



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

Inquiry report finds child sexual abuse in most major UK religions

... The 'Child protection in religious organisations and settings' report examined evidence received from 38 religious organisations with a presence in England and Wales, with the figures provided to the Inquiry about known prevalence of child sexual abuse unlikely to reflect the full picture.

Religious organisations play a central and even dominant role in the lives of millions of children in England and Wales. The report highlights the blatant hypocrisy and moral failing of religions purporting to teach right from wrong and yet failing to prevent or respond to child sexual abuse.

Throughout the [investigation](#), the Inquiry heard of shocking failings across a number of religious organisations, and cases of child sexual abuse perpetrated by their followers. ... Comprehensive child protection policies and procedures are essential to ensuring that children are protected against sexual abuse. Whilst the Inquiry found that some organisations do have effective policies implemented, in some settings not even basic child protection procedures are in place, despite serving large congregations.

The report highlights that an estimated 250,000 children in England and Wales receive 'supplementary schooling' or 'out-of-school provision' from a faith organisation. However, there is no reliable information on how many settings there are, how many children attend them and for how many hours, what activities are provided and who runs them. As there is no requirement for such schools to be registered with any state body, they have no supervision or oversight in respect of child protection.

The report makes two recommendations:

- (i) that all religious organisations should have a child protection policy and supporting procedures; and
- (ii) that the government should legislate to amend the definition of full-time education to bring any setting that is the pupil's primary place of education within the scope of a registered school, and provide Ofsted with sufficient powers to examine the quality of child protection when undertaking inspection of suspected unregistered schools.

Professor Alexis Jay, Chair of the Inquiry said: "Religious organisations are defined by their

moral purpose of teaching right from wrong and protection of the innocent and the vulnerable. However when we heard about shocking failures to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse across almost all major religions, it became clear many are operating in direct conflict with this mission.

“Blaming the victims, fears of reputational damage and discouraging external reporting are some of the barriers victims and survivors face, as well as clear indicators of religious organisations prioritising their own reputations above all else. For many, these barriers have been too difficult to overcome.”

“We have seen some examples of good practice, and it is our hope that with the recommendations from this report, all religious organisations across England and Wales will improve what they do to fulfil their moral responsibility to protect children from sexual abuse.”

To read the full press release see

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/news/inquiry-report-finds-child-sexual-abuse-most-major-uk-religions>

Child protection in religious organisations and settings

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/26895/view/child-protection-religious-organisations-settings-investigation-report-september-2021.pdf>

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Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

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

Updated Travel Advice: Occupied Palestinian Territories

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

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Other Relevant Information

European Commission

Katharina von Schnurbein interview with POLITICO on upcoming EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life

... A recent [study](#) commissioned by the EU’s directorate-general for justice [found](#) that when it comes to anti-Jewish hate on Telegram, Twitter and Facebook, there was a 13-fold increase in German language posts, and a seven-fold increase in French ones during the pandemic. ...

The EU’s coordinator on combating anti-Semitism is aghast at how anti-Jewish racism has mushroomed in online spaces during the pandemic. ...

“Harmful content is not necessarily illegal but can still be very harmful because it can lead to radicalization,” von Schnurbein said, pointing to the 2019 attack in [Halle](#) in which an assailant killed two people. This month, 10 people in Cologne [beat up a young Jewish man](#) wearing a yarmulke in an apparent anti-Semitic assault. ...

There was also a giant [uptick](#) in anti-Semitism during Israel’s [conflict](#) with Hamas in Gaza

in May this year. That's unjustifiable, von Schnurbein said: "We don't accept ... in any other constellation, that a conflict elsewhere in the world can be used to justify pressure against our citizens, or even attacks and criminal acts against our citizens here." ...

The EU will publish a "strategy on combating anti-Semitism and fostering Jewish life" in the first half of October, von Schnurbein said. The aim is to "mainstream" the fight against anti-Semitism across all relevant EU policies. ...

The strategy will also include a pillar focusing on educating the general public about the Holocaust and Jews in general. "We know that awareness about Jewish life is very low," said the German official, who is not Jewish herself. Knowledge about the Holocaust in Europe is declining, von Schnurbein said, and there are fewer and fewer survivors still alive. A Eurobarometer [survey](#) in 2019 found 68 percent of Europeans are "not informed" about Jewish history, customs and practices. ...

When so many parts of Europe are devoid of Jewish life, the lack of knowledge is perhaps not so surprising. ...

"There's sometimes little understanding for the enormity of where we are: You are almost 80 years after the Holocaust and we see symptoms in society [where] Jews feel threatened again here. ... When anti-Semitism is on the rise you know that something bigger is going on. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/719267/en>

Message by European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas on the occasion of Rosh HaShanah 2021

I would like to express my warmest wishes to all European Jews for Rosh HaShanah on behalf of the European Commission. May 5782 be a year full of happiness, peace and good health. May this year bring about a „new normal“ of safer, more resilient, more compassionate and more united European societies. ...

To combat their pernicious impact on our democratic values and human rights, the Commission has launched the European Digital Media Observatory and engaged in online campaigns like #ThinkBeforeSharing and #ProtectTheFacts to combat antisemitism and Holocaust distortion and denial.

The EU will continue to support its Jewish community and help foster Jewish life in all its diversity. In autumn, the Commission will present a first-ever comprehensive Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life in the EU, developed in close cooperation with Jewish communities from across Europe. The Strategy will propose EU-level actions and also support Member States in areas such as preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism; protecting and fostering Jewish life in the EU; education, research and Holocaust remembrance. The EU is also determined to lead the global fight against antisemitism. ...

We must ensure that Jews can continue to feel at home in Europe and be proud of being European citizens. Europe can only thrive, enriched by its diversity and history, when its minorities can live in peace and celebrate their cultural and religious traditions.

On Rosh Hashanah, families will gather again to rekindle the candles of hope and joy, while delighting in the traditional meals and hearing the Shoffar blowing. Despite the many difficult moments of the year that passed, may you now devote yourself to moments of joy and happiness.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and thriving Jewish New Year!

To read the full transcript see

<https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/719450/en>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

Charities Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Education (16 to 19 Academies) (Religious Character) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2946>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Domestic Abuse Act statutory guidance (closing date 14 September 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-abuse-act-statutory-guidance>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill (closing date not stated, but no later than 23 September 2021)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2021/july/have-your-say-on-the-higher-education-freedom-of-speech-bill/>

Dispute Resolution in England and Wales (closing date 30 September 2021)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1008174/dispute-resolution-call-for-evidence.pdf

Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 (closing date 30 September 2021)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/our-strategic-plan-2022-2025-have-your-say>

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