



Representing, connecting and supporting Jewish people in Scotland

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Welsh Assembly

National Assembly for Wales recalled

Following a formal request from the First Minister, Mark Drakeford AM, the Llywydd, Elin Jones AM, has agreed to recall the National Assembly for Wales.

The Assembly will sit on Thursday, 5 September ...

Elin Jones, Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales said: "... I have received a request from the First Minister to recall the Assembly next week in order to discuss the latest Brexit developments. I have agreed to the request and in light of this, a full Plenary session will be held on Thursday 5th September.

"We are in uncharted constitutional territory, and it is a matter of parliamentary principle that as the UK Parliament reconvenes next week, Assembly Members should also be afforded the opportunity to speak for their constituents on this issue of great significance." ...

[The Welsh Assembly had previously been due to return from recess on 15 September.]

To read the full press release see

<http://www.assembly.wales/en/newhome/pages/newsitem.aspx?itemid=2021&assembly=5>

Welsh Government

New organ donation campaign launched to encourage more Welsh people to sign the register

... In 2015, Wales adopted a soft-opt out system of consent, where if a person has not registered any organ donation decision, then their consent can be deemed. Deemed consent means that a person is assumed to have no objection to organ donation unless they have stated otherwise. Moving to the new system has helped increase the consent rate in Wales to the highest in the UK. However, the ability to opt in on the Organ Donor Register has always been there and is something we want to encourage people to do. ... Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said: It's encouraging to see that Wales has paved the way in organ donation legislation and both England and Scotland have followed our lead

with opt-out legislation coming into force in 2020. Despite many people being aware of the legislation in Wales, we must continually think of new ways to ensure as many people as possible are doing all they can to make their decision clear to their friends and family. ... We want to create as many opportunities as possible for people to reflect on and talk about their decision, and if they want, to register that on the Organ Donor Register. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://gov.wales/new-organ-donation-campaign-launched-encourage-more-welsh-people-sign-register>

Crown Prosecution Service

Racist man sentenced for two hate crimes after abuse towards Jewish family

A man who shouted "one, two, three, Heil Hitler" and "go have a sausage sandwich" at a Jewish family has been jailed for 12 weeks for hate crimes.

David Aherne, 54, pleaded guilty to one count of causing racially aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress and one count of causing religiously aggravated intentional harassment, alarm or distress at Wood Green Crown Court on 13 August.

Today [Tuesday, 3 September] Aherne was sentenced to 12 weeks in custody with the judge citing the racist element as an aggravating feature.

Aherne had boarded the 149 bus on 10 July 2019. Whilst on the bus in the vicinity of Stamford Hill in Hackney, he shouted the racist remarks at a Jewish couple and their three children. The victim tried to prevent Aherne from getting off the bus as they waited for police to arrive, only to be told by Aherne that he would pull down his own trousers in front of the Jewish family.

Elaine Cousins, from the CPS, said: "It is hard to believe that crimes like this are still being committed. Unfortunately for the victim and his family, the flagrant disregard and respect for other races and religions shown was exposed in the most offensive of displays.

"This was a cruel verbal attack on people simply going about their business. The family were subjected to extremely racist and offensive language during the tirade.

"The incident was acutely distressing for the family and the wider Jewish community, some of whom were present. Anti-Semitism has no place in our society and the CPS will prosecute those who carry out hate crimes where there is the evidence to do so."

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/london-north/news/racist-man-sentenced-two-hate-crimes-after-abuse-towards-jewish-family>

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Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Updated travel advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated travel advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

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Other Relevant Information

Tell Mama

Tell MAMA Annual Report 2018: Normalising Hatred

... Of over 2,000 contacts made with Tell MAMA in 2018, Tell MAMA recorded 1,282 anti-Muslim or Islamophobic reports, of which 1,072 were verified as being classified as such, through secondary evidential sources. Of the 1,072 cases, 745 occurred at a street level and 327 were online.

In addition, Tell MAMA received reports of 1,891 anti-Muslim hate crimes and incidents from 20 police forces in the U.K. which Tell MAMA has data sharing and information agreements with. (These details do not overlap with the Tell MAMA data sets). ...

In 2018, two significant spikes occurred. The first, in spring, reflected the 'Punish a Muslim Day' letters sent to Muslim homes, institutions, and places of work in March, followed by heightened tensions, fears, and anxieties around the proposed day in April, and the second wave of letters ('Punish a Muslim Day 2'), received in May. ...

The second and more significant spike occurred in August after the former foreign secretary Boris Johnson a column referring to veiled Muslim women as 'letterboxes' and 'bank-robbers'. In the week following his article, anti-Muslim incidents increased by 375% – from 8 incidents the previous week, to 38 in the following. Of the 38 anti-Muslim hate incidents in the first week following Mr Johnson's comments, 22 were directed at visibly Muslim women who wore the face veil (niqab) or other veiling practices. We recorded a total of 57 incidents in the three weeks following the column's publication, 32 of which were directed at visibly Muslim women. ...

Verbal abuse (abusive language), accompanied many of the anti-Muslim incidents. ...

Over the last three years, Tell MAMA has recorded a steady increase in street-based (offline) anti-Muslim incidents year-on-year. However, this year demonstrated an 11% reduction in street-based (offline) incidents compared with the previous reporting period of 2017 (with 839 street-based incidents recorded). ...

The online 2018 Tell MAMA dataset includes 327 verified reports, down 10% from the 2017 figure of 362 verified reports. A clear majority of reported abuse occurred either on Twitter (175 reports/incidents) or Facebook (92 reports), with a small minority having occurred on YouTube (8 reports). ...

Most commonly, anti-Muslim attacks/incidents in 2018 took place in public areas (209). Incidents which took place within, or targeted the victim's household or private property, increased by 11% (101 to 113), and those occurring in the victim's place of work have risen by 8% (74 to 80) since the previous year. ...

The rising instances of discrimination, hate speech, and anti-Muslim literature indicate that a more general intolerance and hatred is growing. These typologies are seldom prosecutable by law and have proven more difficult to achieve satisfactory outcomes and solutions for victims. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-annual-report-2018--normalising-hate/>

Normalising Hatred: Tell MAMA Annual Report 2018

<https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Tell%20MAMA%20Annual%20Report%202018%20-%20Normalising%20Hate.pdf>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

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

Domestic Abuse Bill

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

International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill

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

Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill

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

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Islamophobia in Scotland (closing date 30 September 2019)

<https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=13027>

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