

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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## Home Affairs

### Downing Street

**Prime Minister:** "I would like to wish Jewish people across the United Kingdom and around the world a happy, peaceful and prosperous RoshHashanah. As the Jewish New Year begins, I want to renew my unwavering vow to stand by our Jewish community now and for the years to come."

<https://twitter.com/10DowningStreet/status/1038081117851668480>

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office

#### **Foreign Secretary: Message for Rosh Hashanah**

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said: As we enter the High Holidays, I wish a happy and sweet New Year to all Jewish communities in Britain and around the world.

For our Jewish friends in Israel, this has been a year of landmarks, including the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, the 70th Anniversary of Israel's statehood, and the first British royal visit, made by HRH The Duke of Cambridge in June.

This is also a special occasion for the UK's Jewish community. At a time when many worry about the corrosive impact of anti-Semitism, I want to reiterate our rejection of such ugly intolerance. We are proud of Britain's Jewish community, who make such a positive contribution to all aspects of our society and to public life. Long may that continue.

So I wish all those celebrating in the UK, and beyond, Shana Tova and Chatima Tova. Here's to a prosperous and healthy year!

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-message-for-rosh-hashanah>

**Jeremy Hunt:** One of my first experiences as Foreign Sec was seeing Israel support the UK & others in getting the brave White Helmets out of Syria. Thank you. And to all Jewish people around the world we will NEVER allow the cancer of anti-semitism to return to Europe. Very happy RoshHashanah

[https://twitter.com/Jeremy\\_Hunt/status/1038723571441385478](https://twitter.com/Jeremy_Hunt/status/1038723571441385478)

**Alistair Burt:** I wish a happy new year to Jewish friends in the UK, Israel and around the world – Shana Tova

<https://twitter.com/AlistairBurtUK/status/1038569937260961793>

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## House of Commons Written Answers

### Israel: Immigration Controls

**Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op)** [167392] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what his policy is on Israel's immigration policy which restricts the access of international passport holders to the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Alistair Burt:** We remain concerned about Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement and access into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We continue to raise these wider concerns with the Israeli authorities. However it is for Israel to decide its immigration policy. We have updated our travel advice recommending that concerned UK nationals contact the Israeli Embassy for further information.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-23/167392/>

### Hamas

**Catherine West (Labour)** [168169] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on trends in and the extent of radicalisation by Hamas of Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

**Alistair Burt:** While the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold information on trends in radicalisation, we are very concerned by the recent violence in Gaza. Hamas must cease all attacks against Israel, commit to non-violence and make movements towards peace. The UK will continue to condemn strongly all violence and incitement to commit violence, and support the return of the Palestinian Authority to administer Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-24/168169/>

### Hamas

**Catherine West (Labour)** [168170] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of Hamas-led rocket attacks against Israel there have been in each of the last twelve months.

**Alistair Burt:** Between 1 September 2017 and 31 July 2018 according to figures provided by Israeli security agencies, 160 rocket launching attacks were conducted from Gaza at Israel, with 393 rockets launched. We hold no information on which group fired the rockets. Rocket attacks wreak havoc on the daily lives of Israelis and make achieving peace more difficult. We call on all parties to refrain from violence and to commit to a negotiated solution to end the conflict.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-24/168170/>

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## Other Relevant Information

### Commission on Religious Education

#### Religious Education must change to better reflect modern Britain

... The Commission's report, 'Religion and Worldviews: a national plan for RE', recommends a new approach to RE in schools as well as changes to the laws and policies governing the subject. Its proposals describe a new and richer vision for RE that

prepares young people for living in an increasingly diverse world ...

The core recommendation is a new National Entitlement for all pupils in all schools that specifies nine broad requirements for what they should be taught, including the concepts of 'religion' and 'worldviews', which the Commission describes as 'complex, diverse and plural'. It also recommends that pupils examine the roles religious and non-religious worldviews play in societies and the lives of individuals, including their influence on moral behaviour and social norms. However, the proposals allow schools to develop different approaches to best reflect their pupils' experiences and their school character and context.

Programmes of study for pupils would be able to draw from a range of approaches to life including the different traditions within Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism, non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, secularism, atheism and agnosticism. ...

Chair of the Commission on RE, The Very Rev Dr John Hall, said: ... "At present, the quality of Religious Education in too many schools is inadequate in enabling pupils to engage deeply with the worldviews they will encounter. Many structural changes in education in the past twenty years have unintentionally undermined the integrity of RE in the school curriculum. The Commission is proposing a fresh start for the subject with a vision for the teaching of Religion and Worldviews in every school." ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CoRE-report-release.pdf>

**Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward: A national plan for RE**

<https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Final-Report-of-the-Commission-on-RE.pdf>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* new or updated today

### **UK Parliament**

**Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

**Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

**\*\* Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Notice of amendments

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0012/amend/organ\\_rm\\_pbc\\_0509.1-3.html](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0012/amend/organ_rm_pbc_0509.1-3.html)

### **Scottish Parliament**

**Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 5 days**

**20 years of the Human Rights Act** (closing date 14 September 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/20-years-human-rights-act-launch-17-19/>

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