



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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House of Lords

Queen's Speech

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2019-12-19/debates/C9EB1C3B-3551-473B-8C30-864B8B020409/Queen%E2%80%99Speech>

Government Ministers

Prime Minister	Boris Johnson
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Michael Gove
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Sajid Javid
Foreign Secretary and First Secretary of State	Dominic Raab
Home Secretary	Priti Patel
Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union	Steve Barclay
Secretary of State for Defence	Ben Wallace
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice	Robert Buckland
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care	Matt Hancock
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Andrea Leadsom
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government	Robert Jenrick
Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade	Elizabeth Truss
Secretary of State for Education	Gavin Williamson

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Theresa Villiers
Secretary of State for Transport	Grant Shapps
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions	Thérèse Coffey
Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal	Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
Secretary of State for Scotland	Alister Jack
Secretary of State for Wales	Simon Hart
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland	Julian Smith
Secretary of State for International Development	Alok Sharma
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	Nicky Morgan
Minister without Portfolio (Cabinet Office)	James Cleverly
Chief Secretary to the Treasury	Rishi Sunak
Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons	Jacob Rees-Mogg
Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Whip	Mark Spencer
Attorney General	Geoffrey Cox
Minister of State (Cabinet Office) (jointly with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)	Jake Berry
Minister of State (Cabinet Office)	Oliver Dowden
Minister of State (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy)	Kwasi Kwarteng

<https://members.parliament.uk/Government/Cabinet>

UK Parliament House of Commons Library Briefing

Proscribed Terrorist Organisations

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN00815/SN00815.pdf>

Scottish Government

Scotland's right to choose: putting Scotland's future in Scotland's hands

<https://tinyurl.com/sv3sv2r>

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Holocaust

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Peter Bottomley (Conservative) (7) Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre: That this House supports the proposal and specification issued in September 2015 for the national holocaust memorial and learning centre; regrets that subsequent proposals and methods of propagation fail to meet the specifications; regrets that the management of the proposals fails to meet expected standards of openness, process and environmental

requirements; and calls on ministers to meet leading objectors to find a sensible appropriate way forward, considering appropriate designs and locations.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/53458/holocaust-memorial-and-learning-centre>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-20242 Alexander Stewart (Conservative): Alva Academy Artwork Selected for Holocaust Memorial Day Event – That the Parliament commends Alva Academy, which has been selected to feature in a national art exhibition as part of the commemorations to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau; notes that a memorial flame, which has been created by a personal support group from the school, Arty Stuff, has been selected by a panel of distinguished judges to feature in an exhibition as one of 75 memorial flames, representing each year since the liberation; acknowledges that this will be launched as part of the UK Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony in London on 27 January 2020; understands that more than 300 groups from across the country registered to take part in the competition, which was launched by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust to encourage more people to remember the six million Jewish people who were murdered; notes that the 75 Memorial Flames competition was launched with the creation of a sculpture by the artist and Holocaust survivor, Maurice Blik, who was liberated from the Bergen-Belsen camp as a child, and commends everyone at Alva Academy involved with this for their diligence and sterling work.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-20242>

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Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Renewing UNRWA and securing stability for Israelis and Palestinians: Statement by Ambassador Jonathan Allen, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council briefing on the Middle East.

... In light of the continued increase in Israeli settlements, we reiterate that settlements are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

The United Kingdom notes the Israeli Defence Minister's instructions to act for the advancement of a new Jewish neighbourhood in Hebron. We understand that this does not signal the start of a formal planning process; however, if such plans were to advance this would be of grave concern given the sensitivities of the location.

Demolitions of Palestinian-owned homes and structures have also increased. The UK is concerned in particular by the targeting of donor-funded structures in Area C ...

As we have made clear before, any suggestion that parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be annexed is contrary to international law, damaging to peace efforts and could not pass unchallenged. ...

Madam President, as the UK made clear last month, following the escalation of hostilities in Gaza, the indiscriminate attacks against Israeli civilians by Palestinian Islamic Jihad were completely unacceptable.

All countries, including Israel, have a legitimate right to self-defence, and the right to defend their citizens from attack. In doing so, it is vital that all actions are proportionate, in line with International Humanitarian Law, and are calibrated to avoid civilian casualties.

