



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### Scottish Government

#### Hate Crime Bill

... The Hate Crime Bill seeks to modernise, consolidate and extend existing hate crime law ensuring it is fit for the 21st Century. Alongside the legislation being introduced, a working group will take forward work on a standalone offence of misogynistic harassment.

The draft legislation updates the list of characteristics protected under hate crime legislation and proposes the addition of age to this list – where there is a statutory aggravation for offences motivated by prejudice.

If passed by Parliament, the Bill would also provide for new ‘stirring up’ of hatred offences that would apply to all characteristics listed in the Bill: age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics. Currently these offences only apply to stirring up racial hatred.

Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf said: “This new Hate Crime Bill is an important milestone. By creating robust laws for the justice system, Parliament will send a strong message to victims, perpetrators, communities and to wider society that offences motivated by prejudice will be treated seriously and will not be tolerated.

“Stirring up of hatred can contribute to a social atmosphere in which discrimination is accepted as normal. Our legislation, if passed, would offer greater protection for those who experience this kind of behaviour. We all have a responsibility to challenge prejudice in order to ensure Scotland is the inclusive and respectful society we want it to be.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/hate-crime-bill/>

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## Israel

### UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

#### **COVID-19: Israel must release Palestinian prisoners in vulnerable situation, say UN experts**

A group of UN human rights experts urged Israel not to discriminate against thousands of Palestinian prisoners facing high-risk exposure to COVID-19 and to release the most vulnerable – particularly women, children, older persons and those with pre-existing medical conditions. ...

“Over the past month, Israel has released hundreds of Israeli prisoners as a preventive and protective step. It has not applied similar measures to Palestinian prisoners. This indicates discriminatory treatment towards Palestinians prisoners – which would be a violation of international law,” they added.

The experts said prisoner releases should also include those in administrative and pre-trial detention. “Israel should be taking steps to release those facing arbitrary measures as well as vulnerable groups in its prisons to reduce overcrowding and ensure the minimum conditions to prevent the spread of the virus.”

They noted that family visits have been banned since the COVID-19 outbreak and access to lawyers restricted for Palestinian detainees. “It is critical that any such measures are medically justified and, if so, alternative means for communication, such as video conferencing, should be made available. Special and more relaxed measures should also apply to children and women for visits.”

The experts also expressed serious concerns over reports that Israeli authorities are impeding efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19 in East Jerusalem. In one reported incident, Israeli authorities recently raided a testing clinic in the densely populated Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan under the pretext that its testing kits were provided by the Palestinian Authority. Israel has also arrested doctors.

“It is inconceivable that, in the current conditions, especially in light of the lack of testing kits and other equipment, Israel would undermine existing efforts to ensure that a larger portion of the Palestinian population is tested. Such efforts are especially needed when recent data suggests that rates of COVID-19 have significantly increased in occupied East Jerusalem,” they noted.

Palestinians under occupation, as a protected population under international humanitarian law, should have equal access to treatment and testing without discrimination. “Cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians to ensure protection, prevention and treatment of all is critical. Such acts as raiding Palestinian clinics can only undermine such efforts,” the expert said. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25822&LangID=E>

## United Nations

#### **Common coronavirus enemy, forges some Palestine-Israel cooperation, but West Bank annexation looms**

Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, told the Security Council that the past month has seen yet again more fighting and confrontation in the West Bank and Gaza, with ever-rising casualties.

But he added that it has also witnessed “inspiring examples” of cooperation across conflict lines in a common battle to contain the novel coronavirus outbreak – and opening fresh prospects for progress in the quest for peace.

“The recognition of this interdependence could – if there is political will – translate into

tangible progress towards resolving the conflict”, he said, noting how the two sides – with UN support – are coordinating their COVID-19 efforts.

“I strongly urge Israeli and Palestinian leaders to seize this moment to take steps towards peace (and) to reject unilateral moves that will only deepen the wedge between the two peoples and undermine the chances for peace.”

