



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Debates

#### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill: Report Stage**

*col 604* **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Rachel Maclean):** ... Amendments 4 and 5 are more substantive and relate to the jurisdictional impact—the territorial reach, if you like—of that new behaviour of causing a child to marry even if coercion is not used. At the moment the jurisdictional provisions for that behaviour mirror those in the existing forced marriage offence: namely that prosecution may occur when the perpetrator and/or the victim is physically present in England and Wales, or if at least one of them is habitually resident in England and Wales, or if both of them are outside the UK and at least one of them is a UK national. The sole exception is that marriages of 16 and 17-year-olds in Scotland and Northern Ireland would never be covered. ...

Amendment 5 would remove that exception relating to marriages of 16 and 17-year-olds in Northern Ireland and Scotland. While we made that provision in recognition of the devolution settlement, we came to judge that the potential impact on enforcement was too great. There are too many circumstances in which a parent could evade the law by taking their child to Scotland or Northern Ireland to marry, even if there were no connection with either of those two countries. ...

... amendment [4] would replace existing jurisdictional provisions for the new offence of causing a child to marry with provisions that state that a prosecution may occur if the marriage was to take place in England or Wales, or if at least one of the victim or the perpetrator is habitually resident in England or Wales, or if the victim is a UK national who has at some point been habitually resident in England or Wales and is also neither habitually resident nor domiciled in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Taken together, this will ensure that the law extends only to those circumstances where there is a proper connection to England or Wales and not to, for example, UK national children who live in Scotland and marry overseas or UK national children who live and have always lived overseas. The amendments would therefore ensure, for example, that a parent who lives in England could not take their 16-year-old child who also lives in England to Scotland for a traditional ceremonial marriage merely to get around the law,

but also that, where a 17-year-old child lives in Scotland and the parent does not live in England or Wales, there is no bar to their seeking to arrange for the child to marry outside the UK. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership\(MinimumAge\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership(MinimumAge)Bill)

### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill: Third Reading**

*col 606* **Pauline Latham (Conservative):** ... It is undeniable that changing this law and making it unequivocally clear that it will be illegal to arrange any child marriage, whether for a boy or a girl, in England and Wales, irrespective of alleged consent, coercion or persuasion, is a huge step in the right direction, because many children are brought up to believe that this is the norm, but it is not the norm in this country to be married as a child. ...

*col 608* The second key provision will make it a crime to organise any unregistered marriage involving a child in England and Wales. ...

We know ... that the religious ceremony is the most important part of the marriage in the eyes of the family and the community of the child. They do not need the registered part: they are not interested in that. It is the unregistered part that makes the difference for them, and currently, there is no age limit on an unregistered marriage. The only requirement is that it is not forced, and we know that under the current law, proving a forced marriage where it involves children is extremely difficult. ...

This offence will be triggered by any conduct that causes a child under 18 to enter into such a marriage, whether civil or religious. Crucially, unlike with forced marriage, there is no need to prove coercion or control. ...

A key provision that I would like to highlight is the provision of extraterritoriality. ... very often children who live in the United Kingdom are being taken abroad, often to a country where extended family live, in order to be married. ... It is crucial that the offence captures that conduct, because it is just as damaging to the future prospects and life chances of the victims as a marriage that takes place in the United Kingdom. ...

I am delighted that this Bill will cover not just marriages taking place in England and Wales, but marriages anywhere in the world involving a child or a person who lives in England or Wales, as well as those involving UK national children who have at any point lived in England or Wales. ...

*col 610* Unfortunately, due to marriage policy being devolved, the protections in this Bill extend only to children in England and Wales, or to children with a specific connection to England and Wales. At the moment, the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive do not have equivalent legislation, so children there will not be safeguarded. They also prevent the UK from completing its international obligations to end child marriage. ...

*col 646* **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Tom Pursglove):** ... as much as I would like to, I cannot make a commitment that the Bill will be ready to be commenced by the school summer holidays. I am keen, however, to expedite as far as feasibly possible the work we need to do to implement the Bill. ...

*col 647* **Richard Holden (Conservative):** ... One issue we are trying to address today is the cultural issue. Will the Minister commit to at least examining having a proper awareness campaign when the law changes ... reaching out into communities where we know this issue is more prevalent than in others? It is important that we ram home the message from this united House not just that there is a change in the law, but that we are trying to drive a broader cultural change in society. ...

