



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Lords Written Answer

Marriage: Women

Baroness Cox (Crossbench) [HL8197] To ask His Majesty's Government when they will respond to the Law Commission's report Celebrating Marriage: A New Weddings Law, published on 18 July 2022 (HC 557); and what plans they have to introduce further legislation to safeguard women who are in unregistered marriages.

Lord Bellamy: We are carefully considering the Law Commission's recommendations on weddings reform. As part of its review, the Law Commission has considered ways of ensuring that fewer weddings conducted according to religious rites result in a marriage that the law does not recognise. We will respond to the Law Commission's report in due course.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-05/hl8197>

The report referred to above can be read at

<https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/lawcom-prod-storage-11jsxou24uy7q/uploads/2022/07/A-new-weddings-law-LC-report.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Pam Gosal (Conservative) [S6M-09545] **Celebrating Eid al-Adha 2023** – That the Parliament wishes all those celebrating the festival of Eid in the UK and around the world a joyous Eid al-Adha; understands that the festival follows after the annual Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca where over two million pilgrims from 57 countries will perform Hajj in 2023; further understands that the festival is marked every year to commemorate Prophet Ibrahim's test of faith, and acknowledges what it sees as the enormous contributions that Muslims make across Scotland and the whole of the UK, which it believes enriches communities across this nation.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-09545>

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Holocaust

Downing Street

Rishi Sunak Sir Ben Helfgott was an inspirational Holocaust survivor, who became a British Olympian, global pioneer of Holocaust education and grandfather to nine grandchildren. Ben survived the worst of humanity. His legacy is the ultimate triumph over that darkness.

<https://twitter.com/RishiSunak/status/1669733257640833024>

Office of the Chief Rabbi

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis Sir Ben Helfgott was one of the most inspirational people I have known. He was a charismatic and passionate leader, who promoted the values of compassion, understanding, love and peaceful coexistence. His own horrific experiences inspired him to work tirelessly for a more peaceful and unified world and he inspired us to do likewise. Our thoughts today are with his wife Arza, sons Maurice, Michael and Nathan, and his inimitable sister Mala Tribich. Our ultimate tribute to Sir Ben must be a renewed commitment to guaranteeing that the lessons of the Holocaust will never be forgotten.

<https://twitter.com/chief Rabbi/status/1669644111433936899>

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Israel

Department for Business and Trade and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Updated guidance: Overseas business risk: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-israel/overseas-business-risk-israel--3>

UN Office of the high Commissioner for Human Rights

End-of-Mission Statement of the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices

... During its mission, the Special Committee met with senior Palestinian government officials, UN organisations, and representatives of civil society organisations from the occupied Palestinian territory and occupied Syrian Golan. The Special Committee regrets that since it was established in 1968, Israel has not responded to the Committee's annual requests for consultations with Israeli authorities, nor granted access to Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory, or the occupied Syrian Golan.

Pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, the Special Committee is mandated to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan. This year, the Special Committee was presented with the clearest evidence it has seen in its 55-year history of Israeli policies that systematically violate the human rights of the Palestinian people, in a manner many interlocutors see as akin to apartheid.

The Special Committee was briefed on the Israeli government's Coalition Agreement,

which states that “the prime minister will work towards the formulation and promotion of a policy whereby sovereignty is applied to Judea and Samaria” (biblical names for the occupied West Bank.) The Document of Principles and Division of Responsibilities and Authorities signed on 23 February 2023 between Israel’s Minister of Defence, Yoav Gallant, and Additional Minister in the Ministry of Defense, Bezalel Smotrich, goes further, establishing a “Settlement Administration”, which oversees, instructs, and directs the activities of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) and of the Israeli Civil Administration.

The Israeli government therefore intends to transfer “temporary” military control of the occupied West Bank to a civilian Minister and will attempt to formally annex the occupied West Bank. The Special Committee notes that the prohibition on the annexation of territory is fundamental to international law.

