



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Downing Street

Liz Truss As families come together to celebrate #RoshHashanah I want to wish our Jewish community a happy new year. #ShanaTova
includes video message

<https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1573971109963337729>

Scottish Government

Nicola Sturgeon: To everyone in Scotland's Jewish community - and across the world - celebrating Rosh Hashanah, I wish you Shana Tova and a happy and joyful year ahead.

<https://twitter.com/NicolaSturgeon/status/1574016782079299585>

Rosh HaShanah Message from the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon MSP

I send my warmest wishes to our Jewish communities here in Scotland and around the world, as you begin this special season of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

I imagine that in the wake of the pandemic, many of you are finding that you approach the old traditions with new excitement and anticipation. The experiences of the last two years have certainly taught us to treasure each and every gathering as a precious opportunity. I know you will cherish the presence of family and friends, and the chance to share the rituals and celebrations of your heritage together.

As this festival is a time to reflect on the past and look to the future, I want to reiterate that the Scottish Government places a great value on our strong relationship with the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities and those whom you work so tirelessly to represent. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to hold meetings this year with members of the Jewish community, including the meeting with Jewish students to hear their experiences of life in Scotland and at university.

Together, we will continue to work towards a vision of strong, connected and resilient communities, and to resist divisive, hateful narratives which threaten that unity. Scotland will always be a home for people of all faiths and none to follow their ways of life freely.

I hope the goodness and sweetness of Rosh HaShanah remain with you for the year ahead.

Shanah Tovah.

https://scojec.org/news/2022/22ix_rh/fm.html

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Israel

UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Trade Negotiations with Israel and Canada

The Secretary of State for International Trade (Kemi Badenoch) [HCWS304] The first round of United Kingdom-Israel free trade agreement negotiations took place between 12 and 20 September. ...

The round of negotiations with Israel was conducted in a hybrid fashion; a small group of United Kingdom officials travelled to Jerusalem for in-person discussions, with further officials attending virtually from the United Kingdom. During this initial round, talks focused on gathering insights on key interests and priorities across policy areas as well as building a shared understanding of each other's initial positions. Technical discussions focused on 29 policy areas in over 50 sessions.

A new agreement with Israel—with services and innovation at its heart—will build upon our existing trade and partnership agreement. It will cement our relationship with a rapidly growing economy and take our trading relationship to the next level. It will support United Kingdom jobs, and update outdated trade rules, unleashing our high-tech innovative economies. ...

We are clear that any deals we sign will be in the best interests of the British people and the United Kingdom economy. We will not compromise on our high environmental and labour protections, public health, animal welfare and food standards, and we will maintain our right to regulate in the public interest. We are also clear that during these negotiations, the NHS and the services it provides are not on the table.

We are working towards holding a second and fourth round of negotiations with Israel and Canada respectively in due course. ...

To read the full statement see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-09-23/debates/2209231000009/TradeNegotiationsWithIsraelAndCanada>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Improving Israeli-Palestinian economic cooperation as a path to peace: Lord Ahmad statement at UNGA

... Let me begin by expressing our deep concern over the grave economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

If we are to achieve peace and stability in the region, it is of course vital that the Palestinian Authority and UNWRA are on a stable financial footing.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting this. ...

This includes offering technical assistance to the Palestinian Authority and supporting Palestinian companies to boost exports, among other things.

We were pleased to hear about the success of the E-VAT pilot and welcome Israel's commitment to rolling out the system to all Israeli businesses. ... this has the potential to raise more than \$100 million per year for the Palestinian Authority. ...

We also welcome the Government of Israel's efforts to enable electronic payments to Palestinians working in Israel.

And we are glad to see the positive steps taken by the Palestinian Authority ... to reduce the public sector wage bill. ...

We need much quicker progress on fiscal reforms, and efforts to reduce barriers to trade and investment in the West Bank, if we stand any hope of reviving economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

We call on the Government of Israel to undertake reforms to the clearance revenue mechanism and to renew efforts to tackle the restrictions and costs facing Palestinian businesses.

We would also like Israel to take a decision on the handling fee on Palestinian Authority fuel purchases – which is disproportionate, in our view.

