



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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### Downing Street

#### **King's Speech 2024: background briefing notes**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6697ac9cab418ab05559271d/King\\_s\\_Speech\\_2024\\_background\\_briefing\\_GOV.uk.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6697ac9cab418ab05559271d/King_s_Speech_2024_background_briefing_GOV.uk.pdf)

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## Holocaust

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

#### **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: Glasgow plenary**

The first plenary meeting under the UK's presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) took place in Glasgow from 24 to 27 June, chaired by Lord Pickles, UK Special Envoy on Post-Holocaust Issues.

Delegates from the IHRA's 35 member countries, along with representatives from observer countries and international partners came together for 4 days of discussions on Holocaust remembrance, education, and research. This followed a conference held on the 23 June 2024, which brought together teachers and educators from across Scotland to share best practice on Holocaust education.

The plenary was underpinned by the UK presidency's theme 'In Plain Sight', inspired by a conversation between Lord Pickles and Holocaust survivor Ivor Perl, emphasising that the Holocaust did not happen behind closed doors.

The Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023, the ongoing Israeli military operation in Gaza, and the surge in antisemitism that has emerged in their wake continued to inform discussions. Attendees shared their experiences of working to combat antisemitism and the tools and strategies they found most effective in doing so. ...

The impact of new and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), on Holocaust denial and distortion is a focal point of the UK's IHRA presidency, and featured

prominently in discussions. While close attention was paid to the potential dangers of AI in the facilitation of Holocaust distortion, delegates also explored the unique opportunities that AI can provide for Holocaust education and identifying and tackling distortion. ...

The plenary provided an opportunity to showcase some of the UK's pioneering work in the field of Holocaust remembrance and education. ...

... Lord Pickles launched a guide to implementation of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism for sporting institutions, alongside the Independent Adviser to the Government on Antisemitism, Lord Mann. Delegates also visited Garnethill Synagogue and the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre, where they had the opportunity to engage directly with representatives of Glasgow's Jewish community and learn more about the local history.

Delegates also had the opportunity to hear from the First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney MSP, at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, who quoted author and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi: "the Holocaust is a page from the book of humanity from which we should never remove the bookmark of memory." ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/international-holocaust-remembrance-alliance-glasgow-plenary>

### **The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism: A Guide to Implementation for Sporting Institutions**

<https://wjc-org-website.s3.amazonaws.com/horizon/assets/Vi7vJO-8/ihra-antisemitism-stadiums-a5-slamstudio-3d-nocrops.pdf>

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### **Work of the European Restitution Committees: Lord Pickles' speech: UK Special Envoy for post-Holocaust issues Lord Pickles gave a speech about restitution for art stolen by the Nazi German regime.**

... the V&A holds the only known copy of a complete inventory of the Entartete Kunst, or 'Degenerate Art', confiscated by the Nazi regime from public institutions in Germany, during 1937 and 1938.

There is a list of more than 16,000 artworks was produced by the Reich Ministry for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda in 1942.

It seems that the inventory was compiled as a final record, after the sales and disposals of the confiscated art had been completed in the summer of 1941. The 2 volumes provide crucial cultural information about the provenance, exhibition history and fate of each artwork. ...

The Holocaust was one of the darkest moments in human history.

The Holocaust did not begin with the mass murder of Jews. When the Nazi's first came to power they used the full panoply of government to target and exclude Jews from German society. They took away your job, your home and your identity.

The Nazi German regime enacted discriminatory laws and organised violence targeting Germany's Jews. The Nazi persecution of Jews became increasingly vile between 1933 and 1945.

This radicalisation culminated in a plan that Nazi leaders referred to as the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question'. The 'Final Solution' was the organised and systematic mass murder of European Jews. The Nazi German regime implemented this genocide between 1941 and 1945.

By the end of the Holocaust, the Nazi German regime and their allies and collaborators had murdered 6 million European Jews.

The destruction wrought by the Nazis and their collaborators was so great that, for hundreds of thousands of victims, the only reminder of their existence in this world is a

book with a name etched on the inside cover, a painting or very ordinary item of clothing: a shoe. ...

The Nazis were many things: they were murderers; they were psychopaths; they were bigots; they were racists and they were antisemites.