It is critical that the Palestinian leadership continue their efforts to tackle terror and incitement. Israeli security forces must also avoid the use of excessive force and we encourage Israel to properly investigate all potential breaches of law, holding those responsible to account.

The UK is concerned to hear of a further increase in the number of attacks by settlers on Palestinians. As the Occupying Power, Israel has a responsibility to protect the Palestinian population. We urge Israel to thoroughly investigate every instance and bring those responsible to justice. ...

... at this highly sensitive time in the region, we call on the parties to show real leadership, including the willingness to make tough compromises, in order to achieve a secure Israel, standing alongside a sovereign Palestinian state.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/renewing-unrwa-and-securing-stability-for-israelis-and-palestinians>

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

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

International Criminal Court

Statement of ICC Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, on the conclusion of the preliminary examination of the Situation in Palestine, and seeking a ruling on the scope of the Court's territorial jurisdiction

... following a thorough, independent and objective assessment of all reliable information available to my Office, the preliminary examination into the Situation in Palestine has concluded with the determination that all the statutory criteria under the Rome Statute for the opening of an investigation have been met.

I am satisfied that there is a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation into the situation in Palestine, pursuant to article 53(1) of the Statute. In brief, I am satisfied that (i) war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip ("Gaza") (for specifics, see paras. 94-96 [of the prosecution request]); (ii) potential cases arising from the situation would be admissible; and (iii) there are no substantial reasons to believe that an investigation would not serve the interests of justice. As there has been a referral from the State of Palestine, there is no requirement to seek Pre-Trial Chamber's authorisation before proceeding to open an investigation, and I do not seek to do so.

However, given the unique and highly contested legal and factual issues attaching to this situation, namely, the territory within which the investigation may be conducted, I deemed it necessary to rely on article 19(3) of the Statute to resolve this specific issue.

Earlier today, I therefore requested from Pre-Trial Chamber I a jurisdictional ruling on the scope of the territorial jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court ("ICC" or the "Court") under article 12(2)(a) of the Rome Statute in Palestine.

Specifically, I have sought confirmation that the "territory" over which the Court may exercise its jurisdiction, and which I may subject to investigation, comprises the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. Such determination is made strictly for the purposes of determining the Court's ability to exercise its jurisdiction and the scope of such jurisdiction under the Statute. ...

By seeking this ruling, I have invited the Chamber to rule expeditiously, while also permitting victims, relevant States, and others to participate in these proceedings, as appropriate. By engaging in an open and transparent manner in obtaining a ruling on this important issue, I hope that the process would not only assist the Chamber in its determination, but also endow its decision, and my ensuing investigation, with greater

clarity and reinforced legitimacy. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=20191220-otp-statement-palestine>

Prosecution request pursuant to article 19(3) for a ruling on the Court's territorial jurisdiction in Palestine

https://www.icc-cpi.int/CourtRecords/CR2019_07637.PDF

United Nations

Hope for Two-State Solution Fading as Israeli-Palestinian Violence Continues, Special Coordinator Tells Security Council

... **Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General**, introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) ... As detailed in the report, he said, "No steps were taken during the reporting period to cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem" as demanded by the resolution. Demolition of Palestinian-owned structures also continued.

In addition, despite the resolution's call for steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, violence resulted in injuries and property damage to Palestinians in various clashes in the West Bank, he said. Some 38 Palestinians in Gaza were injured near the border fence during protests that occasionally turned violent and one Palestinian man was killed by an Israeli drone as he approached the fence, bearing arms, according to Israel. Provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric also continued during the reporting period in violation of the resolution.

In recent weeks, the United Nations has continued its engagement with Palestinian officials and different factions in the effort to hold inclusive elections throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory ...

In the three years since the resolution was adopted, plans for over 22,000 units have been advanced or approved in West Bank settlements, he noted. He stressed that settlements must cease immediately and completely. Continued seizures of Palestinian structures, including internationally funded humanitarian projects, must also stop, and affected populations must be compensated. Continuing violence against civilians, terrorist attacks and incitement must also stop, as must indiscriminate launching of rockets and mortars towards the Israeli civilian population. At the Gaza perimeter fence, security forces must exercise maximum restraint, and Hamas must stop the firing of rockets and ensure that protests are peaceful.

Furthermore, children should never be put in harm's way or targeted, he stressed. In addition, more measures must be taken to ensure that Israel fulfils its obligation to protect Palestinian civilians from violence, including by Israeli settlers. ...

