



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Home Affairs

Northern Ireland Assembly Written Answer

Hate Crime

Matthew O'Toole (SDLP) [AQW 5538/22-27] To ask the Minister of Justice what engagement will she and her Department have with the Department of Justice, Ireland, on how to address hate crime on an all-Ireland basis.

Minister of Justice [Naomi Long]: In my introductory call with Justice Minister McEntee last week we discussed the issue of hate crime and agreed the value of creating opportunities to work jointly together to tackle the broader issue of hate crime in the two jurisdictions.

In Northern Ireland, recommendations from Judge Marrinan's Review of Hate Crime Legislation Report provide the main framework for the development of policy and legislative proposals on hate crime. As part of this work, my officials engage as necessary with other jurisdictions on hate crime issues, including with Department of Justice Ireland officials. This engagement provides the opportunity to share information, understand and monitor progress on respective hate crime policy development and legislative approaches to ensure a robust response to hate crime in the two jurisdictions.

At an operational level, whilst an independent matter for the Chief Constable, I am aware that the PSNI and An Garda Síochána work together to develop operational awareness and share learning and information on cross-border Hate Crime practice and interventions. This forms part of the Inter-Governmental Agreement Positive

Action Group work plan. They have established a joint senior team to oversee and drive co-ordinated activity on combatting operational challenges north and south, including hate crime. This will also be a consideration in the current review of the Cross Border Strategy between PSNI and An Garda Síochána.

I welcome the opportunity for officials and criminal justice partners to continue to engage across the jurisdictions to share knowledge and expertise on hate crime issues as our respective Bills develop.

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/printquestionssummary.aspx?docid=387001>

Judge Marrinan's Review, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/hate-crime-review.pdf>

Electoral Commission

Current applications for political party registrations

9 February 2024 ... Never forget Gaza

Part of the UK that this application applies to: England

Proposed name: Never Forget Gaza

Proposed descriptions:

1. We Will Never Forget Gaza
2. We Shall Never Forget Gaza

Proposed emblem:



24 January 2024 ... Dudley Friends of Palestine

Part of the UK that this application applies to: England

Proposed name: Dudley Friends of Palestine

Proposed emblem:



12 January 2024 ... Resurrection

Part of the UK that this application applies to: England

Proposed name: FREE PALESTINE

Proposed descriptions:

1. FREE PALESTINE
2. A Strong Voice to Free Palestine
3. Strong Independent Voice to Free Palestine
4. Your Parliamentary Voice to Free Palestine
5. Experienced Brave Voice for Free Palestine
6. One People, One Land, Free Palestine
7. Make Your Voice Heard, Free Palestine
8. From River to Sea, Free Palestine
9. Rejecting Genocide, Oppression, to Free Palestine

Proposed emblem:

Emblem 1:



Emblem 2:



Emblem 3:



<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/political-registration-and-regulation/political-party-registration/view-current-applications>

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Israel

See also the Electoral Commission “Current applications for political party registrations” that is included in the Home Affairs section above, and the joint statement by the UK and Qatar that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Stephen Morgan (Labour) [13351] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, whether his Department is taking steps to help plan a negotiated settlement on (a) a two-state solution and (b) recognition of a Palestinian state.

Andrew Mitchell: We support a two-state solution that guarantees security and stability for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. We must give the people of the West Bank and Gaza the political perspective of a credible route to a Palestinian state and a new future. And it needs to be irreversible. This is not entirely in our gift. But we and our partners can help by confirming our commitment and vision. Crucially, we must state our clear intention to grant recognition, including at the United Nations. That can't come at the start of the process. But it doesn't have to be the very end of the process.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) has an important long-term role to play. We already provide technical and practical support to the PA, and will work with our allies to continue this, and do more. But the Palestinian Authority also must take much needed steps on reform, including setting out a pathway to democratic progress. And just as the PA must act, so must Israel, which means releasing frozen funds, halting settlement expansion and holding to account those responsible for extremist settler violence.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-06/13351>

UNRWA: Finance

Dan Carden (Labour) [13364] To ask the Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, what his timescale is for reviewing the decision to suspend funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Andrew Mitchell: We are appalled by allegations that UNRWA staff were involved in the 7 October attack against Israel, a heinous act of terrorism that the UK Government has repeatedly condemned. We are pausing any future funding of UNRWA whilst we review these concerning allegations. The United States, Germany, Australia, Italy, Canada, Finland, Switzerland and the Netherlands have all temporarily paused funding.

The pause will remain in place until we review the allegations, and we are looking to our partners in the UN to carry out a robust and comprehensive investigation.

Any future funding decisions will be taken after this point.

