



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023 second edition

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023>

Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023: data tables second edition

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65425d08d36c910012935bad/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023-data-tables-second-edition.ods>

Hate crime, England and Wales, 2022 to 2023: appendix tables second edition

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65425d2b9e05fd000dbe7b59/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2022-to-2023-appendix-tables-second-edition.ods>

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Israel

Downing Street

PM meeting with Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres: 2 November

... The leaders ... discussed the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza and agreed on the importance of urgently scaling up the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid. The Prime Minister set out the work the UK is doing to support, including doubling aid funding for the United Nations and others' work in Gaza and pre-positioning emergency supplies and equipment in Egypt. The Prime Minister and the Secretary-General agreed on the need to reinvigorate international efforts to reach a lasting resolution to the conflict and progress work towards a two-state solution. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-secretary-general-of-the-united-nations-antonio-guterres-2-november-2023>

PM meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen: 2 November 2023

... Both leaders agreed to work closely together on issues of international peace and security, in particular dealing with the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East and continuing to back Ukraine against Russian aggression in Europe. Both agreed that stepping up our efforts to tackle the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is a key priority.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-european-commission-president-ursula-von-der-leyen-2-november-2023>

PM meeting with US Vice President Kamala Harris: 1 November 2023

... The Prime Minister and Vice President also spoke about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The Prime Minister reiterated Israel's right to defend itself against terror as well as the need to get more humanitarian aid into Gaza and to free hostages taken by Hamas. Both agreed that the UK and US were aligned in these efforts and would continue to work with partners in the region to ensure stability. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-us-vice-president-kamala-harris-1-november-2023>

PM call with President el-Sisi of Egypt: 1 November 2023

The Prime Minister ... welcomed the opening of the Rafah crossing today for the first British and other nationals and injured Palestinians to leave Gaza. The Prime Minister thanked President Sisi for his efforts and said the UK would continue to work closely with Egypt and Israel to ensure all British citizens can leave Gaza safely.

The leaders talked about urgent work to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza, and the Prime Minister updated on plans for a second UK aid flight to support the work of the Egyptian Red Crescent. He said ensuring life-saving aid and medical treatment reaches civilians by all available routes is a top priority and the UK stands ready to provide further support.

The Prime Minister and President Sisi also discussed diplomatic efforts to secure the release of hostages held by Hamas, prevent escalation in the wider Middle East and achieve long-term peace and prosperity for the Palestinian people.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-president-el-sisi-of-egypt-1-november-2023>

Ministry of Defence and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UK airlift to Egypt delivers vital equipment to support aid crossing to Gaza

A second UK flight carrying equipment that will support humanitarian agencies to deliver lifesaving supplies to Gaza arrived in Egypt today.

This will be followed by several further flights to deliver 30 tonnes of vital equipment such as forklift trucks, belt conveyors and lighting towers, which have been specifically requested by UK partners in the region, including the Egyptian Red Crescent. ...

This follows the delivery of 21 tonnes of essential supplies, including wound care packs and water filters, which arrived in Egypt last week and was handed over to partner agencies working on the ground in Gaza.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said: With an acute humanitarian crisis unfolding, today's

RAF airlift demonstrates yet again that the UK is committed to helping all suffering civilians.

Our armed forces have rapidly deployed to get our partners on the ground what they urgently need and stand ready to continue supporting the humanitarian effort.”

The flights follow the [UK Government's £30million increase in support for the Occupied Palestinian Territories](#) – more than doubling its original commitment.

International Development Minister Andrew Mitchell said: The UK is determined to drive international efforts to ensure lifesaving aid reaches the people who need it most.

This equipment, specifically requested by our partners on the ground, will bolster essential supplies including food and medicine to be delivered to large numbers of civilians.

We continue to call for the regular delivery of humanitarian supplies into Gaza and the opening of more entry points to relieve those who are suffering.

The UK continues to call for all parties to respect international humanitarian law, minimise civilian casualties and for immediate access for lifesaving aid into Gaza, including food, water, medical supplies and fuel as a priority.

All UK aid undergoes rigorous oversight and multiple safeguards are in place to prevent it benefiting Hamas. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-airlift-to-egypt-delivers-vital-equipment-to-support-aid-crossing-to-gaza>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office The first British nationals have crossed the Rafah border crossing from Gaza into Egypt. UK teams are on the ground providing assistance. We will continue working with partners to ensure the crossing is opened again, allowing vital aid into Gaza and more British nationals to leave safely. We are regularly updating all British nationals registered with us.