**Tom Pursglove:** ... it is certainly something I am mindful of and want to take away and consider. ...

*col 648* I must respect that the devolved Administrations are independent. ... We in

England and Wales are levelling up, tackling the awful practice of child marriage. I have put on the record in the House, and will repeat now, my wholehearted hope that Scotland and Northern Ireland will follow our lead. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership\(MinimumAge\)Bill#contribution-E91FE386-ACEC-4C29-8D6F-71CFD840872A](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership(MinimumAge)Bill#contribution-E91FE386-ACEC-4C29-8D6F-71CFD840872A)

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/9AC0D65F-91AE-43F5-B6CC-8B6B13EB37EC/MarriageAndCivilPartnership\(MinimumAge\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/9AC0D65F-91AE-43F5-B6CC-8B6B13EB37EC/MarriageAndCivilPartnership(MinimumAge)Bill)

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Antisemitism

**Wera Hobhouse (Liberal Democrat)** [122773] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings from the Community Security Trust that anti-Jewish hate incidents have increased 34 per cent from 2020.

**Kemi Badenoch:** Any amount of antisemitism is too much and the Government will continue tackling it in all its forms. We are providing £14 million this year, and provided over £65 million to date, for the Protective Security Grant to protect Jewish schools and community buildings. We also were the first country to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism and will continue to encourage organisations and councils to take this important step to combat antisemitism in their communities.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-10/122773>

### Protection

**Sarah Champion (Labour)** [122674] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help improve safeguarding within faith communities.

**Rachel Maclean:** The Government is committed to doing all that we can to ensure children and vulnerable groups are effectively safeguarded. As such, Home Office collaborates closely with other government departments - including Department for Education (DfE), Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) - to provide leadership and promote effective practice around safeguarding, including across faith communities.

The statutory safeguarding regime applies broadly, underpinned by *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2018), the statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Referrals should be made by any organisation where there are concerns about a child or young person being at risk of abuse or harm.

DfE has also published a safeguarding code of practice for out-of-school settings, including religious supplementary schools, which brings together existing legal requirements and best practice into a single location.

In addition, DLUHC currently fund the organisation Strengthening Faith Institutions who help to create stronger, healthier, integrated and accessible places of worship across England, by delivering safeguarding training in faith institutions. SFI aim to build the capacity of grassroots organisations by delivering crucial expertise alongside local initiatives. They provide health checks for places of worship, alongside training courses to empower women, faith leaders, community leaders and young leaders from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Finally, the Government welcomes the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse's report into child protection into religious organisations and settings, published in September 2021, and is carefully considering its findings and recommendations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-10/122674>

*The guidance referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/942454/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_inter\\_agency\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942454/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_inter_agency_guidance.pdf)

*The code of practice referred to above can be read at*

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/940872/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_code\\_of\\_practice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940872/Keeping_children_safe_code_of_practice.pdf)

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/26895/view/child-protection-religious-organisations-settings-investigation-report-september-2021.pdf>

## Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Department for Communities and Local Government

**COVID-19: Updated guidance for the safe use of places of worship**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship>

## Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Cabinet Office

**Updated Guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-wedding-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-receptions-and-celebrations>

## Northern Ireland Assembly Written Answer

### Hate Crime

**Claire Sugden (Independent)** [AQW 29560/17-22] To ask the Minister of Justice (i) for her assessment of the rise in the number of recorded hate crimes, particularly racist hate crimes; and (ii) to detail what steps she is taking to address this rise.

**The Minister of Justice:** The most recent hate crime statistics, published by PSNI in September 2021, shows there were more hate crimes recorded across each hate motivation strand (racist, homophobic, sectarian, disability, faith/religion and transphobic) when compared with the previous twelve months. Recorded hate incidents also increased across all motivation strands, with the exception of transphobic incidents, when compared with the previous twelve months. Whilst levels of racist hate crime had trended downwards since 2014/15, this has seen an increase since 2018/19 and is currently the most recorded motivation.

Hate Crime is generally underreported, so an increase in reported incidents could indicate a growing confidence in the system to report such matters, in addition to increases due to how some people have decided to target protected groups, such as race, in response to issues such as the protocol, covid pandemic and increase in new comers to Northern Ireland.

Addressing hate crime continues to be a priority for me. This requires a collaborative response with partners in relation to tackling enabling factors of intolerance, prejudice and hate, as well as a robust legislative response to ensure action is taken against offenders, where necessary, and to increase victims' confidence in the system that brings offenders to justice.

