



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Israel: Foreign Relations

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [176736] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to engage with the Minister of National Security in Israel.

David Rutley: The FCDO has no plans to engage with the Israeli Minister of National Security.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-03-29/176736>

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office honours its first Jewish career ambassador with a room named in his memory

... The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has officially opened the 'Phillips Room' in its King Charles Street building in central London, dedicated to the extraordinary life and work of its first Jewish career ambassador, Sir Horace Phillips.

The Phillips Room was named in April 2023, following the 75th anniversary of Sir Horace joining the Diplomatic Service, at an event hosted by the FCDO Permanent Under-Secretary Sir Philip Barton and joined by Sir Horace Phillips' daughter and other family members, as well as current and former Jewish staff, and British Jewish communal figures. This initiative, led by the FCDO's Jewish network, is an important moment to reflect on Sir Horace Phillips' life and career, to recognise the challenges overcome by Jewish FCDO staff past, present and future, and to celebrate their contribution to the FCDO and Diplomatic Service.

Sir Horace Phillips (1917-2004) led an exceptional life. The grandson of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, he was born into a working-class family in Glasgow and had a traditional Jewish upbringing. He was educated in state schools and never attended university, defying all odds at the time to become a British ambassador.

He remained a self-described practising Jew all his life, while almost exclusively serving in Muslim-majority countries where he became fluent in Arabic and an expert in the Middle East. He served in Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Bahrain before becoming British Ambassador to Indonesia in 1966.

He was appointed ambassador to Saudi Arabia in 1968 but the Saudi government withdrew agreement to his appointment after discovering he was Jewish. Sir Horace later said that although the episode was traumatic, the Foreign Office supported him throughout and never lost confidence in him. He went on to become High Commissioner to Tanzania and Ambassador to Turkey.

Sir Philip Barton, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the FCDO and Head of the Diplomatic Service said: The Phillips Room honours the outstanding contribution of Sir Horace and all the FCDO's Jewish staff, past, present and future. By dedicating this room to him, we have an opportunity to share his story with staff and visitors to our King Charles Street building. That story includes Sir Horace's remarkable achievements but also recognises the challenges he faced, and that our Jewish colleagues can still face today. ...

The FCDO's Jewish Network meets regularly to discuss issues of Jewish interest, as well as advocating for Jewish staff in the FCDO ...

Sophie Ross and Rebecca Viney, Co-Chairs of the FCDO's Jewish staff network, the Horace Society, said: ... Sir Horace Phillips ... was a trailblazer and remains an inspiration for many Jewish staff, who reflect on his diplomatic excellence, talent and fortitude, including in the face of challenges. We hope that the dedication of this room raises awareness of the contribution of Jewish staff to the FCDO Diplomatic Service. We are proud that Sir Horace Phillips' legacy lives on in the FCDO, with Jewish colleagues continuing to make a contribution at all levels of the organisation, including as Ambassadors. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-commonwealth-and-development-office-honours-its-first-jewish-career-ambassador-with-a-room-named-in-his-memory>

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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>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

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

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/50731/documents/3301>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

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

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

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

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438>

Schools Bill

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

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

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

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

**** Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill**

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

House of Commons Library Briefing

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9705/CBP-9705.pdf>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Prospective Scheme of Delegation for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
(closing date 15 May 2023)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-prospective-scheme-delegation-charity-commission-northern-ireland>

Supporting earlier resolution of private family law arrangements (closing date 15 June 2023)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/private-family-law-consultation/>

Review of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (closing date 18 June 2023)

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-review-race-relations-ni-order-1997>

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