



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Scottish Parliament Motion

Annie Wells (Conservative) [S6M-06707] Former Archbishop of Glasgow Mario Conti dies – That the Parliament pays tribute to The Emeritus Archbishop of Glasgow, Archbishop Mario Conti, who passed away on 8 November 2022; understands that Archbishop Conti died peacefully after a short illness at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow; notes that Archbishop Emeritus Mario Conti had been a priest for 64 years and a bishop for 45 years; understands that he trained at St Mary's College in Blairs, Aberdeenshire, before studying at the Scots College and Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he obtained degrees in philosophy and theology, and that he was later ordained a priest in Rome on 26 October 1958; notes that, after a series of roles, including his only parish priest appointment to Wick and Thurso, Scotland's most northerly mainland Catholic parishes, he was named Bishop of Aberdeen in February 1977; understands that he was one of the last surviving bishops in the world to have been appointed by Pope (now saint) Paul VI; further understands that, after 25 years in Aberdeen as bishop, he was named as successor to Cardinal Tom Winning as Archbishop of Glasgow in 2002, and served in that role for 10 years, and believes that the death of Archbishop Mario will be felt not just in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, but across Scotland and beyond.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-06707>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answer

Prime Minister's Questions

Bob Blackman (Conservative): Eighty-four years ago today in Germany, hundreds of synagogues were destroyed, Torah scrolls were desecrated, and thousands of Jewish

businesses and shops were destroyed. Ninety-one Jewish people were murdered, and later 30,000 Jewish men were sent to the concentration camps. So as we commemorate Kristallnacht, let us remember that it was started with anti-Jewish hatred, it became antisemitism and it is still prevalent in society today. So will my right hon. Friend condemn antisemitism in all its forms, but congratulate the holocaust survivors, who give their testimony year after year? In particular, will he congratulate the Holocaust Educational Trust on the brilliant work it does in ensure that we will never, ever forget what happened in the holocaust? (902140)

The Prime Minister: I thank my hon. Friend for his powerful question and his continued work on this issue. I completely agree that antisemitism has no place in our society, and we are taking a strong lead in tackling it in all forms. We became the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, and the Government's independent adviser on antisemitism regularly provides advice to Ministers on how best to tackle this issue. May I join my hon. Friend, as I know the whole House will, in praising the work of those survivors who so bravely tell their stories so that we might never forget?

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-11-09/debates/C1B0F00A-FD38-40DE-A372-767E69955CFE/Engagements#contribution-1DB5ECEE-4685-41D9-8E14-AFFF242D7682>

Scottish Parliament Written Answers

Holocaust: Education

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-11653] To ask the Scottish Government what percentage of secondary school pupils have received education on the Holocaust during their time at school in the school year 2021-22.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: The Curriculum for Excellence enables teachers to tailor the content of lessons to best suit learners in their particular circumstances. Within the broad general education there is the opportunity to teach the Holocaust, not only within social studies, but across the wider curriculum. There is also an opportunity to teach the Holocaust within the History qualifications in the senior phase.

Scottish Government does not hold information on the percentage of secondary school pupils who have received education on the Holocaust during the 2021-22 school year, however a wide range of resources are available for schools to promote learning and teaching about, and remembrance of, the Holocaust. These resources focus on the Holocaust but also promote awareness of Jewish people, culture and their contribution to society and address the issue of antisemitism in the world today. Professional learning to support teachers to embed Holocaust education across secondary schools in Scotland is also available, including a subsidised standalone Masters module on Citizenship and Holocaust Education.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11653>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Holocaust: Education

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-11654] To ask the Scottish Government how education on the Holocaust is delivered in secondary schools.

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-11655] To ask the Scottish Government what steps it is taking to ensure that all secondary school pupils are taught about the Holocaust.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: The Curriculum for Excellence enables teachers to tailor the content of lessons to best suit learners in their particular circumstances. Within

the broad general education there is the opportunity to teach the Holocaust both within the people, past event and societies section of social studies and across the wider curriculum. There is also an opportunity to teach the holocaust within the History qualifications in the senior phase.

The curriculum in Scotland is built around 4 central tenets, that young people will become successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals, and responsible citizens. Enabling young people to develop into responsible citizens requires them to understand both modern day and historic discrimination. One way this is built into our social studies curriculum is through the requirement for learners to demonstrate the following experiences and outcomes:

- I can discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence.
- I can discuss the motives of those involved in a significant turning point in the past and assess the consequences it had then and since.
- Through researching, I can identify possible causes of a past conflict and report on the impact it has had on the lives of people at that time.
- Having critically analysed a significant historical event, I can assess the relative importance of factors contributing to the event.
- I can express an informed view about the changing nature of conflict over time, appreciate its impact and empathise with the experiences of those involved.

