



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Downing Street

Queen's Speech 2021

My Government's priority is to deliver a national recovery from the pandemic that makes the United Kingdom stronger, healthier and more prosperous than before. ...

My Government will protect the health of the nation, continuing the vaccination programme and providing additional funding to support the NHS. ...

My Government will build on the success of the vaccination programme to lead the world in life sciences ...

My Ministers will oversee the fastest ever increase in public funding for research and development ...

My Government will strengthen the economic ties across the union ...

Legislation will support a lifetime skills guarantee to enable flexible access to high quality education and training ...

My Ministers will address lost learning during the pandemic ...

My Government will help more people to own their own home whilst enhancing the rights of those who rent. ...

Measures will be brought forward to address racial and ethnic disparities and ban conversion therapy.

Legislation will support the voluntary sector by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and releasing additional funds for good causes ...

My Government will invest in new green industries to create jobs, while protecting the environment. ... Legislation will also be brought forward to ensure the United Kingdom has, and promotes, the highest standards of animal welfare ...

Legislation will be introduced to ensure the integrity of elections, protect freedom of speech and restore the balance of power between the executive, legislature and the courts ... My Ministers will promote the strength and integrity of the union. ...

Legislation will increase sentences for the most serious and violent offenders ... Proposals will be brought forward to address violence, including against women and girls, and to support victims ... Measures will be brought forward to establish a fairer immigration system ...

My Government will lead the way in ensuring internet safety for all...

Legislation will be introduced to counter hostile activity by foreign states ...
My Government will continue to provide aid where it has the greatest impact on reducing poverty and alleviating human suffering. My Government will uphold human rights and democracy across the world. ...

To read the transcript in full see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/queens-speech-2021>

The Queen's Speech: Background Briefing Notes

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985029/Queen s Speech 2021 - Background Briefing Notes..pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985029/Queen_s_Speech_2021_-_Background_Briefing_Notes..pdf)

Scottish Parliament Information Centre

Briefing: Election 2021

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/2021/5/11/591dc3c7-d994-4bbd-8120-767e9e781a67/SB%2021-24.pdf>

Senedd Research

Election Results 2021 – what's changed?

<https://research.senedd.wales/research-articles/election-results-2021-what-s-changed/>

What's next? Key issues for the Sixth Senedd

<https://research.senedd.wales/media/eovoht1d/key-issues-for-the-sixth-senedd.pdf>

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Israel

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UK calls for an end to the violence in Jerusalem: Minister's statement

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, James Cleverly, said: The UK appeals for calm, and calls for an end to the violence witnessed in Jerusalem over recent days. All sides need to de-escalate tensions in the final days of Ramadan.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-calls-for-an-end-to-the-violence-in-jerusalem-ministers-statement>

Dominic Raab: The UK condemns the firing of rockets at Jerusalem and locations within Israel. The ongoing violence in Jerusalem and Gaza must stop. We need an immediate de-escalation on all sides, and end to targeting of civilian populations

<https://twitter.com/DominicRaab/status/1391815855839789057>

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>

European Union

Israel/Palestine: Statement by the Spokesperson on the latest escalation

The significant upsurge in violence in the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem as well as in and around Gaza needs to stop immediately.

The firing of rockets from Gaza against civilian populations in Israel is totally unacceptable and feeds escalatory dynamics.

All leaders have a responsibility to act against extremists. The status quo of the holy sites must be fully respected.

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/98261/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-latest-escalation_en

United Nations

Deeply Concerned over Violence in Occupied East Jerusalem, Secretary-General Calls on Israeli Authorities to Exercise Maximum Restraint

... The Secretary-General expresses his deep concern over the continuing violence in occupied East Jerusalem, as well as the possible evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods. He urges Israel to cease demolitions and evictions, in line with its obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law.

Israeli authorities must exercise maximum restraint and respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. All leaders have a responsibility to act against extremists and to speak out against all acts of violence and incitement. The Secretary-General urges that the status quo at the holy sites be upheld and respected.

The Secretary-General reiterates his commitment, including through the Middle East Quartet, to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sqsm20718.doc.htm>

Palestinian Rights Committee Gravely Concerned by Violence at Al-Aqsa Mosque, Escalation in Gaza, Calling for Efforts to 'Salvage Prospects' for Peace

... The Bureau, on behalf of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, expresses its deep alarm at the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that includes the escalation of violence and acts of provocation and incitement, particularly by Israeli extremists in occupied East Jerusalem.

The Committee is gravely concerned at the violence today at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, where over 200 Palestinian worshippers have been injured by the Israeli forces, who fired rubber-coated bullets, stun grenades and tear gas at unarmed civilians. The Committee condemns such acts against worshippers and all acts of provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric.

The Committee is further alarmed by Israel's escalation in the Gaza Strip today, where missile strikes are reported to have killed at least nine Palestinians, among them three children. There is no justification for the taking of innocent lives. All indiscriminate attacks against civilians must stop.

