

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, and Holocaust Memorial Foundation

Kristallnacht 80 years on

To mark the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation has today (9 November 2018) released a short film with exclusive testimony from 6 British survivors of the Holocaust.

On the 9 and 10 November 1938, Jewish communities in Germany and throughout Nazi occupied territories faced widespread state-sponsored violence against their businesses, homes and places of worship. The pogrom became known as Kristallnacht (in English, crystal night) after the smashed glass that littered the streets on the morning of the 10 November.

Over the course of the evening an estimated 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps, including Dachau and Buchenwald.

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation set out in 2015 to record the testimony of British survivors of the Holocaust. In interviews with broadcaster Natasha Kaplinsky, survivors recall their experiences of Kristallnacht and the aftermath of the violence on their daily lives, their families and their wider communities.

UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation co-Chair Ed Balls said: "Kristallnacht was a moment where prejudice turned into violence, and it is right 80 years on, that we examine this vicious escalation of the Nazi campaign against Jewish communities in Europe.

By understanding the steps that lead up to the Holocaust, we are can remain vigilant to any attempt to create divisions and stir up hate in our society today."

UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation co-Chair Lord Pickles said: "The Foundation was set up to increase the visibility and scope of Holocaust education in the United Kingdom, securing the legacy of the British Holocaust survivors who have dedicated their lives to educating the future generation on where prejudice, intolerance and hatred can lead.

Our hope is that the short film released today, with moving testimony from men and women who recall the impact of Kristallnacht on their own communities, is a small step in achieving these aims." ...

To read the full press release and watch the short film see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/kristallnacht-80-years-on>

Church of Scotland

Dossier reveals horrors of Kristallnacht on Jew

A Church of Scotland minister compiled a dossier that lays bare the “depths of human misery” inflicted on Jewish people during the infamous German Pogrom which happened 80 years ago today.

It contains “truthful observations and trustworthy accounts by eye witnesses” to Kristallnacht, a wave of Nazi orchestrated violence on November 9-10, 1938. ...

The typewritten document was compiled two months after the so-called Night of Broken Glass by Rev Donald William Mackay, who was minister of the Scots International Church in Rotterdam in the Netherlands from 1934-1940.

Unearthed in the World Mission Council archive at the Church of Scotland offices in Edinburgh, the dossier contains deeply disturbing details of the fury meted out on the Jewish community and serves as a timely reminder of what can happen when hatred and prejudice takes hold.

But the preface states: “What really did happen is worse by far than anything described in these pages”.

The Kirk, which works closely with the Jewish community and other faith groups, believes it has a responsibility to “examine and challenge antisemitism and prejudice” wherever it manifests. ...

Rev Ian Alexander, Secretary to the World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland, said: “It is extraordinary to unearth a document which shares first-hand knowledge and experience from people living through the desperate events of 1938, and their aftermath. ...

Mirella Yandoli, Interfaith Programme Officer for the Church of Scotland, said: “This archive is a timely reminder of both what happened 80 years ago and also the responsibility of the Church to act and draw attention to this hatred then and now.

“We need to take this anniversary as an opportunity to reflect on how easy it is to fall into the position of bystander and do nothing but lament.

“I view it as the Church’s responsibility to examine and challenge antisemitism and prejudice in our own organisation and continue to look at how we can call it out in the public sphere. ...

To read the full press release see

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2018/dossier_reveals_horrors_inflicted_on_jewish_people

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Khalida Jarrar

Tom Brake (Liberal Democrat) [186917] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the political activist Khalida Jarrar.

Alistair Burt: We have not raised the case of Ms Khalida Jarrar with the Israeli authorities. We remain concerned about Israel’s extensive use of administrative detention. According to international law, this should be used only when security makes it absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law and either charge or release detainees.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186917/>

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Richard Burden (Labour) [186926] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what preconditions his Department has set for the UK to recognise the State of Palestine.

Alistair Burt: The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. The UK continues to support efforts towards peace. We are clear that we want to see the creation of a sovereign, independent, contiguous, and viable Palestinian state - living in peace and security, side by side with Israel. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation; without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186926/>

Gaza: Visits Abroad

Richard Burden (Labour) [186927] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on facilitating visits to Gaza for hon. Members.

Alistair Burt: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against all travel to Gaza. Entry to, and exit from, Gaza can be very difficult. Permission to access Gaza is granted by either the Israeli or Egyptian authorities. Any specific request from Members of Parliament for assistance from the Government would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186927/>

Palestinians: Peace Negotiations

Richard Burden (Labour) [186930] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Egyptian counterpart on the proposal for the Palestinian reconciliation process to be overseen by the Egyptian Government.

Alistair Burt: On 14 October, I discussed the Middle East Peace Process, including reconciliation efforts, with the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, in Cairo. The UK is supportive of Egyptian efforts to facilitate the return of the legitimate Palestinian Authority to Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186930/>

Israel: Palestinians

Richard Burden (Labour) [186932] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage the resumption of substantive negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Alistair Burt: At this highly sensitive time in the region, there is an urgent need to restart the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians. We regularly press both parties to resume direct negotiations towards a two-state solution. I discussed the issue of the Middle East Peace Process with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 11 October. We continue to encourage the US Administration to bring forward detailed proposals for a viable peace agreement that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186932/>

Middle East: Peace Negotiations

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [186992] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has plans to convene a summit of European and Arab foreign ministers with the US Administration to discuss the red lines for that country's Middle East peace plan.