A wide range of resources are available for schools to promote learning and teaching about, and remembrance of, the Holocaust. These resources focus on the Holocaust but also promote awareness of Jewish people, culture and their contribution to society and address the issue of antisemitism in the world today. Professional learning to support teachers to embed Holocaust education across secondary schools in Scotland is also available, including a subsidised standalone Masters module on Citizenship and Holocaust Education.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11654>

and

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11655>

Holocaust: Education

Paul Sweeney (Labour) [S6W-11656] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will consider embedding Holocaust education in the Curriculum for Excellence in a similar way as LGBTQ+ education, and what the reasons are for its position on this matter.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: There is no specific content embedded in the curriculum. Curriculum for Excellence is a flexible curriculum, which enables teachers to tailor the content of lessons to best suit learners in their particular circumstances

To find out more about what the Scottish Government is doing to teach Holocaust Education in schools, I refer the member to the answer to question S6W-11654 on 9 November 2022. ...

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11656>

The answer referred to above can be read above and at

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-11654>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Israel: Embassies

Andy Slaughter (Labour) [65661] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the announcement that the Government is reviewing the location of Britain's embassy in Israel, what the terms of reference are for the review; and if that review will take contributions from British non-Governmental organisations with an interest.

David Rutley: There are no plans to move the UK embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv. Israel is a close friend and key strategic partner, built on decades of cooperation. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with Israel through our Embassy in Tel Aviv.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-18/65661>

House of Lords Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Blackstone (Labour) [HL2913] To ask His Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of (1) the number of incidents in which Palestinian children were (a) killed, and (b) injured, by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, (2) the number of investigations that were opened by the Israeli authorities into those incidents, and (3) the number of those investigations which led to an arrest or charge, in the last five years.

Baroness Blackstone (Labour) [HL2914] To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel regarding the continued (1) killing, and (2) injury, of Palestinian children by (a) Israeli forces, and (b) Israeli settlers in the West Bank, this year.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise the issue of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities, encouraging them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. We will continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, particularly the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-26/hl2913>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-10-26/hl2914>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Mercedes Villalba (Labour) [S6M-06640] **Dundee Trades Union Council Delegation to Palestine** – That the Parliament expresses its solidarity with the Dundee Trades Union Council (DTUC) delegation, which is visiting Palestine from 2 to 9 November 2022; understands that the main purpose of the delegation is to sign a solidarity declaration between the workers of both Dundee and Nablus; further understands that the DTUC delegation will join with one from the Dundee Nablus Twinning Association and civic dignitaries to commemorate the life of Ernie Ross MP with a tree planting outside the Municipality Building; acknowledges that Dundee is reportedly the city with the longest twinning arrangement with a Palestinian city in the world having formally twinned in 1980,

and commends what it sees as the long-standing commitment of DTUC and the Fire Brigade Union to Palestine, including the donations of fire appliances.

Supported by: Maggie Chapman, Foysol Choudhury, Katy Clark, Joe FitzPatrick, Monica Lennon, Paul Sweeney, David Torrance

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-06640>

United Nations

Violence Reaching Unprecedented Levels in Occupied Palestinian Territory, Fourth Committee Hears, as Israeli Practices Come under Spotlight

... **Peter Mohan Maithri Pieris (Sri Lanka), Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories**, presented the Secretary-General's note transmitting the Special Committee's report (document A/77/501), noting that the human rights situation of the Palestinian people has further deteriorated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Regrettably, the Israeli authorities did not respond to a request for consultations or grant access to Israel, the occupied Syrian Golan, or the Gaza Strip. ... to date, 2022 has been the deadliest year for Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 2006. Noting that 121 Palestinians, 27 of them children, were killed by Israeli security forces in the occupied West Bank in the first 10 months of this year, he highlighted the story of Rayyan Suleiman, the 7-year-old Palestinian boy who died of a sudden heart failure while being pursued by Israeli soldiers. Settler violence reached unprecedented levels during 2022, he said, with such violence increasingly well-coordinated, and often, facilitated by Israeli security forces. Officers and soldiers regularly participate directly in attacks, he said, adding that serving members of the Knesset are among those responsible for inciting violence. More than 700,000 settlers now live in 279 settlements, outposts or satellite neighbourhoods in the West Bank. ... Stressing that the establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity, he said the Special Committee believes that the transfer of Israeli civilian population may constitute a war crime.

