



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Home Affairs

Charity Commission

Guidance: Chapter 5: Protecting charities from abuse for extremist purposes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-charities-from-abuse-for-extremist-purposes/chapter-5-protecting-charities-from-abuse-for-extremist-purposes>

Scottish Government

New Hate Crime laws come into force

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act will provide greater protection for victims and communities.

It introduces new offences for threatening or abusive behaviour which is intended to stir up hatred based on prejudice towards characteristics including age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics. These extra provisions will add to the long-standing stirring up racial hatred offences, which have been in place UK-wide since 1986.

The new laws were developed following Lord Bracadale's Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation which concluded that new specific offences relating to stirring up hatred were needed. The legislation, which was passed by a majority of MSPs in the Scottish Parliament in 2021, was also subject to extensive consultation and engagement throughout, including with communities affected by hate crime.

Minister for Victims and Community Safety Siobhian Brown said: “Nobody in our society should live in fear and we are committed to building safer communities that live free from hatred and prejudice. We know that the impact on those on the receiving end of physical, verbal or online attacks can be traumatic and life-changing. This legislation is an essential element of our wider approach to tackling that harm.

“Protections for freedom of expression are built into the legislation passed by Parliament and these new offences have a higher threshold for criminality than the long-standing offence of stirring up racial hatred, which has been in place since 1986.”

<https://www.gov.scot/news/new-hate-crime-laws-come-into-force/>

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2021/14/contents>

The Bracadale Review, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/progress-report/2018/05/independent-review-hate-crime-legislation-scotland-final-report/documents/00535892-pdf/00535892-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00535892.pdf>

Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS)

Lord Advocate’s guidelines: Offences aggravated or motivated by prejudice

<https://www.copfs.gov.uk/publications/lord-advocate-s-guidelines-offences-aggravated-or-motivated-by-prejudice/html/>

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Israel

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

David Cameron The news of the airstrike that killed World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid workers in Gaza is deeply distressing. British Nationals are reported to have been killed, we are urgently working to verify this information and will provide full support to their families.

https://twitter.com/David_Cameron/status/1775096297122414710

David Cameron These were people who were working to deliver life-saving aid to those who desperately need it. It is essential that humanitarian workers are protected and able to carry out their work.

https://twitter.com/David_Cameron/status/1775096304500125997

David Cameron We have called on Israel to immediately investigate and provide a full, transparent explanation of what happened.

https://twitter.com/David_Cameron/status/1775096307427742136

Scottish Government

Humza Yousaf Continuing arms sales to Israel is unjustified & now possibly illegal. UK Government must now, finally, do the right thing. The UK Government should also intervene in the ICJ case ruling on genocide in Gaza and provide their legal advice to the Court. *[plus link to an Observer report that includes a recording of Alicia Kearns MP*

claiming at a public meeting that the UK Government has received legal advice that Israel has breached international humanitarian law in Gaza but chosen not to make the information public]

<https://twitter.com/HumzaYousaf/status/1774718850199646478>

Humza Yousaf Melanie is right. The Israeli Government cannot be above accountability. The UK Government continues to send arms to Israel despite the fact they have killed children, women, aid workers and bombed hospitals, school & refugee camps. Shameful & unacceptable. #NotATarget [plus link to a tweet from Melanie Ward of Medical Aid for Palestinians]

<https://twitter.com/HumzaYousaf/status/1775087760618950994>

United Nations

Gaza: UN aid teams still waiting for Israeli green light to relieve stricken northern hospital

The killing of seven aid workers from the NGO World Central Kitchen in Israeli military airstrikes in central Gaza has been strongly condemned by senior UN humanitarian officials who on Tuesday reiterated repeated concerns that "there is no safe space left in Gaza".

"This is not an isolated incident," said Jamie McGoldrick, Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). "As of 20 March, at least 196 humanitarians had been killed in the OPT since October 2023. This is nearly three times the death toll recorded in any single conflict in a year."

Mr. McGoldrick repeated appeals to "all parties to the conflict, including the Government of Israel" to respect international humanitarian law, which prohibits the targeting of humanitarian personnel.

"The role of aid workers is to alleviate the suffering of people in crisis. Their safety, along with that of the civilians they serve, must be guaranteed," he said. ...

From the UN World Health Organization spokesperson Dr Margaret Harris maintained that the NGO mission had been agreed with the Israeli authorities ahead of time and that the organization's car was "well marked, it was very clear: it was World Central Kitchen".

Turning to the destruction of Al-Shifa Hospital following a two-week siege by the Israeli military,, Dr Harris said that it had "ripped the heart out of healthcare" in the enclave.