Within a week of signing this Coalition Agreement, Minister Smotrich told Israeli media that “the village of Hawara needs to be wiped out. ... This statement followed an Israeli settler rampage through Hawara and nearby villages on 26 February 2023, where over 400 settlers torched Palestinian homes, businesses, a school, and dozens of vehicles, and shot dead a 37-year-old Palestinian man, Sameh Aqtash, and wounded over 100 others. ... However, except for the temporary detention of two settlers, to date all other perpetrators have enjoyed complete impunity, as is the case in almost all instances of Israeli settler violence.

The Special Committee notes a direct correlation between the policies of the Israeli government, as articulated in its Coalition Agreement, and Israeli practices on the ground. The Special Committee was briefed that under the current Israeli government, settler attacks have increased from an average from two a day in 2022, to three a day in 2023.

The Special Committee is appalled that the number of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, killed by Israeli Forces in the first five months of 2023 was more than double (124 percent higher) than in the same period in 2022, noting Israeli Forces killed more Palestinians in the occupied West Bank in 2022 than any other year since the UN began compiling these statistics in 2005. The number of Palestinian injuries from live ammunition in the West Bank was almost double (94 percent increase) than in the same period in 2022 ...

The Special Committee deplores the conduct of Israel’s “Operation Shield and Arrow” from 9-13 May, which commenced with the targeted killing of three Palestinian Islamic Jihad commanders in airstrikes on Gaza that also killed 10 civilians, including three children. Israel’s latest war of choice on Gaza followed extensive lobbying by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, whose ultranationalist Otzma Yehudit party boycotted cabinet meetings and threatened to quit the government until the operation commenced. ...

The Special Committee expresses concern that the Israeli settler population in the occupied Syrian Golan has now surpassed the local population for the first time. Israeli policies and practices on the Golan isolate the population from their familial and cultural links to Syria and enforce integration into the Israeli economy and education system, for lack of any alternative. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/06/end-mission-statement-un-special-committee-investigate-israeli-practices>

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Other Relevant Information

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Human Rights Chief: Hate speech has no place in our world

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk has called on everyone to work together to build a more respectful and civil world, and for effective action to end hate speech, ahead of the International Day for Countering Hate Speech on 18 June.

“We know that the spread of hate is used by those who want to sow divisions, to scapegoat and to distract from real issues. Social media is a remarkably fertile ground for hate speech, providing it with both unprecedented reach and speed. And hate breeds bigotry, discrimination and incitement to violence,” said Türk. ...

There is no silver bullet, no switch to flip that will rid our world of hate, online or offline. But with targeted and well-resourced measures, we can succeed in limiting its spread, isolating and holding accountable hate-mongers, and building greater respect.” ...

Rather than criminalizing protected speech, we need States and companies to take urgent steps to address [incitement to hatred and violence](#), Türk said.

The High Commissioner called for multifaceted and well-resourced efforts, including:

- Ratcheting up investment in efforts to combat hate speech in languages other than English ...
- Listening to those most affected by hate speech, and providing better channels for them to raise concerns and get prompt action;
- Holding companies responsible for what they are – and are not – doing to respect human rights ...
- Empowering expanded research into how to effectively combat hate speech through greater transparency ...
- Providing support to those whose mental and physical health are seriously affected by incitement to hatred and violence ...
- Investing in digital and media literacy programmes, human rights education, and supporting mechanisms to provide independent fact-checking ...

“More also needs to be done to address mega-spreaders – those officials and influencers whose voices have profound impact and whose examples inspire thousands of others,” Türk said. ...

The UN Human Rights Office’s [“Faith for Rights” framework](#) is one such effort. It engages religious leaders in an effort to respond to hatred and incitement of violence ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/06/un-human-rights-chief-hate-speech-has-no-place-our-world>

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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>

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>

Nakba Commemoration Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461>

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>

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 today**

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>

**** closes in 5 days**

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill (closing date 23 June 2023)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3146/>

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

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

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland (closing date 5 October 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/equality-and-human-rights/a-human-rights-bill-for-scotland-consultation/>

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