Our decision to pause future funding to UNRWA has no impact on the UK's contribution to the humanitarian response. We are getting on with aid delivery through funding multiple implementing partners including other UN agencies and international and UK NGOs. This support is helping people in Gaza get food, water, shelter and medicines.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-06/13364>

House of Lords Written Answer

UNRWA

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL2138] To ask His Majesty's Government when they expect to be notified of the outcome of the investigation into allegations that some staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were involved in the Hamas attacks against Israel on 7 October 2023; and what steps they are taking to ensure that the humanitarian response in Gaza is not adversely affected as a result of the suspension of donor country funds to UNRWA.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK's pause in any future funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) will remain in place until we review the allegations, and we are looking to our partners in the UN to carry out a robust and comprehensive investigation. Any future funding decisions will be taken after this point. We remain committed to getting humanitarian aid to the people in Gaza who desperately need it, and our decision to pause future funding to UNRWA has no impact on the UK's contribution to the humanitarian response. Our commitment to trebling aid to Gaza still stands, and we are getting on with aid delivery through funding multiple implementing partners including other UN agencies and international and UK NGOs. This support is helping people in Gaza get food, water, shelter and medicines. The UK is providing £60 million in humanitarian assistance to support partners including the British Red Cross, UNICEF, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS) to respond to critical food, fuel, water, health, shelter and security needs in Gaza.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-01/hl2138>

House of Commons Library Briefing

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Parliamentary reading list (2020-24)

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9873/CBP-9873.pdf>

Scottish Labour Party

Motion adopted by the Scottish Labour Party Conference (submitted by Cunninghame South CLP, Dundee City East CLP and Glasgow Anniesland CLP)

Conference condemns the terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas in Israel on 7th October 2023 that killed 1200 innocent people.

Conference notes the devastation caused by ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the horrifying scenes in recent weeks and months in Israel and Palestine, where over 20,000 innocent Palestinians have been killed and over 100 Israelis are still being held hostage.

There is no justification for the targeting of civilians, the taking of hostages and the loss of innocent life.

Conference supports Israel's right to protect its citizens, in line with International Law, affirms that Hamas remaining in Gaza is not tenable and agrees there is no justification for the collective punishment of 2.2 million citizens in Gaza.

Conference also acknowledges the importance of preventing an escalation of the conflict in the region.

Conference believes:

- The values of equality, democracy, human rights and the international rule of law are of fundamental importance.
- All combatants must act in accordance with the rules of war and international

humanitarian law. Conference supports Anas Sarwar in his call for an immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire in Gaza.

- Recognising that for any ceasefire to be successful and sustained it requires both sides to comply, Conference calls for:
- An end to rocket fire into and out of Gaza
- The unconditional release of hostages held by Hamas
- Essential supplies of water, food, medicine and electricity to be restored to Gaza, and the passage of aid into Gaza facilitated.
- A pathway to a peace process

Conference reaffirms its commitment to a two-state solution and recognises that long-term security for Israel and long-term justice for Palestine will only be achieved through a political, rather than military settlement.

Conference resolves to continue to campaign for these aims, to ask the UK Government to support an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and to use every form of diplomacy with international partners to make this a reality.

Conference condemns the rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia in the UK.

Conference thanks community leaders for the role they are playing in reducing tensions and calls on public figures to act responsibly and work to bring communities together at this time.

<https://labourlist.org/2024/02/scottish-labour-conference-ceasefire-protest/>

International Court of Justice

Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel): Decision of the Court on South Africa's request for additional provisional measures

... the Court, having duly considered [South Africa's letter](#) dated 12 February 2024 and [Israel's observations](#) thereon received on 15 February 2024, took the following decision ...

“The Court notes that the most recent developments in the Gaza Strip, and in Rafah in particular, ‘would exponentially increase what is already a humanitarian nightmare with untold regional consequences’, as stated by the United Nations Secretary-General (Remarks to the General Assembly on priorities for 2024 (7 Feb. 2024)).

This perilous situation demands immediate and effective implementation of the provisional measures indicated by the Court in its Order of 26 January 2024, which are applicable throughout the Gaza Strip, including in Rafah, and does not demand the indication of additional provisional measures.

The Court emphasizes that the State of Israel remains bound to fully comply with its obligations under the Genocide Convention and with the said Order, including by ensuring the safety and security of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.”

To read the decision in full see

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240216-pre-01-00-en.pdf>

The UN Secretary-General's comments referred to above can be read at

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sqsm22127.doc.htm>

The ICJ Order referred to above can be read at

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

United Nations

Secretary-General's remarks to the Munich Security Conference: Growing the Pie: A Global Order that works for Everyone

... Nothing can justify the unconscionable terror attacks launched by Hamas on 7 October against Israel.

And nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people in Israel's military response.

The situation in Gaza is an appalling indictment of the deadlock in global relations.

The level of death and destruction is shocking in itself. The war is also spilling over borders across the region and affecting global trade.

The humanitarian aid operation is now on life support. It is barely functioning.

