



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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'Never Again' - a call to action, not a slogan

... On the 14th Of October, I embarked on a journey to Poland. To Krakow, a historic town made infamous by the brutality that was the Holocaust. ...

At 30 years old, I'd heard of Auschwitz, I'd seen *The Boy In The Striped Pajamas*, and I'd also heard words like Holocaust, genocide and fascism. But I didn't truly know what these words meant or how they fit into today's society and the struggles we face in 2019.

What I learnt before and during the trip was that the Holocaust was a cruel act of mass murder, a racist act that should never have happened. What scared me most was that this wasn't something that happened centuries ago. It was committed 80 years ago and practically on our own doorstep. I hear the term 'far-right' every day within my trade union, and until I actually sat down and researched the true meaning of those words, I couldn't really comprehend them. ...

The whole experience felt surreal. Auschwitz looked so new, almost like something from a creepy film set. ... We saw the only remaining gas chamber, where thousands of people walked unknowingly to a painful death. ... Birkenau, although not as well-known as Auschwitz, was actually 25 times bigger. It was more raw and on a phenomenal scale. It was a place purely intended for torture and mass slaughter.

So how does all this fit into today's world? Every day on the news we are faced with acts of violence, from vicious homophobic attacks to racial slurs and chants on football pitches. We are brainwashed by tabloid newspapers into believing that all immigration is bad for the country, that immigrants are stealing our jobs, when in fact they are escaping life-threatening conditions in hope of a better life for themselves and their families. Fascism should never be tolerated. Acts of genocide should not be happening anywhere in this world. We are all members of the same human race, a race that should be protected, no matter what skin colour, religious belief or sexual preference.

The trip opened my eyes to how cruel the world has been to so many. By continually spreading knowledge and remembering those that were lost, we can help shape a better and more peaceful future for all.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/never-again-call-action-not-slogan>

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Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-19969 John Finnie (Green): United States' Change in Policy on Israeli Settlements – That the Parliament deplores the reported recent change in the United States' official policy on Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land; believes that the new policy contradicts international law; understands that it is not within the power of the US Secretary of State to unilaterally change international law; considers that United States' support for Israel in the past has not brought stability to the region; believes that this change will serve as a barrier to achieving peace and justice, and expresses its solidarity with the people of Palestine.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-19969>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israeli settlements: UN expert condemns US decision to “jettison international law”

The announcement by the US Secretary of State that Israeli settlements do not violate international law is a decisive break with international consensus, and will only further entrench the perpetual Israeli occupation, a UN human rights expert said today.

“This is not a step towards peace or justice in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,” said Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. “The American Government’s decision to jettison international law and to legitimise the illegal Israeli settlements is probably the very last nail in the coffin of the two-state solution.

“This effectively grants permission to the Israeli government to formally annex large parts of the occupied West Bank, as it has already done with East Jerusalem,” he said. “This will only confirm a one state reality characterised by a rigid two-tier system of legal and political rights, based on ethnicity and religion. This would meet the international definition of apartheid.” ...

“The Israeli settlements are a major source of human rights violations, and they are the engine of Israel’s occupation,” said Lynk. “They are built on confiscated Palestinian property; they rely upon the illegal appropriation of Palestinian natural resources, including water, land and minerals; and they have forced Palestinians into smaller and more constricted space on their own territory.

“Most importantly, the incessant expansion of the Israeli settlements has robbed the Palestinians of hope for a future based on freedom.” ...

“Monday’s announcement by the US Secretary of State is the latest in a series of recent moves that has undermined the rules-based international order. Its earlier decisions to recognise Israel’s illegal annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights and to move its embassy to Jerusalem have pushed the chances of a shared future by Israeli Jews and Palestinians based on equality even further away.”

The Special Rapporteur called upon the international community to reaffirm the illegality of the settlements. He also asked the international community to take further steps to put international law into action by prohibiting the importation of settlement goods and services into the international marketplace.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25319&LanglD=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Draft content of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Specified Type A Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations (closing date 11 December 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/population-health/human-tissue-regulations-2019/>

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill (closing date 31 January 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/113449.aspx>

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