While they reiterated a commitment to advance peace agreements and cooperate with Israel’s neighbours, Mr. Mladenov said that the two Israeli politicians also agreed on advancing the annexation of parts of the West Bank, from 1 July.

In response, the Palestinian Authority has threatened to cancel the implementation of all bilateral agreements if annexation takes place, he said, adding that critical decisions by Israeli leaders today could impact the trajectory of the conflict for years to come.

“Moves to annex land and to accelerate settlement expansion, combined with the devastating impact of COVID-19, can ignite the situation and destroy any hope of peace”, he said. ...

He also put a spotlight on Israeli efforts to help Palestinians affected by the deadly virus. Significant challenges remain, however, with Palestinian health services still reporting an acute shortage of medical equipment and personnel, due to insufficient funding.

Emphasizing Israel’s responsibility to ensure the well-being and safety of people under its control in the Occupied Territories, the Special Coordinator reported that measures are being discussed to ensure that clearance revenues transferred by Israel to the Palestinian Authority, will not slip below \$137 million during the coming four months.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1062452>

*To read the full text of the briefing see*

[https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/security\\_council\\_briefing\\_-\\_23\\_april\\_2020.pdf](https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/security_council_briefing_-_23_april_2020.pdf)

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## Other Relevant Information

### European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

#### **Council of Europe’s anti-racism body holds working meeting on the fight against antisemitism**

The working group of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on the fight against antisemitism held its second meeting, through videoconferencing, on 21 April. This thematic working group is composed of the following ECRI members: Michael Whine (Chair of the working group, member in respect of the United Kingdom), Jean-Paul Lehnens (Vice-Chair, member in respect of Luxembourg), Irena Ilieva (member in respect of Bulgaria), Els Keytsman (member in respect of Belgium) and Šarūnas Liekis (member in respect of Lithuania). With a view to implementing its [Roadmap to Effective Equality](#), ECRI set up this working group in December 2019 and tasked it with revising its [General Policy Recommendation No. 9](#) on the fight against antisemitism.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance/-/council-of-europe-s-anti-racism-body-holds-working-meeting-on-the-fight-against-antisemitism>

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

### UK Parliament

#### **Assisted Dying Bill**

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

#### **Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill**

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

#### **Education (Assemblies) Bill**

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

#### **Genocide Determination Bill**

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

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill**

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

### Scottish Parliament

#### **Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill**

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

#### **\*\* Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**

<https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>

Bill as introduced

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/introduced/bill-as-introduced-hate-crime-and-public-order-bill.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/introduced/explanatory-notes-hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill.pdf>

Policy Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/introduced/policy-memorandum-hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill.pdf>

Financial Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/introduced/financial-memorandum-hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill.pdf>

Delegated Powers Memorandum

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/introduced/delegated-powers-memorandum-hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill.pdf>

Statements on Legislative Competence

<https://beta.parliament.scot/-/media/files/legislation/bills/current-bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/introduced/statements-on-legislative-competence-hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill.pdf>

Equality Impact Assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-public-order-scotland-bill-equality-impact-assessment/>

Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-public-order-scotland-bill-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessment/>

Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-public-order-scotland-bill-child-rights-wellbeing-impact-assessment/>

Data protection impact assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-public-order-scotland-bill-data-protection-impact-assessment/>

Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-public-order-scotland-bill-business-regulatory-impact-assessment/>

Strategic Environmental Assessment

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-public-order-scotland-bill-strategic-environmental-assessment/>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 6 days**

**Amendments to the organ donation regulations (Wales)** (closing date 30 April 2020)

<https://gov.wales/amendments-organ-donation-regulations>

**Regulating Independent Educational Institutions** (closing date 8 May 2020)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/regulating-independent-education-institutions/>

**Protecting places of worship** (closing date 10 May 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>

**\*\* Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill** (closing date not stated)

The Scottish Government welcomes your views on any aspect of the Bill as it begins its passage through Parliament. Please send any queries titled 'Hate Crime Bill Launch' to [ConnectedCommunities@gov.scot](mailto:ConnectedCommunities@gov.scot)

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