



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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The Charity Commission

Charities Act 2022: information about the changes being introduced

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-act-2022-guidance-for-charities>

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Israel

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

FCDOGovUK: The Foreign Secretary's statement following air strikes in Gaza: The UK stands by Israel and its right to defend itself. We condemn terrorist groups firing at civilians and violence which has resulted in casualties on both sides. We call for a swift end to the violence. Liz Truss, Foreign Secretary

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1555902068724039683>

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator in the occupied Palestinian territory, Lynn Hastings, on the escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel

I am gravely concerned by the ongoing and serious escalation of violence in and around Gaza between Palestinian militants and Israel which so far has claimed the lives of 13 Palestinians by Israeli airstrikes, including a 5-year-old child and one woman. Reports indicate that more than 100 Palestinians have been injured and 7 Israelis injured. Residential areas in both Gaza and Israel have been hit and houses damaged; 31 families in Gaza have already been left homeless.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is already dire and can only worsen with this most recent escalation. The hostilities must stop to avoid more deaths and injuries of civilians in Gaza and Israel. The principles of international humanitarian law including those of distinction, precaution and proportionality must be respected by all parties.

Fuel for the Gaza Power Plant is due to run out today; electricity has already been cut. The continued operation of basic service facilities such as hospitals, schools, warehouses, and designated shelters for internally displaced persons is essential and now at risk. Movement and access of humanitarian personnel, for critical medical cases, and for essential goods, including food and fuel into Gaza, must not be impeded so that humanitarian needs can be met.

The Israeli authorities and Palestinian armed groups must immediately allow the United Nations and our humanitarian partners to bring in fuel, food, and medical supplies and to deploy humanitarian personnel in accordance with international principles; this includes specifically ensuring access and safety through key border crossings. We stand ready to work with all sides to ensure humanitarian needs are met.

I reiterate the United Nations Special Coordinator's appeal on all sides for an immediate de-escalation and halt to the violence, to avoid destructive ramifications, particularly for civilians.

<https://www.ochaopt.org/content/statement-humanitarian-coordinator-occupied-palestinian-territory-lynn-hastings-escalation-violence-gaza-and>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Trade Agreements: Human Rights and Religious Discrimination

Munira Wilson (Liberal Democrat) [37607] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of (a) the human rights records and (b) any potential reports of religious persecution in countries with which the UK is pursuing a trade agreement before entering negotiations.

Penny Mordaunt: The UK assesses and considers appropriate action in response to egregious human rights violations and abuses globally, and this goes much wider than considering trade alone, drawing on the wider tools and levers at our disposal. Our strong economic relationships with trading partners allow the Government to have open discussions on a range of difficult issues, including human rights and religious freedom.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-15/37607>

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Other Relevant Information

Community Security Trust (CST)

Antisemitic Incident Report January-June 2022

CST's Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2022, published today, shows 786 anti-Jewish hate incidents recorded nationwide in the first half of this year. This is a 43% decrease from the 1,371 incidents recorded in the first six months of 2021, and the joint-

fifth-highest total ever reported to CST between January and June in any year. CST recorded 875 antisemitic incidents in the first half of 2020, 911 in the first six months of 2019, and 810 from January to June 2018. ...

The decrease from last year to this reflects the magnitude of the spike in anti-Jewish hate observed in May and June 2021, when there was an escalation in conflict between Israel and Hamas. External factors also impacted six-monthly figures reported in the three previous years, with the COVID-19 outbreak and allegations of antisemitism in the Labour Party affecting the nature and volume of reports in 2020, 2019 and 2018. Without a similar trigger event, the 786 instances of anti-Jewish hate recorded between January and June 2022 represent a 'new normal' in levels of UK-based antisemitism. Over 100 incidents were reported in each month: totals that were unprecedented before 2016 but have become typical since.

There were 638 offline incidents, the third-highest number of offline incidents ever recorded in the first half of a year ... [which] suggests that anti-Jewish activity is returning to the street level ...

In contrast, the volume and proportion of online incidents diminished, from 378 (28% of 2021's January-to-June total) to 148 (19% of 2022's six-monthly figure). This can be partly explained by the removal of COVID-19 limitations of social interaction, which is also evident in the fall in 'Zoombombing' – where online communal events are hijacked with antisemitic abuse ...

The most common type of language or imagery used in antisemitic incidents over the first six months of 2022 referenced Hitler, the Nazis and/or the Holocaust, present in 232 (30%) of the 786 cases of anti-Jewish hate. Fifty of these involved evidence of far-right extremist beliefs, beyond the simple and superficial appropriation of Nazi-era reference, while incident offenders more commonly glorified the Holocaust than denied its existence: 36 incidents celebrated the Nazi extermination of European Jewry, whereas eight incidents involved denial of the facts or scale of the Holocaust.

CST recorded 102 antisemitic incidents that referenced or were related to Israel, Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. ...

CST recorded 73 antisemitic incidents in the category of Assault from January to June 2022 ... There were 59 incidents of Damage & Desecration of Jewish property ... 49 direct antisemitic threats; 630 cases of Abusive Behaviour, including verbal abuse, antisemitic graffiti, antisemitic abuse via social media and one-off hate mail; and four instances of mass-mailed antisemitic Literature. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2022/08/04/antisemitic-incidents-report-january-june-2022>

Antisemitic Incidents January-June 2022

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/3/b/Incidents%20Report%20Jan-Jun%202022.pdf>

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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

Standards for ethnicity data (closing date 30 August 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-ethnicity-data>

Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25 (closing date 23 September 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

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