We urge the Palestinian Authority to bolster work with partners, including the International Monetary Fund, on the reforms necessary to address the fiscal crisis and build a more stable future.

We must also retain focus on the humanitarian situation in Gaza and the need for economic recovery and reconstruction. ...

We welcome the increase in permits for Gazans to work in Israel but unemployment remains unacceptably high.

We urge Israel to continue increasing work permits and reducing restrictions in order to create more jobs. ...

We welcome the parties' commitments to re-establishing the Joint Economic Committee as the key body for decision-making ...

While we have rightly focussed on the economic situation today, I must also address the bigger picture. We are gravely concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the West Bank and the risk of instability.

The UK calls on both parties to refrain from taking actions that undermine the prospect for peace.

This includes all unilateral and provocative acts, and breaches of international law.

These take us further from a negotiated two-state solution, and the long-term peace and stability that Israelis and Palestinians so deserve.

The UK will do all we can to support progress towards that goal.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/improving-israeli-palestinian-economic-cooperation-as-a-path-to-peace-lord-ahmad-statement-at-unga>

Securing sustainable funding for the UN's vital work to support Palestinian refugees: Lord Ahmad statement at UNGA

... Let me begin by thanking UNRWA for your tireless work to support Palestinian refugees. You play an important role in helping to maintain stability in an increasingly fragile region, and the UK will continue to support you in every way we can.

We announced a new multi-year funding agreement with UNRWA earlier this year.

This year, we will provide £15m of funding to help you continue delivering high-quality services. ...

We commend your efforts to get on to a more viable financial footing and address the chronic funding shortfall.

But these efforts alone will not be enough.

We urge UNRWA to continue work on a robust and realistic plan for resource mobilisation, and on clear contingency plans to manage future financial challenges.

Member States should continue to think creatively about opportunities to support UNRWA to resolve its perennial financial crisis and deliver on its mandate. ...

Let me finish by reiterating that a negotiated, two-state solution is the only viable means of

bringing the peace and stability that both Palestinians and Israelis deserve. Until that day, the UK will continue to support UNRWA and its vital work.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/securing-sustainable-funding-for-the-uns-vital-work-to-support-palestinian-refugees-lord-ahmad-statement-at-unga>

United Nations

Palestine calls for full UN membership and a plan to end the occupation

President Mahmoud Abbas reiterated his appeal for the State of Palestine to become a full-fledged member of the UN, and warned of waning peace prospects with Israel ...

“Palestine, the Observer State in this Organization for 10 years now has proved that it qualifies for full membership. You have all recognized this,” he said ...

“We are the exception. We are the only ones in the world on whom double standards are being applied.”

Killings, looting, demolitions ...

“Israel is giving total freedom to the army and to the terrorist settlers who are killing the Palestinian people in broad daylight, looting their land and their water, burning and demolishing their homes, compelling them to pay for the demolition, or forcing them to destroy their homes with their own hands, and uproot their trees,” he said, speaking through an interpreter.

He also addressed the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, among other incidents.

The *Al Jazeera* correspondent was shot in May while on assignment in the West Bank. He said Israel acknowledged that she had been killed by a sniper.

“I dare the United States to prosecute those who have killed this American national. Why? because they are Israelis,” he told world leaders. ...

Mr. Abbas stated that “our trust and the possibility of achieving peace based on justice and international law is unfortunately regressing.”

He said Israel is ignoring international resolutions and undermining agreements and is no longer a partner in the peace process.

“It has and still is, through its current policies, which are premeditated and deliberate, destroying the two-State solution. This proves unequivocally that Israel does not believe in peace. It believes in imposing *status quo* by force and by aggression.” ...

Mr. Abbas noted that during their speeches to the General Assembly, United States President Joseph Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid, along with other world leaders, voiced support for the two-State solution

“This is of course, a positive development,” he said, though adding that the “real test to the seriousness and credibility of this stance” will be for Israel to immediately return to the negotiating table.

“The State of Palestine is looking forward to peace,” he said. “Let us make this peace to live in security, stability and prosperity for the benefit of our generations and all the people of the region.”

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1127771>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Increasing the use of mediation in the civil justice system (closing date 4 October 2022)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/dispute-resolution/increasing-the-use-of-mediation/>

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