... he warned that without additional funding and further Palestinian and Israeli commitments, Gaza could once again be pushed to the brink of collapse. He urged Israel to ease restriction on movement of people and goods. It is also crucial to end the militant build-up in Gaza, the constant threat of rocket fire and the separation of Gaza from a single Palestinian authority. ...

Since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), he said he remains greatly concerned at the lack of progress towards ending the occupation and realizing a negotiated two-State solution. It is not enough to call for renewal of efforts, he added, emphasizing that "we must take concrete action". ...

Adele Raemer, speaking via videoconference from Tel Aviv, recounted her personal experiences living in Kibbutz Nirim on the border with Gaza since 1975. When the warning of incoming rockets sounds, she has 5 to 10 seconds to get to safety. From her kitchen,

she can sprint to a safe room in three seconds, but if she is in the shower, “I’m out of luck”, she remarked. In the past year and a half, some 1,800 rockets were launched at Israeli communities, she said, adding that in August 2014, during Operation Protective Edge, deadly shrapnel ripped through her bedroom. Nothing has changed since that summer and, if anything, it has gotten worse. Describing a now-neutralized terror tunnel five minutes from her house, she asked Council members to consider how children in her community must feel knowing that terrorists can emerge from the ground at any time.

Within the past two years, Hamas has organized weekly riots along the border every Friday after prayers, prompting those living on the Israeli side to brace for a possible escalation of violence and rocket fire ... People seeking psychological assistance has risen 231 per cent in the past five years, with more than half being children.

Everyone in the area, both on the Israeli side and in Gaza, are hostages of Hamas, some literally so, she said, referring to two Israel citizens being held in Gaza along with the remains of two Israel soldiers. ... “I know that not all Gazans are part of Hamas,” she said, recalling that when she moved to her kibbutz, her family would drive to the beach or market in Gaza and that Gazans would come to her area. ...

Hamas must stop investing in terrorism and incitement to hatred and start making choices to enable the people of Gaza to thrive and prosper, she said, adding that the Government of Israel and Palestinian leaders must get to work on a long-term political agreement. ...

Jonathan Guy Allen (United Kingdom), expressing concern over non-compliance with the resolution, affirmed that settlement activity must cease, as must demolition of Palestinian structures. ... Indiscriminate attacks against Israeli citizens are also unacceptable and responses to attacks must be proportional and avoid civilian casualties. ...

Nicolas De Rivière (France) ... added his concern regarding ongoing settlement activity that could undermine the territorial continuity of a future Palestinian State. Israeli annexation of parts of the West Bank would constitute a serious violation of international law, he said, calling on the Israeli authorities to avoid policies that might result in a fait accompli. ...

Juergen Schulz (Germany) said ... the parties to the conflict, as well as all international stakeholders, must refrain from taking any measures which undermine the viability of a negotiated two-State solution. Resolution 2334 (2016) must be fully implemented, not only with regard to settlement activities but also with regard to acts of terror, violence against civilians, incitement, provocative actions, and inflammatory rhetoric. Calling on Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad to stop firing rockets into Israel, he said that the three military escalations in and around Gaza in 2019 highlight the urgent need for sustainable long-term solutions to the ongoing humanitarian and economic crisis there. ...

Vassily A. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) ... said that the support of unilateral Israeli actions by the United States are gross violations of international law. ... Constructive action by the international community is needed to create the conditions for a political solution ...

Kelly Craft (United States) reiterated that Israel’s people live in constant fear of attack that is not allayed by the Council’s constant criticism of that country. Resolution 2334 (2016) is correspondingly one-sided. However, it also condemns violence against civilians and that has not prevented rockets from raining down both on Israeli and Palestinian civilians. She asked whether this Council will also condemn those violations of the resolution. The resilience shown by Israel’s people despite living under constant attack is the factor that keeps the hope of a peaceful solution alive ...

Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine said: “Two words - confinement and expansion - can summarize the map of the Palestinians’ reality,”, adding that Palestinian Christians from Gaza were being barred by Israel from celebrating Christmas in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, two cities separated by a wall. While 2 million Palestinians are besieged in Gaza, those in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,

have been confined to the areas where they already lived in 1967. ...The purpose of this policy is to acquire maximum Palestinian land with minimum Palestinians, he continued, emphasizing that the illegal annexation of Palestinian land is the overarching objective of the Israeli occupation. ...