The Committee is gravely concerned at the prospects of further destabilization and calls for immediate efforts to de-escalate this dangerous situation with the aim of bringing a halt to the violence, protecting innocent civilians lives and restoring calm. The Security Council bears particular responsibilities in this regard. The Council must act immediately to uphold its resolutions on the question of Palestine and fulfil its duties under the United Nations Charter. It cannot remain paralysed in this situation, which constitutes a threat to

international peace and security.

The Committee also expresses its deep concern about the imminent evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem. In Sheikh Jarrah, 169 people, including 46 children, face the immediate threat of eviction from the homes in which they have lived for generations, and being rendered homeless. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has warned that these actions — which constitute flagrant violations of Israel's obligations as the occupying Power under international law and could lead to a risk of forcible transfer — must cease.

Responsible collective action is urgent for de-escalation and ensuring the necessary accountability for the violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, being perpetrated by Israel for far too long in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its calls for a halt to all illegal Israeli policies and practices, including all settlement activities, home demolitions, evictions and all other acts of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population.

The Committee echoes the clear call by the Secretary-General for "Israel to cease demolitions and evictions in line with its obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law", as well as his call for the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem to be upheld and respected. This must include respect for the historic and legal status quo at Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and respect for the sanctity of this holy site and for the right of Muslims to peacefully worship there free from threats, intimidation and violence.

The Committee calls on the Secretary-General to continue utilizing his good offices and mediation capacities, as well as on all parties with influence, to act with urgency to de-escalate this volatile situation. The Committee further urges the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet to revitalize the stalled peace process in view of resuming meaningful negotiations towards the achievement of a just peace.

The international community has an abiding responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all aspects, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, and must act without delay to salvage the prospects for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and lasting peace and security.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/gapal1437.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

East Jerusalem: UN experts deplore brutal police response to protests, urge eviction threats to be lifted

UN human rights experts today expressed grave concerns about Israel's aggressive response to protests in East Jerusalem, and called on Israel, as the occupying power, to immediately lift its threat to evict hundreds of Palestinian households from their legally-protected homes.

"Re-establishing calm in Jerusalem is important, but creating the conditions for justice and equality in the City are even more important," the experts said. "Neither short-term calm nor long-term peace will be accomplished as long as the national and individual rights of the City's Palestinian population are routinely abrogated."

Hundreds of Palestinians, as well as some Israeli police officers, have been injured in clashes over recent days. The experts called on Israel to exercise full restraint in its policing of the demonstrations by Palestinians in Jerusalem, and to respect the freedoms of assembly, expression and religious worship.

"The recent scenes of Israeli police and security forces attacking large crowds of Palestinian residents and worshipers is only intensifying a deeply inflammatory

atmosphere in the City. A militarized response to civilian protests against discriminatory practices only deepens social divisions. Respecting rights is the only path forward," The ongoing and threatened evictions of Palestinian families from their homes, primarily in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, are based on two Israeli laws: the Absentee Property Law of 1950 and the Legal and Administrative Matters Law of 1970. The 1950 law prohibits Palestinians from reclaiming their properties lost in the 1947-49 war, while the 1970 law allows Israeli Jews to re-claim properties lost during the same war. Evictions of Palestinian families under these laws have recurred many times over the years, raising deep concerns about impunity and lack of accountability.

"These laws are inherently discriminatory, both in intent and in application, and they violate fundamental principles of both international humanitarian law and international human rights law," said the experts. "An occupying power is prohibited from confiscating private property belonging to the protected population, and it must respect the body of existing laws which had governed the territory, unless it is absolutely necessary to alter them.

"The forced transfer of the population under occupation is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which contribute to the coercive environment now prevailing in East Jerusalem. As well, these evictions breach the right to adequate housing – a core human right in international law."

"The proper step for Israel to take is to remove the threat of eviction, have the property rights of these Palestinian families respected and legal regularized, and annul all discriminatory legislation from its laws."

Israel occupied East Jerusalem, along with the West Bank and Gaza, in 1967. Within weeks of the June 1967 war, it annexed East Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank. Over the past five decades, it has built 13 settlements, housing more than 220,000 Jewish settlers, in East Jerusalem.

The United Nations Security Council has repeatedly condemned both the annexation and the settlements as null and void under international law, and has demanded that Israel rescind its illegal acts. UN human rights experts have demanded repeatedly over the years that Israel comply with its international obligations and stop evictions, demolitions and forced removal of Palestinians from their lands. Israel has regularly stated that it has no intention of complying with the direction of the international community.

"The immediate source of the current tensions in East Jerusalem are the actions of Israeli settler organizations, whose stated aim is to turn Palestinian neighbourhoods into Jewish neighbourhoods. This demographic engineering has been abetted by the Jerusalem municipality, whose urban master plans have explicitly set a goal of limiting the City's Palestinian population at 30 percent. Establishing official population targets such as this reinforce entrenched patterns of ethnic domination, which have no place in the modern world."

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27083&LangID=E>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Evidence for Equality National Survey (EVENS) (closing date 30 June 2021)

<https://evensurvey.co.uk/>

Protect Duty (closing date 2 July 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty>

Social Distance, Digital Congregation: British Ritual Innovation under COVID-19

(closing date not stated)

<https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>

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