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1719786374931370480>

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon I met Palestinian leaders to reiterate UK support to the Palestinian Authority in trying to establish stability. We agreed on the need for humanitarian access to allow aid to reach those in need. [British flag] will continue to work with partners in the region to deliver a two-state solution [plus photos]

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1719817260439679013>

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

Monica Lennon (Labour) [S6W-22432] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will consider donating period products to assist the humanitarian response in Gaza, in co-ordination with local authorities, other public bodies and the supply chain involved in delivering Scotland's free period products scheme.

Shirley-Anne Somerville: We recognise that hygiene related needs in Gaza are acute. However, it is generally accepted as good practice to defer to the expertise

of local humanitarian organisations that are best placed to assess and prioritise needs.

We have consulted with a number of UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations operating in Gaza who have also indicated a preference for sourcing locally.

This is why the Scottish Government has no plans at present to donate period products. Instead, we are providing £500,000 towards the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's flash appeal in response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. These funds will support the immediate food, health, shelter and protection needs of people seeking safety.

With the escalation of violence, the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza is extremely challenging. A ceasefire from all sides is urgently needed to allow the creation of a secure and sustained humanitarian corridor to ensure the protection of innocent civilians, and the delivery of essential supplies including food, fuel, water, and medical provisions.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-22432>

Scottish Government

Humanitarian aid for Gaza

... First Minister Humza Yousaf has pledged a further £250,000 to support displaced people in Gaza access food, water, shelter and medical supplies.

The additional money takes the total given to assist relief efforts in Gaza via the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's Flash Appeal (UNRWA) to £750,000. ...

First Minister Humza Yousaf said: "I have been repeatedly calling for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, but while we press this vital issue it's important we support the Palestinian people as much as we can.

"The situation in Gaza is catastrophic which is why I'm pledging this additional funding to support in helping to stop the humanitarian disaster we are witnessing. As supplies run out in Gaza, the lives of innocent civilians are at grave risk from a lack of food, water, medical supplies and fuel.

"My thoughts remain with all of those caught in the middle of the escalating conflict in Israel and Gaza. The killing of innocent civilians can never be justified, wherever it occurs."

Marta Lorenzo, Director of UNRWA Representative Office Europe said: "Scotland has proven that they stand hand in hand with Palestine refugees and those suffering in Gaza.

"Scotland is helping UNRWA provide shelter, food, medicines and water to entire families that had to flee their home. ...

"With this vital funding the Agency will be able to continue providing essential and life-saving aid. With the ongoing crisis deepening further each day it is vital for more donors to step forward and support the millions of people suffering in the Gaza strip." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.scot/news/humanitarian-aid-for-gaza/>

United Nations

As General Assembly Emergency Session on Gaza Enters Fourth Day, Calls Intensity for Security Council Action, 'Immediate and Sustained Humanitarian Truce'

... [The General Assembly] resumed its tenth emergency special session on the "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian

Territory”. ...

Kuwait’s delegate ... noted that, on the day delegates voted to challenge the atrocities committed by the Israeli occupation forces, the ground invasion of Gaza began. “Does the world still believe that what has been unfolding is in self-defence?”, he asked ...

Gravely concerned over the situation’s unravelling, **the speaker for El Salvador** condemned all acts of terrorism and urged a halt to indiscriminate attacks on civilians. “We recall with heavy hearts that boys and girls are half the population of Gaza and have lived their entire lives in a zone under constant conflict and siege,” she said. ...

Also regretting the lack of progress in the Security Council, **the representative of Greece** condemned Hamas’ attack and said Israel has the right to self-defence in line with international humanitarian law. He called for the immediate release of all hostages, noting with alarm “the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza” and warning of the danger of violent spillover to the wider region. ...

The delegate from the Russian Federation called out the hypocrisy of the United States and its allies, noting they appeal for respect of international humanitarian law and yet all they can muster now is continued pronouncements of Israel’s supposed right to self-defence. “We do not deny Israel the right to fight terrorism. But fight the terrorists. Don’t fight civilians,” he said.

Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people, **the representative of Romania** said, calling for a clear distinction to be made between the justified and legitimate Palestinian expectations and demands and the terrorist attacks of Hamas, which harm the future for Palestinians. Respect for international law and international law must be reaffirmed, he said, emphasizing that the protection of civilians, especially children, must always be ensured. Voicing concern about the rise of antisemitism and anti-Palestinian and Islamophobic speech in Europe, he said this is the moment to speak out against hatred. ... Nepal, said its representative, is grieving the death on 7 October of 10 Nepali nationals in southern Israel. He called for an immediate de-escalation of violence and for unrestricted and adequate humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza. ... his country remains deeply concerned about a missing student, Bipin Joshi, and is desperately awaiting information on his whereabouts.

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12553.doc.htm>

Bureau of General Assembly’s Palestinian Rights Committee Renews Calls for Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza Strip

... The Bureau of the General Assembly’s Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People reiterates its appeal for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce in the Gaza Strip leading to a cessation of hostilities ...

Israel’s relentless and heavy bombardment of densely populated areas in the Gaza Strip, since 7 October, and its recent ground invasion of northern Gaza has resulted in nearly 9,000 Palestinians killed, mostly women and children, some 22,000 others wounded and 2,000 are missing, most likely under the rubble. These indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian objects constitute grave breaches of international law and must cease immediately. Israel, the occupying Power, must comply with its obligations, including to allow and facilitate immediate and unimpeded humanitarian aid for Palestinians civilians in Gaza including food, water, fuel, electricity and medical supplies.

The Bureau once more demands full respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law, and for a halt to the indiscriminate attacks against Palestinian and Israeli civilians and protected objects, including hospitals, schools, places of worship and UN facilities ... the Bureau also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians who are being illegally held captive.

The international community cannot stand by and watch as this horrific Nakba continues to be inflicted on the Palestinian people. The Bureau condemns the persistent voices in Israel inciting against and dehumanizing Palestinians, as well as the provocative calls for their forced transfer from their ancestral land and for the “destruction” of the Gaza Strip. The Bureau stresses the urgency of the gathering of evidence by UN international mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, to ensure accountability of all the crimes being perpetrated.

The Bureau is also gravely concerned about the escalation of tensions and settler violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Israeli Government officials have openly distributed assault weapons to extremist Israeli settlers who have increased their attacks and forcibly displaced entire Palestinian villages in the South Hebron Hills, with the support of the Israeli occupation army. ...

Force will not end the legitimate Palestinian national aspirations. Only the fulfilment of their inalienable human rights, including to self-determination and return, and a credible peace process leading to the implementation of the two-State solution will do. ...

To read the full statement see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gapal1456.doc.htm>

UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

The other mass displacement: while eyes are on Gaza, settlers advance on West Bank herders

Nearly 2,000 Palestinians displaced amid settler violence since 2022; 43% since 7 October 2023

Shortly after armed Israeli settlers threatened to kill them if they did not leave, 24 Palestinian households totaling 141 people, half of whom are children, were displaced from Khirbat Zanuta in the southern West Bank. ...

“On 26 October, settlers attacked us, destroying our homes, water tanks, solar panels, and cars,” said 43-year-old Abu Khaled from Khirbet Zanuta. “I felt the presence of death so tangibly as if I saw it with my own eyes. I was torn between staying on or leaving the place I love, where I belong, where I may die. On 28 October, I made the hardest decision in my life: to leave Zanuta and leave everything behind, as memories. I did this to protect my children.”

These experiences are not unique to Khirbat Zanuta. In 15 herding communities across the West Bank, at least 98 households comprising 828 people, including 313 children, have been displaced amid settler violence or increased movement restrictions since 7 October. ...

In this period, OCHA has recorded 171 settler attacks against Palestinians, resulting in Palestinian casualties (26 incidents), damage to Palestinian properties (115 incidents), or both (30 incidents). ...

Since 7 October, access restrictions, typically imposed by the Israeli authorities, have intensified throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. These are particularly severe in areas near Israeli settlements and in the ‘Seam Zone,’ the Palestinian area isolated by Israel’s 712-kilometre-long Barrier in the West Bank.

Settlers too have imposed movement restrictions, blocking access roads to Palestinian communities. Such measures have limited Palestinians’ access to essential services and livelihoods. In some cases, settlers have also damaged water resources relied upon by herding communities, depriving them of a fundamental human necessity. ...