But fundamentally, the Nazis were thieves and robbers. They looted and plundered throughout Europe. They stole from citizens; they stole from states, and, because there is no honour among thieves, they stole from one another. ...

Do not think for a moment that this was confined to a bunch of Nazis.

The looting undertaken against Jewish people was an important part of the German economy during the Second World War. That was how people got their fur coat, their bit of jewellery, a nice mirror, their book collections and pots and pans.

What was not looted by your neighbours was often taken by the state and sold outside your house or at special sales. The very clothes of the poor victims of Babi Yar, in the Ukraine who were stripped and laid in pits, were sold close to the execution site.

Throughout the world, thousands of artefacts, properties, and belongings remain in the wrong hands – in the hands of national collections, local authorities, museums, churches and private individuals.

People and communities are often very proud of their collections and may even be well-meaning, but stolen property in the most benign and cultured hands is still theft. It is shocking that, even today, thousands of injustices remain uncorrected. ...

Anything considered sufficiently Aryan, such as Rembrandts, were earmarked for the Furhermuseum that Hitler planned for his hometown of Linz in Austria. But anything seen as 'degenerate', such as work by Egon Schiele or Van Gogh, were sold at so-called 'Jew auctions' to raise cash for the Nazi war machine. Other paintings were simply burned.

Everybody always thinks it's just rich people's paintings the Nazis took, but they took everything – your tablecloths, your towels, your pots, and pans.

It was all part of Hitler's aim to annihilate the Jewish people, he wanted to erase people's identity. ...

A successful meeting was held in London in March 2023 ... where it was agreed we would focus on art restitution in the first instance and meet every 6 months. The United States agreed to host a second meeting in Washington ... At the meeting it was agreed that we should develop some best practice guidelines to support the Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art.

In March this year the guidelines were launched.

What makes this document stand out is that it brings together best practice but more importantly it is designed to be used. ...

We have to acknowledge that some countries have made progress over the last 25 years. Five countries have established a restitution commission according to Articles 10 and 11 of the Washington Principles at a very early stage these are Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK. Israel and Switzerland have also embarked on a process of setting up a commission.

Looking to the future, to the next 25 years we need to ensure transparency. Claimants, as well as the public in general, have a right to know about the existence and the whereabouts of all items in public collections. ...

If we are to implement the Washington Principles faithfully, we must ensure that in those countries where commissions have been set up are fully transparent. ...

We need to insist on research – without research we cannot know what museums hold. This should include full public lists but also provenance research. This should also be public. ...

Since 1998 British museums have been researching the provenance of their collections to establish whether works that had previously been stolen by the Nazis in the period 1933 to 1945 had unwittingly been acquired. Details of these objects are published in a fully searchable database.

The UK's [Spoliation Advisory Panel](#) considers claims from people or their heirs who lost cultural objects during the Nazi-era and which are now in public collections. Since its establishment in 2000, the Panel has considered 22 claims and 11 objects have been returned. ...

One of the key guidelines is to encourage mediation not litigation. Sadly, many institutions particularly in the United States prefer to litigate.

It can't be right that 80 years on families who had their lives destroyed by the Nazi's and their collaborators have to pay to get their property back. Why should families who have had their art stolen have to go to court to get their art returned? This practice simply exacerbates the loss.

This is not about Rubens or Rembrandt or a Vermeer or a Van Dyk. It is often about family pieces with huge sentimental value.

This is about small pieces, which hung on the wall of homes across Europe. It is about Judaica – precious pieces related to the Jewish religion, deeply personal items like family candlesticks used on shabbat. ...

The best practice guide mentions 'Just and fair solution'.

It is important that these decisions are made public. Secret bilateral settlements may comfort the individual parties involved, but such settlements neglect the public dimension of the restitution process.

We need to understand the reasoning behind decisions. That is why transparency is key. ...

We need to remember that, whether it is a painting or a book or a porcelain jar, every object represents the life and lives of those who were lost. Their restitution restores a personal connection, a link with those lives so utterly transformed or destroyed by the Nazis.

After 80 years we need to be proactive and not wait for people to come to us. The first step is for all institutions to publish list of holdings.

