January (HL5056 and HL5057), what steps they take to ensure that radical Islamism is not being promoted in mosques in the UK; whether they have any evidence that radical Islamism is being promoted in mosques; and if not, what further steps they intend to take.

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Muslims make an enormous contribution to British Society and have done for centuries. Islam is a religion observed peacefully by over a billion people worldwide and we remain clear that Islamist extremism is not true Islam. Whether through Islamism or any other ideology, the Government is committed to tackling those who spread views that promote violence and hatred against individuals and communities in our society, and that radicalise others into terrorism.

We assess all evidence of those that radicalise others though their support for or justification of violence and will not tolerate those who spread divisive and harmful narratives.

We continue to work with law enforcement agencies and multi-agency partners to increase our understanding of new and emerging radicalising threats to society. Any violent threat is assessed and managed by the police and security services based on the threat that it is deemed to pose.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-20/hl5588>

*The answers referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-16/hl5056>

*and*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-16/hl5057>

## **UK Parliament Ministerial Statement**

### **Online Safety Bill: Priority Offences**

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Chris Philp)** [HCWS593] I wish to inform the House that the Government will be making a change to the Online Safety Bill, to set out priority offences in primary legislation on the face of the Bill.

This change responds to the calls for greater clarity about the criminal offences in scope of the new regulatory framework, and will increase the pace of implementation of the regulatory regime.

Specifically, this change responds to calls from the Online Safety Bill Joint Committee and the Digital, Culture Media and Sport Committee's Sub-Committee on Online Harms and Disinformation, which recommended that the most relevant criminal offences should be included in primary legislation. The Petitions Committee further specified a number of offences that it believes should be listed, including hate crime.

We plan to include offences within the following categories on the face of the Bill:

Encouraging or assisting suicide.

Offences relating to sexual images, including revenge and extreme pornography.

Incitement to and threats of violence.

Hate crime.  
Public order offences, harassment and stalking.  
Drug-related offences.  
Weapons and firearms offences.  
Fraud and financial crime.  
Money laundering.  
Exploiting prostitutes for gain.  
Organised immigration offences.

Offences relating to terrorism and child sexual abuse and exploitation are already listed in the Bill. The Secretary of State will have the ability to designate additional offences as priority by statutory instrument, which will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

Priority offences represent the most serious and prevalent illegal content and activity online. Companies will need to take proactive steps to tackle such content. Companies will need to design and operate their services to be safe by design and prevent users encountering priority illegal content. This could include, for example, having effective systems in place to prevent banned users opening new accounts.

Beyond the priority offences, all services will need to ensure that they have effective systems and processes in place to take down quickly other illegal content once it has been reported or they become aware of its presence.

Listing the priority offences on the face of the Bill, instead of in secondary legislation, is an important step in strengthening this pioneering legislation designed to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. This will mean that platforms do not need to wait for secondary legislation to start tackling the most serious illegal content.

We will respond fully to all three Committees' reports in due course alongside introduction of the Bill, and thank them for their recommendations.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-07/debates/22020743000011/OnlineSafetyBillPriorityOffences>

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## Holocaust

### House of Commons Point of Order

**Martin Docherty-Hughes (SNP):** On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Last Monday, in my constituency, I had the immense privilege of assisting to hoist the holocaust memorial flag to commemorate everyone who was butchered or medically experimented on by national socialism as it dominated the continent of Europe.

As co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, I was utterly dumbfounded at the weekend when the holocaust was used to poke fun at one of the most marginalised groups in these islands. The Roma and Gypsy community have been part of the story of these islands for millennia and, as co-chair of the APPG, I can tell the House that it was not funny.

Comedy is a useful tool in lightening the mood, and it is often up to us to decide what we believe to be funny. What opportunities are there for Members of this House to show their support and commitment to the dignity of the suffering of all those who lost their lives during the holocaust—Jews, Gypsies, Roma, the LGBT community, Jehovah's Witnesses and many others—such as an Adjournment debate or a Backbench Business debate? *[Interruption.]* Perhaps Conservative Members should listen. What opportunities are there to recognise the value and worth of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community across these islands, and to raise them up, not put them down?

**Deputy Speaker (Rosie Winterton):** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving

me notice of his point of order. He has put his concerns in the public domain very effectively with what he has just said. He asks me what mechanisms there are to raise his concerns. He listed quite a few of them, so he is obviously aware of them. I am sure the Table Office will be able to advise him on any other mechanisms. The Leader of the House is here, too, and he will have heard what the hon. Gentleman had to say. I will leave it at that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk//commons/2022-02-07/debates/3A8E5F52-4782-4A86-929B-1B823CBBF137/PointsOfOrder#contribution-44BE0DED-9C95-494B-A060-905CDFC11E06>

*A report of the incident referred to above can be read at*  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-60261876>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Israel: Sanctions

**Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat)** [HL5627] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to impose sanctions on Israel for continued breaches of international law.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The British Government has made its position on sanctions clear. While we do not hesitate to hold Israel to account where necessary, we are firmly opposed to sanctions. We believe that open and honest discussions, rather than imposing sanctions or supporting anti-Israel boycotts, best supports our efforts to help progress in the peace process and achieve a negotiated solution.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/hl5627>

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat)** [HL5625] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 1 April 2021 (HL14507), what plans they have to address recent reports concerning the violent eviction of a Palestinian family and the demolition of their home on 19 January; and what plans they have to provide protection for remaining families under threat.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. On 19 January, Minister Cleverly urged the Government of Israel to stop these practices.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/hl5625>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-23/hl14507>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://twitter.com/jamescleverly/status/1483866915613388810>

#### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat)** [HL5626] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect Palestinians in territories occupied by Israel from damage to olive groves and crops by Israeli settlers.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We understand the particular significance of olive trees given their status as a national symbol and the sole source of income for many Palestinian farmers. We have repeatedly raised the issue of incidents of settler violence, including the destruction of olive trees, with the Israeli authorities.

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Sheehan (Liberal Democrat)** [HL5646] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to protect (1) Palestinians in territory occupied by Israel, and (2) human rights activists, from violent attacks by Israeli settlers.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK regularly raises the issue of settler violence with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defence on 20 January. We welcome discussion by the Israeli authorities on how to address this issue, and urge Israel to bring those responsible to justice.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-24/hl5646>

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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 (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>

Ministerial Statement

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-07/debates/22020743000011/OnlineSafetyBillPriorityOffences>

Reaction to the draft Online Safety Bill: A reading list

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9243/CBP-9243.pdf>

## **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

**Marriage Law (Northern Ireland)** (closing date 18 February 2022)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/public-consultation-marriage-law>

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Draft Corporate Plan 2022-2025**

(closing date 25 February 2022)

<https://www.equalityni.org/CorporatePlanConsultation#gsc.tab=0>

**Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights** (closing date 8 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>

**Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland** (closing date 28 March 2022)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-hate-crime-legislation-northern-ireland>

**Trade with Israel** (closing date 30 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/trade-with-israel-call-for-input>

**CPS: Public interest guidance for suicide pact and 'mercy killing' type cases**

(closing date 9 April 2022)

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/consultation-public-interest-guidance-suicide-pact-and-mercy-killing-type-cases-0>

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