In a stark assessment of the closure of 750-bed facility Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City, the World Health Organization (WHO) maintained that aid teams had been waiting for "days and days" for Israeli permission to reach the stricken facility, where staff and patients endured "horrific levels of violence".

"We've had contact with the staff, the (hospital) directors told us that Al-Shifa has gone, it's no longer able to function in any way, shape or form" as a medical centre, said WHO spokesperson Dr Margaret Harris.

Speaking to journalists in Geneva, Dr Harris said that the facility was now "in ruins" and that at least 21 patients had died during the Israeli Defense Forces "siege".

As the situation deteriorated at Al-Shifa, medical staff had to move patients to an office space within the hospital grounds without toilets and where there was "no water (or), food; they were sharing one bottle of water between 15 people by the end", the WHO spokesperson continued.

She noted that medical staff "had no means of looking after patients, many of whom were severely injured (or) intensive care-level patients" fitted with urinary catheters but lacking urinary bags. "You can imagine the horror that has been going on," Dr Harris said.

If permission is granted on Tuesday to reach Al-Shifa and northern Gaza's last few remaining health facilities, priorities for WHO teams include bringing medicines, fuel and

food – and assessing what other supplies are needed and how to provide relief to the most severely injured and sick.

“We’ve been trying to go for days and days and days and most of our missions have been rejected,” Dr Harris said. “We’re not going to be able to provide the things that, say, a functioning hospital needs, but first of all we need to do an assessment to understand what we can do. Secondly who needs to be evacuated where can they go and what can we do to save the lives of those patients (who are) remaining.” ...

A UN health agency team also intends to visit Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza City where there are already dire concerns about the growing number of babies being born too underweight to survive.

The facility is already admitting at least 15 malnourished children per day and the needs are “getting ever more severe”, Dr Harris insisted, in a renewed call for a ceasefire. “It’s got to be taken seriously - the ceasefire, the UN resolution – the world has agreed a ceasefire must happen. It should have happened months ago, but it must happen now.” ... Before conflict erupted, Gazans were self-sufficient in food production and only 0.8 per cent of children under the age of five were acutely malnourished. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1148161>

Martin Griffiths [UN Humanitarian Chief] Outraged by the killing of @WCKitchen aid workers in Gaza. All this talk about ceasefires, and still this war steals the best of us.

Outraged by the killing of @WCKitchen aid workers in Gaza.

They were heroes, killed while trying to feed starving people. My condolences to their families and colleagues.

All this talk about ceasefires, and still this war steals the best of us.

The actions of those behind it are indefensible.

This must stop.

<https://twitter.com/UNReliefChief/status/1775072561862263199>

World Health Organisation

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus How many more lives will be lost until there's a ceasefire? We are outraged by the killing of humanitarian workers in #Gaza. Safety is a basic requirement for the delivery of life-saving aid. Our deepest condolences to the @WCKitchen team and affected families. We once again call for the sustained protection of humanitarian workers across Gaza.

<https://twitter.com/DrTedros/status/1775089879182876707>

World Central Kitchen

7 World Central Kitchen team members killed in Gaza

World Central Kitchen is devastated to confirm seven members of our team have been killed in an IDF strike in Gaza.

The WCK team was traveling in a deconflicted zone in two armored cars branded with the WCK logo and a soft skin vehicle.

Despite coordinating movements with the IDF, the convoy was hit as it was leaving the Deir al-Balah warehouse, where the team had unloaded more than 100 tons of humanitarian food aid brought to Gaza on the maritime route.

“This is not only an attack against WCK, this is an attack on humanitarian organizations showing up in the most dire of situations where food is being used as a weapon of war. This is unforgivable,” said World Central Kitchen CEO Erin Gore.

The seven killed are from Australia, Poland, United Kingdom, a dual citizen of the U.S. and Canada, and Palestine.

“I am heartbroken and appalled that we—World Central Kitchen and the world—lost beautiful lives today because of a targeted attack by the IDF. The love they had for feeding people, the determination they embodied to show that humanity rises above all, and the impact they made in countless lives will forever be remembered and cherished,” said Erin. The IDF says it is “carrying out an in-depth examination at the highest levels to understand the circumstances of this tragic incident.”

World Central Kitchen is pausing our operations immediately in the region. We will be making decisions about the future of our work soon.

<https://wck.org/news/gaza-team-update>

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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

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-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

European Commission: 1st progress report of the EU antisemitism strategy

(closing date 19 April 2024)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14204-1st-progress-report-of-the-EU-antisemitism-strategy_en

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