This is a mea culpa moment for us all. We need to pledge to do better and the Washington guidelines are step in the right direction.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/work-of-the-european-restitution-committees-lord-pickles-speech>

*The guidelines referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.state.gov/best-practices-for-the-washington-conference-principles-on-nazi-confiscated-art/>

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## **International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Chair visits Jersey for Liberation Day**

Key to the UK's Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was the visit by Lord Pickles to Jersey to take part in Liberation Day. The Channel Islands were the only part of Britain to be occupied by the Nazis during the Second World War. Liberation Day marked the end of almost 5 years of occupation by Nazi forces during World War 2. ...

Lord Pickles ... said: The camps in Alderney were significant in the history of the Holocaust not just because they were sited on British soil but also because there had been considerable speculation in recent years over numbers of individuals murdered by the conditions in the camps. ...

Numbers matter because the truth matters. The dead deserve the dignity of the truth; the residents of Alderney deserve accurate numbers to free them from distortion. Exaggerating the numbers of the dead, or even minimising them, is in itself a form of Holocaust distortion and a critical threat to Holocaust memory and to fostering a world without genocide. ...

Lord Pickles ended his visit to Jersey with a Shabbat dinner with the Jewish community where concerns were raised about the rising levels of antisemitism across the UK especially on university campuses and recent Pro-Palestinian demonstrations in Jersey. He reassured the Jewish community of Jersey that better days will come.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/international-holocaust-remembrance-alliance-chair-visits-jersey-for-liberation-day>

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## Israel

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office** "We need to see an immediate ceasefire in Gaza: the death and destruction is intolerable. Much more aid must flow in and Hamas must release all the hostages." Foreign Secretary @DavidLammy on his first official visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [plus video]

<https://x.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1813253078927495337>

## United Nations

**Security Council: Multilateral cooperation in the interest of a more just, democratic and sustainable world order**

**Sergey V. Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation** and Council President for July ... recalled United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken's 2021 statement in response to a question about what he thinks about the decision of the previous administration to recognize the Syrian Golan Heights as belonging to Israel. He said: "Leaving aside the question of legality, from a practical standpoint, the Golan Heights are very important to Israel's security." Likewise, he recalled the statement of the Permanent Representative of the United States that resolution 2728 (2024) — demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza — is "not legally binding". In other words, "these American rules are more important than Article 25 of the UN Charter", he said. The reckless expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) — despite repeated warnings of Moscow over many years — also provoked the Ukrainian crisis. He stressed that the United States continues to ramp up confrontation ...

**Ali Bagheri, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran** ... stressed that "unilateralism is an invitation to injustice, confrontation and war." Expressing regret over the misuse of the Security Council by certain permanent members for self-serving political agendas, he highlighted the pressure on independent States and the paralysis in addressing aggression, particularly noting the United States' consistent vetoing of efforts to stop the Israeli regime's ongoing genocide of Palestinians. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15766.doc.htm>

*UNSCR 2728, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2728\(2024\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2728(2024))

*Article 25 of the UN Charter, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-5>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **Holocaust Memorial Bill**

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

### 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

#### **\*\* closes today**

#### **Petitioning against the Holocaust Memorial Bill** (closing date 17 July 2024)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/8481/petitioning-against-the-holocaust-memorial-bill/>

House of Lords: Guidance on the right to be heard

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/55634/documents/4871>

House of Lords: Guidance on submitting your petition

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/55632/documents/4869>

#### **£20k registration threshold for charities in Northern Ireland** (closing date 11 August 2024)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-ps20k-registration-threshold-charities-northern-ireland>

#### **Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 16 August 2024)

[https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-bill/consult\\_view/](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-bill/consult_view/)

#### **Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill: Financial Memorandum** (closing date 16 August 2024)

[https://yourviews.parliament.scot/finance/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland/consult\\_view/](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/finance/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland/consult_view/)

#### **Gaps in Equality Legislation [Northern Ireland]** (closing date 6 September 2024)

<https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/committee-for-the-executive-office/gaps-in-equality-legislation-inquiry>

#### **Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2025-2028** (closing date 3 October 2024)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/our-strategic-plan-consultation-2025-2028>

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