Noting that the General Assembly is adopting a resolution on the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and an independent State, he said that such texts are firmly rooted in the Charter of the United Nations, international law, human rights and Council resolutions. Yet they are described as biased and one-sided, with Israel's representative calling the Assembly "morally bankrupt". ...

"The claim that the United Nations passes a disproportionate number of resolutions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a distortion that dismisses key facts and context," he said, underscoring that the real bias lies in the Council's paralysis. ...

Danny Ben Yosef Danon (Israel) said the briefing illustrated how Iran-funded Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorize civilians in the Gaza Strip. On the Israeli side, he added, an entire generation is suffering trauma and fear that the noise they hear at night is that of a terror tunnel being dug under their bedrooms. ...

He went on to reiterate that Iran does not care about civilians, but only about its extremist ideology ... In Lebanon, it provides Hizbullah with kits for turning rockets into precision-guided missiles that could provoke a war in the Middle East, he warned. ...

Describing Iran as the biggest threat to stability and security in the region, he said many Council members and others in the international community nevertheless try to appease the regime. For years, Israel warned that Iran's nuclear programme is a global threat, yet "your appeasement has done nothing to slow it down", he recalled. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sc14056.doc.htm>

Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016):

Report of the Secretary-General

<https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/938>

Resolution 2334 (2016)

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2334%20\(2016\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2334%20(2016))

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

A very happy Hanukkah from @Rehman_Chishti to all those celebrating around the world

<https://twitter.com/foreignoffice/status/1208703729421172736>

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Other Relevant Information

United Nations

Amid Rising Hatred, Attacks on Religious Freedom, 'We Must Stand Together' for Peace, Secretary-General Says, Following Audience with Pope Francis

... This is a time of peace and goodwill and I am sad to witness Christian communities — including some of the world's oldest — unable to celebrate Christmas in safety. Tragically, we see Jews being murdered in synagogues, their gravestones defaced with swastikas; Muslims gunned down in mosques, their religious sites vandalized; Christians killed at prayers, their churches torched. We need to do more to promote mutual understanding and tackle rising hatred.

Your Holiness, I want to express my deep appreciation for your extraordinary service in promoting interfaith relations — including your landmark declaration with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar on “human fraternity for world peace and living together”. ... The United Nations has also launched a Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites and a strategy to combat hate speech.

In these turbulent and trying times, we must stand together for peace and harmony. ... And that is reflected in your vision, guidance and example. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sqsm19918.doc.htm>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

**** European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/europeanunionwithdrawalagreement.html>

Bill as introduced

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0001/20001.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0001/en/20001en01.htm>

Delegated Powers Memorandum

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0001/EU%20\(Withdrawal%20Agreement\)%20Bill%20-%20Delegated%20Powers%20Memorandum%20\(1\).pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0001/EU%20(Withdrawal%20Agreement)%20Bill%20-%20Delegated%20Powers%20Memorandum%20(1).pdf)

Human rights Memorandum

[https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0001/EU%20\(Withdrawal%20Agreement\)%20Bill%20-%20ECHR%20Memorandum.pdf](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0001/EU%20(Withdrawal%20Agreement)%20Bill%20-%20ECHR%20Memorandum.pdf)

First Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-12-19/debates/3E26BAA9-77D2-4D46-ABDE-979EA6CC56F2/BusinessOfTheHouse\(19And20December\)#contribution-4AB832A9-6784-41C3-8DE2-251D94B89D1B](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-12-19/debates/3E26BAA9-77D2-4D46-ABDE-979EA6CC56F2/BusinessOfTheHouse(19And20December)#contribution-4AB832A9-6784-41C3-8DE2-251D94B89D1B)

Second Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-12-20/debates/FE5B9762-F298-457B-8306-98D2D1D3519B/EuropeanUnion\(WithdrawalAgreement\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-12-20/debates/FE5B9762-F298-457B-8306-98D2D1D3519B/EuropeanUnion(WithdrawalAgreement)Bill)

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Equality Act 2010: Commencing the socio-economic duty (Welsh Government)

(closing date 17 January 2020)

<https://gov.wales/equality-act-2010-commencing-socio-economic-duty>

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