Expressing concern about Israeli attacks and restrictions on Palestinian civic space, which also escalated to unprecedented levels this year, he said that seven Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organizations in the West Bank that were raided and, in six cases, designated as "terrorist". This included the officers of two organizations that briefed the Special Committee, he said, also expressing the Special Committee's distress about the killing of the Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in May 2022. ...

Turning to Operation Breaking Dawn, which Israel conducted on Gaza in August, killing 49 Palestinians, he recalled the Secretary-General's words that if there were a hell on earth, it would be the lives of children in Gaza today. ... Israeli settlements and Israeli commercial activity in the occupied Syrian Golan have limited the Syrian population's access to its natural and agricultural resources. Declaring that Israel's political system has the characteristics of apartheid, he called on the authorities to investigate all cases of excessive use of force in the West Bank. ...

Ilze Brands Kehris, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, presented the reports of the Secretary-General on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (document A/77/493) and on the occupied Syrian Golan (document A/77/520) ... She noted that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan are a flagrant violation of international law. Such activity amounts to the transfer by Israel of its own civilian population into territory it occupies, which is prohibited under international humanitarian law ... It may also be a war crime ...

The Palestinians' rights to freedom of movement and access to services and livelihoods continue to be arbitrarily infringed, including through restrictions on access to key roads, she said. The report also highlights an intensification of settler violence against Palestinians ... Systematic and increasingly severe settler violence, with the acquiescence and support of the Israeli security forces, is putting Palestinians' rights to life and security of the person at risk. There were also many instances where Israeli security forces used force to restrict or suppress Palestinian demonstrations against settlement activity ...

The Secretary-General's report recommends that Israel immediately stop and reverse all settlement activities, halt demolitions and forced evictions, and review the operations and policies of Israeli security forces to ensure they are consistent with its obligations as an occupying Power ...

An observer for the State of Palestine, stating that the Special Committee's findings and recommendations reflect the agonizing reality of millions of Palestinians, asked how the work of civil society has been affected by the occupying Power's unlawful actions. She also asked what, if anything, is being done to ensure that staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights can resume their work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

A representative of the European Union ... [emphasised] the need for language on the holy sites of Jerusalem that reflects their importance and historical significance for the three monotheistic religions.

She expressed the European Union's concern over increased violence in the West Bank and she called on all parties to take urgent steps to change the situation in Gaza. ...

Feda Abdelhady-Nasser, observer for the State of Palestine, said that Palestinians, no matter where they are — under occupation, in Israel or living as refugees or in exile — continue to be deprived of their freedom, dignity and rights by Israel. "Our struggle is for attainment of no less than our inalienable human rights, including our right to self-determination and for our fundamental right to exist." Of immediate urgency is ensuring protection to the Palestinian people from the brutality of the Israeli occupation and pursuing accountability, as both are essential to deter further violations and promote justice. Palestinian lives are under daily threat as Israeli occupying forces and armed settlers relentlessly harass, intimidate and attack Palestinian civilians. No one is safe, she said, not children, women or men, not clergy, not peaceful protesters, not civil society, not medical personnel or journalists. An entire people are being dehumanized and branded as terrorists by the occupying Power, with thousands held captive in Israel's prisons under the most deplorable conditions, all in grave breach of international law, she said.

These are war crimes and crimes against humanity, she said, adding that the world cannot continue to entertain the false pretexts and excuses given by Israel for its unlawful and cruel policies and practices. Israel cannot be singled out, privileged to act as a State above the law and given a free pass over and over again. ...

The representative of Israel, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that today's reports, and the statements made during today's meeting, failed to touch upon true Israeli practices. Once again, Israeli is being blamed for all the ills in the Middle East. She recalled Israel and the Palestinian Authority worked together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, with Israel vaccinating more than 150,000 Palestinians, facilitating the flow of medical supplies and training Palestinian health-care providers. Israel is also joining others in the region in signing climate pledges. Describing Israel as one of the Middle East's most culturally diverse countries, she noted that two years ago, it signed historic peace agreements with several countries in the region and hopes more will follow. She went on to say that delegates should reflect the true reality on the ground in their statements, one in which Israel is working for peace for all in the Middle East.

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2022/gaspd769.doc.htm>

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/77/501)
<https://undocs.org/en/A/77/501>

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Occupied Syrian Golan (A/77/493)
<https://undocs.org/en/A/77/493>

The occupied Syrian Golan (A/77/520)
<https://undocs.org/en/A/77/520>

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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

**** closes in 4 days**

Mapping Exercise - Youth Workers supporting young people facing racism & antisemitism in Scotland (closing date 14 November 2022)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z5YX2C7>

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