In response to Judge Marrinan's recommendations on strengthening hate crime legislation, I have published phase one of a public consultation to inform the development of a Hate Crime Bill. Phase two of the consultation will follow later in the year with the intention of introducing a Hate Crime Bill in the next mandate. This Bill will improve the criminal justice process for victims of hate crime, including race hate crime victims; help inform rehabilitative work and act as a deterrent for potential perpetrators; and reduce the risk of reoffending and further victimisation. On an operational level, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs), which are jointly funded by the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Policing Board, have a role in addressing hate crime, and the fear of hate crime through specific local Hate Crime projects. For example, provision of support to initiatives raising awareness of the impact of hate crimes and training projects which engage minority community members on bias, language and stereotypes and provides strategies for "speaking up" against hate crime.

My Department also chairs the multi-agency Hate Crime Delivery Group (HCDG), which assists delivery of the strategic priorities in the draft Programme for Government 2016-2021, in relation to working across government to develop new approaches to dealing with harm and vulnerability, in this context hate crime. The HCDG monitors trends in hate crime and delivers a Hate Crime Action Plan which aims to ensure connectivity between partners and coordinate activities to address hate crime across Northern Ireland.

My officials have also have been working with other Departments to tackle the enabling factors of hate crime and align respective strategies and policies, for example, with The Executive Office (TEO) to connect the TEO Racial Equality Strategy and Good Relations Programme with my Department's work on Community Safety.

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/printquestionssummary.aspx?docid=367546>

*The statistics referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.psni.police.uk/globalassets/inside-the-psni/our-statistics/hate-motivation-statistics/2021-22/q3/hate-motivations-bulletin-dec-21.pdf>

*The recommendations referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/hate-crime-review.pdf>

*The consultation referred to above can be read at*

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

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Middle East: International Law**

**arah Owen (Labour) [118624]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to Amnesty International citing human rights

abuses against Palestinian civilians, published 1 February 2022, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure international law is upheld in the Middle East.

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Sarah Owen (Labour)** [118625] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made for the implications of her policy of the latest report by Amnesty International on the seizures of Palestinian land and property, unlawful killings, forcible transfer, drastic movement restrictions, administrative detention and the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians.

**Amanda Milling:** We do not agree with the use of this terminology. Any judgment on whether serious crimes under international law have occurred is a matter for judicial decision, rather than for governments or non-judicial bodies. As a friend of Israel, we have a regular dialogue on human rights. This includes encouraging the Government of Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and do all it can to uphold the values of equality for all. Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is a human rights priority for the FCDO.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-04/118624>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-04/118625>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/MDE1551412022ENGLISH.pdf>

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Palestinians: Personal Names**

**Steve McCabe (Labour)** [122585] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the latest Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and the Palestinian Authority (PA), whether her Department has made representations to representatives of the Palestinian Authority on reports in the official PA newspaper Al-Hayat Al-Jadida on 13 June 2021 celebrating the naming of a Palestinian baby after Adolf Eichmann.

#### **Palestinians: Television**

**Steve McCabe (Labour)** [122586] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, in the context of the latest Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Palestinian Authority (PA), whether her Department has made representations to representatives of the PA on the broadcasting of songs with lyrics inciting violence on official PA TV News on 3, 10, 11 and 13 July 2021.

**Amanda Milling:** Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle any language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to avoid engaging in, or encouraging, any type of action and language that makes it more difficult to achieve a negotiated solution to the conflict.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-10/122585>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-02-10/122586>

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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>

#### **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>

Report Stage, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership\(MinimumAge\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership(MinimumAge)Bill)

Third Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership\(MinimumAge\)Bill#contribution-E91FE386-ACEC-4C29-8D6F-71CFD840872A](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/1967704D-1346-4B9D-A47D-BF128CB1FF8A/MarriageAndCivilPartnership(MinimumAge)Bill#contribution-E91FE386-ACEC-4C29-8D6F-71CFD840872A)

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/9AC0D65F-91AE-43F5-B6CC-8B6B13EB37EC/MarriageAndCivilPartnership\(MinimumAge\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-25/debates/9AC0D65F-91AE-43F5-B6CC-8B6B13EB37EC/MarriageAndCivilPartnership(MinimumAge)Bill)

Notice of amendments

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0018/amend/marriage\\_day\\_rep\\_0225.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0018/amend/marriage_day_rep_0225.pdf)

#### **\*\* Nationality and Borders Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/45385/documents/1471>

and

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/45416/documents/1482>

#### **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 9 days**

**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