



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Downing Street

#### **Ministerial appointments: November 2023**

The King has been pleased to approve the following government appointments.

- Rt Hon James Cleverly MP as Secretary of State for the Home Department.
- Rt Hon David Cameron as Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.
- Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- Richard Holden MP as Minister without Portfolio.
- Victoria Atkins MP as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.
- Laura Trott MBE MP as Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministerial-appointments-november-2023>

### Ministry of Justice

**Responding to human rights judgments Report to the Joint Committee on Human Rights on the Government's response to human rights judgments 2022–2023**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/654cf01c014cc9000d677371/responding-human-rights-judgments-2022\\_2023.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/654cf01c014cc9000d677371/responding-human-rights-judgments-2022_2023.pdf)

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### Council of the European Union

#### **Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on humanitarian pauses in Gaza**

The EU is gravely concerned about the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

The EU joins calls for immediate pauses in hostilities and the establishment of humanitarian corridors, including through increased capacity at border crossings and through a dedicated maritime route, so that humanitarian aid can safely reach the population of Gaza.

In line with the European Council conclusions of 26 October, the EU re-emphasizes Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law. The EU calls for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need through all necessary measures including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs. In this regard, we welcome the results of the November 9 humanitarian conference held in Paris.

The EU reiterates its call on Hamas for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. It is crucial that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is granted access to the hostages.

The EU condemns the use of hospitals and civilians as human shields by Hamas. Civilians must be allowed to leave the combat zone. These hostilities are severely impacting hospitals and taking a horrific toll on civilians and medical staff. The EU emphasizes that international humanitarian law stipulates that hospitals, medical supplies and civilians inside hospitals must be protected. Hospitals must also be supplied immediately with the most urgent medical supplies and patients that require urgent medical care need to be evacuated safely. In this context, we urge Israel to exercise maximum restraint to ensure the protection of civilians.

The EU and its member states, will continue to work closely with international partners, the UN and other agencies as well as countries in the region to provide a sustained flow of assistance and facilitate access to food, water, medical care, fuel and shelter.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/11/12/statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-humanitarian-pauses-in-gaza/>

*The Council conclusions referred to above can be read on p5 of*

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/67627/20241027-european-council-conclusions.pdf>

### World Health Organisation (WHO)

#### **UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO Regional Directors call for immediate action to halt attacks on health care in Gaza: Statement by Ms. Laila Baker, UNFPA Arab States Regional Director; Ms. Adele Khodr, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa; Dr. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean**

... We are horrified at the latest reports of attacks on and in the vicinity of Al-Shifa Hospital, Al-Rantissi Naser Paediatric Hospital, Al-Quds Hospital, and others in Gaza city and northern Gaza, killing many, including children. Intense hostilities surrounding several hospitals in northern Gaza are preventing safe access for health staff, the injured, and other patients.

Premature and new-born babies on life support are reportedly dying due to power, oxygen, and water cuts at Al-Shifa Hospital, while others are at risk. Staff across a number of

hospitals are reporting lack of fuel, water and basic medical supplies, putting the lives of all patients at immediate risk.

Over the past 36 days, WHO has recorded at least 137 attacks on health care in Gaza, resulting in 521 deaths and 686 injuries, including 16 deaths and 38 injuries of health workers on duty.

Attacks on medical facilities and civilians are unacceptable and are a violation of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law and Conventions. They cannot be condoned. The right to seek medical assistance, especially in times of crisis, should never be denied.

More than half of the hospitals in the Gaza Strip are closed. Those still functioning are under massive strain and can only provide very limited emergency services, lifesaving surgery and intensive care services. Shortages of water, food, and fuel are also threatening the wellbeing of thousands of displaced people, including women and children, who are sheltering in hospitals and their surrounds.

The world cannot stand silent while hospitals, which should be safe havens, are transformed into scenes of death, devastation, and despair. Decisive international action is needed now to secure an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and prevent further loss of life, and preserve what's left of the health care system in Gaza. Unimpeded, safe and sustained access is needed now to provide fuel, medical supplies and water for these lifesaving services. The violence must end now.

<https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/unfpa-unicef-and-who-regional-directors-call-for-immediate-action-to-halt-attacks-on-health-care-in-gaza.html>

## Amnesty International

### **Israel/OPT: Amnesty petition demanding ceasefire to end civilian suffering backed by more than one million signatures**

More than a million signatures from people around the world have been gathered for an Amnesty International petition demanding an immediate ceasefire to end the unparalleled escalation of hostilities in Gaza and Israel since 7 October 2023. In response, Erika Guevara-Rosas, Senior Director of Research, Advocacy, Policy and Campaigns at Amnesty International, said:

“The world is watching in horror as more and more civilians lose their lives each day amid Israel’s [relentless bombardment](#) and ground operations, and the unfolding of an unprecedented, man-made humanitarian catastrophe in the occupied Gaza Strip. More than 10,800 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza including at least 4,200 children in the last four weeks. In Israel at least 1,400 people were killed and [more than 200 were taken hostage](#), including 33 children, by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 October.

For more than one month the international community has failed to act in the face of staggering levels of civilian bloodshed, destruction and unimaginable human suffering in Gaza.

“Israel’s further tightening of its illegal blockade of Gaza has left 2 million people without access to drinking water, food, medical supplies and fuel, leading to the collapse of the health system at a time when the number of those injured is over 25,000. At least 1.5 million Gazans have been forcibly displaced from their homes due to the attacks and as a result of orders from the Israeli army to move to the south of the Strip.

“Outraged over the devastating toll on civilians, a global chorus of Amnesty International members and supporters are calling for the protection of all civilians at risk by signing our petition to demand an immediate ceasefire by all parties to the conflict. Hundreds of thousands of people continue to protest across the world to demand a ceasefire, yet their calls have gone unheeded by the international community as warring parties continue to display a callous disregard for civilian lives.”

“Israeli authorities continue to dehumanize Palestinians in their rhetoric as Israeli forces bomb densely populated refugee camps, hospitals, UN-run schools, bakeries, mosques and churches, roads and civilian homes wiping out entire families. Civilian hostages held by Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza remain in danger, and ongoing indiscriminate rocket fire into Israel places civilians at risk. ...

“The only way to prevent further loss of civilian lives and allow lifesaving aid to reach those in desperate need in Gaza is for states to act now to demand an [immediate ceasefire](#) by all parties to the conflict in the occupied Gaza Strip. A ceasefire will also provide opportunities to secure the release of hostages and for independent international investigations to take place into the war crimes committed by all parties to address long-standing impunity. Ultimately, justice and reparation for all victims and dismantling Israel’s entrenched system of apartheid against Palestinians are essential to ending the cycle of recurrent horrors.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/israel-opt-amnesty-petition-demanding-ceasefire-to-end-civilian-suffering-backed-by-more-than-one-million-signatures/>

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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>

#### **The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 [Draft]**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/9780348253191/contents>

#### **Holocaust Memorial Bill**

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

#### **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill**

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

### **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**

**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/>

**\*\* closes in 4 days**

**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/>

**\*\* closes in 4 days**

**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