Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

**Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill**

*Beth Winter (Labour) [193279]* To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in his Department have had discussions with their counterparts in the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill and its compliance with UN Security Council resolution 2334.

*David Rutley:* Yes. FCDO officials have been in regular contact with their counterparts from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities throughout the development of the bill. They have discussed a number of issues, including the compliance with UNSCR 2334.

[https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-10/193279](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-10/193279)

**UNSCR 2334, referred to above, can be read at**


The following six questions all received the same answer

**Independent Faith Engagement Review**

*Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [192907]* To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what questions were asked to faith communities during interviews for the Independent Faith Engagement Review.

*Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [192908]* To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, who responded to the call for evidence for the Independent Faith Engagement Review by (a) faith group and (b) organisation.

*Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [192910]* To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, who gave evidence in person to the Independent Faith Engagement Review; and how many and what proportion of those people also provided written evidence through the call for evidence.

*Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [192912]* To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many and what proportion of (a) respondents to the call for evidence and (b) people who gave evidence in person to the Independent Faith Engagement Review were from the Sikh community.
Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [192915] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason his Department decided that the Independent Faith Engagement Review call for evidence should be open for 28 days; and whether he sought independent advice on this decision.

**Religion**

Preet Kaur Gill (Labour Co-op) [192913] To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with which faith organisations the Government has a policy of not engaging.

Dehenna Davison: In relation to the call for evidence, information is in the process of being deleted according to our published privacy notice.

In relation to additional in-person meetings and any written evidence submitted to the reviewer outside the call for evidence, I want to re-iterate that as an Independent reviewer, Colin Bloom was free to meet with any individuals or organisations he chose to inform his review. He was not under any obligation to inform officials of his meetings or to pass on any written evidence.

As an Independent reviewer, Colin Bloom met with a wide range of stakeholders - including charities, organisations, academics and other sectoral experts and key individuals of all faiths and none - whom he deemed to have relevant insight into particular themes relevant to his report. Given the sensitive issues covered in his review, Colin Bloom was committed to preserving respondents’ anonymity so they could speak freely. While these anonymised sources and external analysis have informed the review, the views and recommendations expressed are Mr Bloom's own.

With this in mind, we can provide the following information:

1. The call for evidence was conducted in adherence with the Cabinet Office’s consultation principles, including consideration of the length of the consultation. Given the sheer volume of responses (over 21,000), the length of the consultation period clearly provided sufficient time for individuals and organisations to respond.

2. The breakdown of respondents by declared faith was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Respondent Count</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>9874</td>
<td>47.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>4189</td>
<td>19.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>2522</td>
<td>12.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist/Humanist</td>
<td>2466</td>
<td>11.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>1.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jain</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmadi Muslim</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahá’í</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritualist</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoroastrian</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taoist</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual religious identities</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple religious identities</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools: Islamophobia

Stephen Morgan (Labour) [192640] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to tackle islamophobia in schools.

Nick Gibb: The Government condemns and strives to tackle all forms of discrimination, prejudice, and harassment.
Under the Equality Act 2010, schools have a duty to take steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations across all protected characteristics, including between people of different religions or beliefs. The Department has published advice to support schools to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act 2010, which is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools?msclkid=9ce22dddcc5d11ec9a0a2d6e2fd0a666
As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be introduced to different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain. This can include experiences and voices of people from all backgrounds. The relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum has a focus on equality, respect, the harmful impact of stereotyping, as well as the importance of valuing difference. RSHE guidance is available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health
Schools are also required to actively promote fundamental British values, including mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. Actively promoting these values means that any opinions or behaviours that contradict them need to be challenged. The Department publishes information, guidance and support for teachers and head teachers on how to challenge discriminatory beliefs on the Educate Against Hate website, accessible at: https://www.educateagainsthate.com
This includes the ‘Respectful School Communities’ toolkit, a self review and signposting tool to support schools to develop a whole-school approach which promotes respect and discipline.
All schools are required by law to have a behaviour policy which outlines measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. To support schools tackle bullying, the Department is providing over £3 million of funding between August 2021 and March 2024 to five anti bullying organisations. The Department has deliberately focused this grant programme on preventing and tackling bullying of pupils with protected characteristics. This includes projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefer not to say</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>0.38%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
targeting the bullying of particular vulnerable groups, such as those who are victims of hate related bullying.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-05/192640

**Religious Freedom**

**Julian Knight (Independent) [193114]** To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church is taking to help (a) tackle religious persecution and (b) protect religious freedom.

**Andrew Selous:** Last month the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen, welcomed the UN Security Council’s adoption of a joint UK / UAE Government resolution highlighting threats to Freedom of Religion or Belief. The steps taken by the UK Government followed a review authored by the Bishop at the invitation of the then Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, the implementation of which has since become Government Policy. In a vote, the Security Council adopted the proposal, which will see the UN Secretary General produce an oral report on Freedom of Religion or Belief related threats to international peace and security. The initial deadline is 14th June 2024, with the intention of such a statement becoming an annual event.

Religious persecution and freedom of religion were on the agenda at the gathering of the global Anglican Communion at the Lambeth Conference in 2022. At the Conference a range of ‘calls’, or priorities for the Church worldwide, were made to tackle these issues. The documents relating to Freedom of Religion and religious persecution can be found under the Inter-Faith, Christian Unity and Human Dignity sections, here:


The Church of England remains closely involved with the work of the FCDO in supporting the work of His Majesty’s Ambassadors and diplomats and the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief. More information about the work of the International Panel can be found here:

https://www.ippforb.com/about/

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-10/193114

*The Security Council Resolution referred to above can be read at*  
https://daccess-ods.un.org/tmp/6278727.6506424.html

*The Review referred to above can be read at*  

**Relevant Legislation**  **new or updated today**

**UK Parliament**

**Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475

House of Commons written answer  
https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-07-10/193279

**Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill**  
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186
Holocaust Memorial Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325

** Online Safety Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137
Notice of amendments
https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/52268/documents/3817

Nakba Commemoration Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438

Schools Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-
overarching-documents

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill
https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-
scotland-bill

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill
**Consultations**  **new or updated today**

**In 4 days**
Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill (closing date not specified – no later than 14 September 2023 but may be earlier)

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland (closing date 5 October 2023)

The future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales (closing date 26 October 2023)
[https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/ons/futureofpopulationandmigrationstatistics/](https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/ons/futureofpopulationandmigrationstatistics/)