



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland

UK Government Minister visits the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre

... Beginning in the historic synagogue, the group discussed the roots of Scotland's Jewish communities before visiting the Scottish Holocaust-era Study Centre and displays. Here, the Minister was shown one of the Learning Kits – about Dorrith Sim – used by school groups who visit to learn about the stories of Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe. UK Government Minister for Scotland John Lamont said: For the past 200 years the Jewish community has made a significant contribution to life in Scotland and it was a real privilege to hear more about this while exploring the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre. Established in 2021, in part through funds from the UK Government-backed Community Security Trust, visitors to Glasgow's wonderful Category A-listed Garnethill Synagogue can learn about the history and culture of Scottish Jewry, including how Scotland responded to events in Nazi Germany and took in a number of refugees.

The UK Government is committed to supporting Jewish communities so they can live and worship safely. I thank those involved in the only Jewish Heritage Centre in Scotland and urge as many people as possible to visit – and make a donation if able – to support this vital project.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-government-minister-visits-the-scottish-jewish-heritage-centre>

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Israel

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Religious Freedom

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL7219] To ask His Majesty's Government what

action they are taking with international partners and the government of Israel to preserve the status quo of the Al-Aqsa compound and freedom of worship in occupied East Jerusalem, following the storming of the Al-Aqsa mosque and the restrictions placed on Muslims coming to worship there during Ramadan.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As the Foreign Secretary said in his statement on 7 April, the UK condemns Israeli police violence at Al Aqsa Mosque. When Israeli security forces conduct operations, they must ensure they are proportionate and in accordance with international law. The UK is a strong supporter of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and calls for places of worship to be respected. We value the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's custodianship of the holy sites in Jerusalem and urge all parties across the region to de-escalate tensions.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-18/hl7219>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/calls-for-de-escalation-at-jerusalems-holy-sites-foreign-secretary-statement>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL7220] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel to protect the freedom of worship and property of Palestinian Muslims in occupied Hebron, in view of the closure of the Ibrahimi mosque to Muslims for two days for Jewish Passover activities during Ramadan.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises issues of religious freedom with the Israeli Government. We continue to call on all sides to ensure those of all faiths in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories are able to practise their faiths in peace and security. We engage the Israeli authorities to ensure access to the holy sites for Palestinians across the OPTs. As set out in the House of Commons on 24 April by Andrew Mitchell, Secretary of State for Development and Africa, we welcome Israel's decision to prevent non-Muslims from visiting al-Aqsa mosque during the final days of Ramadan, which we regard as an important de-escalatory act.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-18/hl7220>

The Minister's statement, referred to above (made on 20 not 24 April) can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-04-20/debates/FA8242F1-F6CB-4E0E-AC9F-A9F05F8C5E3E/HumanRightsProtectionsPalestinians#contribution-1D6CB13C-2013-4C07-8806-6303D622DCDE>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Janke (Liberal Democrat) [HL7221] To ask His Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel in response to the death of a 15-year-old child and injuries to Palestinian civilians during a raid by Israeli forces on the Aqbat Jaber refugee camp near Jericho in occupied territory while searching for Palestinians accused of attacks against Israelis.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We regularly raise the issue of the numbers of Palestinians killed and injured by Israeli Defence Forces in the West Bank and Gaza with the Israeli authorities. We encourage them to carry out swift, transparent and thorough investigations and, if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account. We 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. The Minister of State for

the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon also raised this point with the Israeli Government during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) in January.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-04-18/hl7221>

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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>

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>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

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

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454>

Scottish Parliament

**** Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill**

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

Stage 1 Report, Social Justice and Social Security Committee

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/SJSS/2023/4/28/38b80b46-35c2-401a-a218-ac5eb073c6e3-4/SJSS062023R4.pdf>

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 10 days**

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>

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/charities-tax-compliance/consultation-charities-tax-compliance>

JPR 2023 Antisemitism in the UK Survey (closing date not stated)

<https://www.jpr.org.uk/panel/UKantisemitism2023> (UK except Scotland)

and

<https://bit.ly/3Vg7DDH> (Scotland)

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