Alistair Burt: We have no plans to convene a summit to discuss the Middle East Peace Process. We continue to encourage the US Administration to bring forward detailed proposals for a viable Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement that addresses the legitimate concerns of both parties. We are also in conversation with likeminded European and Arab states about the best way to advance prospects for peace.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186992/>

Israel: Palestinians

Emily Thornberry (Labour) [186993] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Israeli government on the proposed implementation of Military Order 1797 to (a) accelerate the process of demolitions within the Occupied Palestinian Territories and (b) prevent third-party legal challenges against those demolitions.

Alistair Burt: Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised this specific Military Order with the Israeli authorities from the Ministry of Justice in May. The Government has repeatedly made clear to the Israeli authorities our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. In all but the most exceptional circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians and is harmful to the peace process. We call on the Israeli authorities to cease the policy of demolitions and provide a transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186993/>

United Nations

Second Committee Approves 5 Texts Including on Sovereignty of Arab Population in Occupied Syrian Golan, Palestinian People over Their Natural Resources

The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) today introduced 31 draft resolutions and approved five of them, including one calling on Israel to cease its occupation of the Palestinian Territory and Syrian Golan.

The text, "permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources", further stated that the 51-year occupation by Israel has caused multi-layered harm to those populations, with the funding crisis affecting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) further exacerbating the situation. ...

The representative of Egypt (on behalf of the Group of 77) introduced the resolution ... stating the 51-year Israeli occupation has had a detrimental effect on the people of Palestine and Syria. The harm is multi-layered, and the funding crisis of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) only exacerbates the condition of the Palestinian people. Israel's actions are a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and may constitute collective punishment. ...

Speaking before the vote, the representative of Saudi Arabia said ... Israel has gone far

beyond the pale, occupying and settling the territories, and it is time to establish an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. ...

The representative of Israel said the content of the draft resolution has little to do with reality or development, which is the primary interest of the Committee. The data is highly selective and does not hide its anti-Israel bias. It is the opposite of what a United Nations resolution should be. Denouncing Hamas as a hate-filled organization, she called them a murderous gang ruling over millions in Gaza, with no connection drawn between its reign of terror and the condition of the people under its rule. She stated the resolution is a political agenda in search of a document number. ...

The observer of the State of Palestine expressed gratitude for those Member States who voted for the resolution. The approval is a resounding affirmation of the rights of the sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. Noting that the extensive destruction of the occupying power Israel caused grave environmental and economic harm, she said its adherence to international law is an absolute imperative and can only support sustainable development. Only international action can change the situation on the ground, and after 51 years of brutal occupation, the international community must act collectively to end it. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gaef3508.doc.htm>

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.2/73/L.37>

Despite funding crisis, Palestine refugee classrooms set to stay open, says UNRWA

The Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) looks set to keep its classrooms open for the rest of the school year, despite earlier fears that they would have to close within the next few weeks, due to steep funding cuts ...

Matthias Schmale, the Head of UNRWA operations in Gaza, said that the agency still has a deficit in its core program budget, "but we are one and a half months away from the end of the year. If we get to the end of December, we know that there are Member States who committed money for next year. So, I can say now that this school year is basically safe."

UNRWA operations have been hit hard by the United States decision at the beginning of the year to cut back its funding of the Agency by around \$300 million. That constituted the largest ever reduction in funding in UNRWA's history, leading to a severe financial crisis which threatened the existence of many of its critical assistance programmes ...

Although the gap is now reduced to \$64 million, a strong sign of a collective effort to safeguard its programmes, the difficulties in the region continue. ...

To read the full press release and listen to a UN News interview, see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1025211>

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Other Relevant Information

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

Tackling antisemitism effectively requires proper data

The persistent problem of limited data hinders effective responses to tackle Europe's

longstanding antisemitism issues, finds the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights' latest annual overview of antisemitism data from across the EU. Without such data, government and civil society efforts to combat antisemitism will remain general and untargeted.

The *Antisemitism: Overview of data available in the European Union 2007–2017* report is released on the day that remembers the wave of violent anti-Jewish events of Kristallnacht on 9 November 1938. As in previous years, it underlines the problems of limited data on how people experience antisemitism.

It reveals how official data on reported antisemitic incidents were missing in eight EU Member States for 2017.

In addition, the high-level of under-reporting by victims and different national approaches to data collection make it difficult for policy makers to understand the extent, nature and characteristics of antisemitism in their countries and across the EU.

However, antisemitism remains a serious concern which requires action, based on the official and unofficial data that is available.

Therefore, greater efforts to tackling under-reporting by encouraging victims and witnesses to report antisemitism is key. In addition, authorities need systems in place to record such incidents.

National data collection on hate crime, including antisemitism also needs improving. Here FRA's [compendium of practices for combating hate crime](#) which has examples of how some Member States are recording hate crime could help.

FRA also assists Member States in [improving hate crime recording and data collection](#), within the EU's High Level Group on combating Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of Intolerance. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2018/tackling-antisemitism-effectively-requires-proper-data>

Antisemitism – Overview of data available in the European Union 2007–2017

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-antisemitism-update-2007-2017_en.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>

Online Forums Bill

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

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

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

Reform of the legal requirements for divorce (closing date 10 December 2018)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/reform-of-the-legal-requirements-for-divorce/>

The future of civil partnership in Scotland (closing date 21 December 2018)

<https://consult.gov.scot/family-law/the-future-of-civil-partnership-in-scotland/>

2021 Census: Outputs Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland (closing date 9 January 2019)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/dfp/2021-census-outputs-strategy-consultation-for-northern-ireland-document.pdf>

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