Humanitarians are working under unimaginable conditions – including live fire, multiple physical obstacles and Israeli restrictions as well as the breakdown of public order.

Rafah is at the core of the entire humanitarian aid operation. An all out offensive on the city would be devastating for the 1.5 million Palestinian civilians there who are already on the edge of survival.

I have repeatedly called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and a humanitarian ceasefire. That is the only way to massively scale up the aid delivery in Gaza.

This must be the foundation for concrete and irreversible steps towards a two-state solution, based on international law and United Nations resolutions. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2024-02-16/secretary-generals-remarks-the-munich-security-conference-growing-the-pie-global-order-works-for-everyone-delivered>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Gaza: When mothers have to bury at least 7,700 children, very basic principles are challenged, UN women's rights committee says

... "On this 125th day of the war in Gaza, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the Committee) appeals for an immediate and sustained ceasefire to halt violence and loss of lives, and destruction of infrastructure and property and a return to a constructive peace dialogue to agree on actions to bring about lasting peace and security that involves the leadership and decision-making of both Israeli and Palestinian women. ...

The Committee is deeply concerned about the plight of the more than one million Palestinian women and girls who have been forcibly displaced multiple times. As of 12 February 2024, UN Women reports that at least 28,340 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, and 70 per cent of those killed are said to be women and children. ... The Convention's very principles are challenged when mothers are put in a situation of burying at least 7,729 children. As stated by UNFPA, an estimated 5,500 women are due to give birth within the next month, more than 180 delivering every day, and an estimated 840 women may experience pregnancy- or birth-related complications. The Committee condemns the inexorable march of death, disease, and destruction in the Gaza Strip.

The Committee calls on Israel to comply with the order of provisional measures of the International Court of Justice to "take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts" of violence, "prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide", and "to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance".

The Committee calls upon Israel to allow the provision of medical personnel, medicines,

water, food, fuel, shelter, and clothes to all civilians and provide a special focus on women's and girls' special needs, such as sexual and reproductive health services and sanitary and hygiene products. The clock is ticking fast towards famine and an outbreak of epidemics. The lives and health, physical and mental, of the women and girls of Gaza are severely compromised.

The Committee deplores that women are among the first victims of conflict-related violence and stresses that they are leading forces for peace. It reaffirms its profound commitment to women's leadership and decision-making at this moment of conflict and in all evolving processes in peace-building. ...

The Committee calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the Israeli hostages held captive by Hamas. It also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Palestinians, including women and girls, who are arbitrarily arrested and detained by Israeli forces.

The Committee warns against any pending and potential military offenses and incursions into the already limited land space of Rafah where hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced persons, predominantly women and children, are seeking refuge.

The Committee appeals to the Security Council to claim an immediate and total cessation of the war in Gaza to ensure lasting peace and security in the region."

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/02/gaza-when-mothers-have-bury-least-7700-children-very-basic-principles-are>

The Convention (on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) referred to above can be read at

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

The International Court of Justice Order referred to above can be read at

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-ord-01-00-en.pdf>

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Global humanitarian and development co-funding initiative: joint statement by the UK and Qatar

The UK and Qatar have issued a joint statement launching a new co-funding initiative for international development cooperation and humanitarian response.

As part of a joint collaborative humanitarian effort between the State of Qatar and the United Kingdom, the two states are launching a formally led Qatar-UK co-funding initiative. Under the initiative, the UK and Qatar will work towards an initial \$50 million target to address the most pressing humanitarian and development challenges globally. ...

Through this cooperation, Qatar and the UK will combine their expertise, resources, and networks to implement impactful projects that address both the immediate and long-term challenges faced by communities in these critical areas. ...

Recently, the State of Qatar and the United Kingdom have worked together to deliver 29 tonnes of urgent humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip within the framework of joint humanitarian and development cooperation. In addition, the two countries are actively working together to implement several co-funding opportunities, with two focused on Syria to bolster crucial humanitarian and educational initiatives, and one aimed at addressing food insecurity in Somalia. ...

Together, the State of Qatar and the United Kingdom are dedicated to addressing the most urgent development challenges with greater urgency and effectiveness.

To read the full statement see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/global-humanitarian-and-development-co-funding-initiative-joint-statement-by-the-uk-and-qatar>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arms Trade (Inquiry and Suspension) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3567>

Criminal Justice Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3511>

Disestablishment of the Church of England Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3539>

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>

Genocide Determination Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3535>

Genocide (Prevention and Response) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3521>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

International Freedom of Religion or Belief Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3564>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3596>

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

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Enhanced Dataset [England] (closing date 5 March 2024)

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/clinical-audits-and-registries/female-genital-mutilation-datasets/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-enhanced-dataset-overview-of-2024-consultation>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill - Standard Tier (closing date 18 March 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/martyns-law-standard-tier-consultation>

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