More than one in every three settler-related incidents since 7 October has involved settlers using firearms to threaten Palestinians, including by opening fire. In almost half the cases, Israeli forces accompanied or actively supported the attackers. ...

To read the full press release see

UNICEF

Statement by UNICEF on the deaths and injuries of children in Jabaliya camp

“The scenes of carnage coming out of Jabaliya camp in the Gaza Strip following attacks yesterday and again today are horrific and appalling.

“While we do not yet have estimates of the toll the attack has taken on children, people’s homes have been leveled, hundreds apparently injured and killed, with many children reportedly among the casualties.

“These two attacks follow 25 days of ongoing bombardment that have reportedly resulted in more than 3,500 children killed – not including today’s deaths – and over 6,800 children reportedly injured. This would be over 400 children killed or injured per day, for 25 straight days. This cannot become the new normal.

“Refugee camps, settlements for the internally displaced, and the civilians inhabiting them are all protected under international humanitarian law (IHL). Parties to conflict have an obligation to respect and protect them from attack.

“Attacks of this scale on densely populated residential neighborhoods can have indiscriminate effects and are completely unacceptable. Refugees and internally displaced people are protected under international humanitarian law. Parties to conflict have an obligation to protect them from attack.

“Children have endured too much already. The killing and captivity of children must stop. Children are not a target.

“UNICEF reiterates its urgent call to all parties to the conflict for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, to ensure the protection of all children, and for safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to deliver lifesaving aid at scale across the Gaza Strip, according to International Humanitarian Law.”

<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/statement-unicef-deaths-and-injuries-children-jabaliya-camp>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Child Rights Committee condemns killing of children in Gaza Strip

Grave human rights violations against children are mounting by the minute in the Gaza Strip, and there are no winners in a war where thousands of children are killed. The UN [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) issued the following statement today, expressing outrage at the profound suffering of children:

“The Committee on the Rights of the Child strongly condemns the escalation of attacks by Israel against civilian targets in the Gaza Strip, which had resulted in the deaths of more than 3,500 children since 7 October 2023. We also remain deeply concerned about children who continue to be held as hostages.

Armed conflict harms children first and foremost and has lifelong effects on their physical and mental health, their development and ultimately the enjoyment of all their rights. Children are also harmed when they survive but lose parents and other family members and friends and witness catastrophic events.

Despite the protection that should be provided to all children by international law, during the first month of this war, there have been devastating reports of acts that are forbidden by international humanitarian law, including maiming, injury, abduction, forcible displacement, deprivation of medical care, food, and water. According to article 38 of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), States have an obligation to respect and ensure

respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, and to take all feasible measures to ensure the protection and care of children affected by armed conflict.

The Committee calls for an end to the devastating harm being wreaked on children's lives in the occupied Palestinian Territory. We add our voice to those calling for an immediate ceasefire. We urge the immediate release of child hostages, with their caregivers, as a first urgent phase towards the release of all hostages. We call on all parties to protect all children and provide all the necessary medical and protective support, including psychological support, to begin the long process of overcoming the consequences of these grave violations. We plead that all humanitarian convoys be permitted to enter the Gaza Strip and provide humanitarian aid to all children in need, as required by international law. The ceasefire should be the beginning of discussions aimed at establishing a just and lasting peace in the region so that all children can fully enjoy all their rights and the conditions for their development that respond to their intrinsic dignity as human beings." ...

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/un-child-rights-committee-condemns-killing-children-gaza-strip>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

**** International Freedom of Religion or Belief Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3499>

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this Bill will make no further progress.

**** Nakba Commemoration Bill**

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

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this Bill will make no further progress.

**** Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill**

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

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this Bill will make no further progress.

**** Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)**

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

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this Bill will make no further progress.

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

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

**** Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)**

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

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this Bill will make no further progress.

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

Management of burial grounds, application for burial, exhumation, private burial and restoration of lairs: regulation in Scotland (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/regulation-burial-scotland/>

Statutory inspection of burial authorities, cremation authorities and funeral directors (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/statutory-inspection-burial-authorities/>

Funeral director licensing scheme for Scotland (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/licensing-funeral-directors-scotland/>

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) [Northern Ireland] (closing date 24 November 2023)

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse-consultation>

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