



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Antisemitism

Oliver Dowden (Conservative) [1927] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps her Department is taking to tackle anti-Semitism.

Jim McMahon: Antisemitism has absolutely no place in our society, and tackling antisemitism in all its forms is a top priority for this Government. This Government recently reappointed Lord John Mann as its Independent Adviser on Antisemitism to provide independent advice to the Secretary of State and ensure that the Jewish community's concerns about antisemitism are heard and acted upon. This Government also continues to fund the Community Security Trust, supporting their vital work in protecting Jewish communities. This includes providing additional security at Jewish schools, synagogues, and other sites.

Antisemitism is a deplorable form of hate crime, and this Government is committed to ensuring that everyone is able to worship freely, wear religious clothing and go about their lives in safety and security – irrespective of their background, faith or other characteristic. Tackling hate crime will be a key part of this Government's work to overcome divisions and create connections between all communities, and we are exploring a more integrated and cohesive approach to achieve this.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/1927>

The Charity Commission

Charity Commission statement in response to riots and public disorder

Charities are at the heart of communities across the country and have always been part of the solution to division and hatred. They offer hope and unity, bringing communities of place, faith, and interest together, and they build bridges. Many have been already and are responding to the violence with courage and optimism.

But despicably, charities in turn are not immune from becoming targets for, or affected by,

violence and aggression. Mosques and other charitable places of worship have been targeted, and other charities have become victims of mindless vandalism. Some charity leaders now face tough choices, weighing up the importance of their day-to-day activities against the challenges of keeping beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and premises safe from harm.

As regulator, the Commission recognises that some charities are responding to unfamiliar circumstances and unclear risks. What matters is that trustees make decisions in good faith, guided by their charity's best interests and act reasonably on the information available.

The Commission provides guidance that can help trustees, who know their charities, communities, and circumstances best, make good decisions. As the regulator we stand by charities as they navigate this challenging time and stand ready to support them as they do what they do best - bring communities together, protect society's most vulnerable and work to make our country and world a better place. ...

The Commission's safeguarding guidance includes a section on how to [handle and report incidents and concerns](#), which includes advice to:

- follow your protecting people and safeguarding policies and procedures
- act quickly, ensuring you stop or minimise any further harm or damage
- report it to all relevant agencies and regulators when required
- plan what to say to those involved with your charity and the media if appropriate

Charities will wish to keep the security and safety of their staff, visitors and premises under regular review and consider whether further protective measures are necessary. ...

It is also important to remember that police and other services are actively monitoring the situation across the country and regularly assessing risks and threats and responding appropriately. Monitor official social media channels of police forces and government bodies for accurate and up to date information to support your assessments and decision making. With significant disinformation circulating it's important to check sources of information and rely only on official or other trusted channels of communication avoiding speculation or rumours.

However, we recognise given the moving nature of events and unique situation this may not be easy. We also recognise that not every scenario can be planned for or mitigated against and reviews and mitigations should be proportionate and will be different for each organisation and situation. ...

There is further advice from the National Business Crime Centre on [safeguarding your organisation during public events](#).

Guidance is also available from ProtectUK on how to [effectively protect and prepare](#).

Charities can work with local emergency services, including [Local Resilience Forums](#). ...

The [VCS Emergencies Partnership](#) is a network of more than 300 voluntary, community and statutory sector organisations that come together to provide a more coordinated and person-centred response to emergencies. It aims for greater national resilience and a better experience for people who are impacted by emergencies. ...

Your local infrastructure organisation (LIO) will be a source of information about the local situation and immediate risks, a useful point of contact for immediate support and connection to other organisations locally, and a good way to feed information back to statutory services. Find your [nearest local infrastructure organisation](#). ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-statement-in-response-to-riots-and-public-disorder>

Welsh Government

Eluned Morgan becomes Wales' first female First Minister

Born in Ely, Cardiff and educated at the Welsh-language Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf comprehensive school, Eluned has had a 30-year career in public service.

She has represented Wales in the European Parliament – where she was the youngest MEP in 1994 – the House of Lords and in the Senedd. She has served in the Cabinets of three First Ministers since first being elected to the Senedd to represent Mid and West Wales in 2016. ...

In a statement to the Senedd this morning, following the vote to nominate the new First Minister, Eluned said: It is the greatest honour of my life to stand before you as the first woman to become the First Minister of Wales. As First Minister, I promise to champion voices and experiences, which have too often been sidelined and silenced.

I hope to be defined by my unwavering commitment to the people of Wales, by my years of public service and my determination to create a fairer, greener and more prosperous nation for us all. ...

It's our job in Government to provide everyone with the opportunity to fulfil their potential. This is based on the deep belief I have - that the success of one leads to the success of many. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.wales/eluned-morgan-becomes-wales-first-female-first-minister>

Cabinet Appointments: Eluned Morgan MS, First Minister

... The appointments I am announcing today will provide stability and continuity over the summer in the Ministerial team ...

- Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs: Huw Irranca-Davies MS
- Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and the Cabinet Office: Rebecca Evans MS
- Cabinet Secretary for Education: Lynne Neagle MS
- Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning: Jayne Bryant MS
- Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care: Mark Drakeford MS
- Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Transport and North Wales: Ken Skates MS
- Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip: Jane Hutt MS
- Minister for Social Care: Dawn Bowden MS
- Minister for Social Partnership: Jack Sargeant MS
- Minister for Mental Health and Early Years: Sarah Murphy MS
- Counsel General Designate: Elisabeth Jones

Further announcements on portfolio allocations will be made in September following a listening exercise over the summer with the Welsh public. ...

To read the full press release

<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-cabinet-appointments>

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Holocaust

Scottish Parliament Motion

Kenneth Gibson (SNP) [S6M-14015] Commemorating Warsaw Uprising Day and

Honouring the Heroic Polish Resistance of 1944 80 Years On – That the Parliament acknowledges what it sees as the significance of Warsaw Uprising Day, observed annually on 1 August, to commemorate the heroic efforts of the Polish resistance during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944; understands that the uprising, a valiant and decisive armed struggle by the Polish Home Army against the occupying Nazi German forces, occurred within the broader context of the Second World War after five years of occupation; further understands that the revolt was part of Operation Tempest, a broader initiative orchestrated by Tadeusz “Bór” Komorowski and the Polish Government-in-exile to liberate Polish territories from German occupation while the Germans were preparing their defences against the advancing Soviet Red Army; believes that the uprising was a response to the barbaric conditions under Nazi rule, which saw the Holocaust of European Jewry conducted primarily on Polish soil, as well as suppression of the Polish nation and culture, forced labour, and mass deportation, and the extermination of Polish nationals to create an ethnically German living space; understands that the uprising, which lasted 63 days, resulted in the tragic loss of approximately 200,000 Polish civilian lives and the near-total destruction of the city of Warsaw, with German forces carrying out mass executions and severe reprisals against the civilian population; notes that the bloodiest action took place between 5 and 7 August 1944, when approximately 40,000 men, women, and children were murdered during massacres in the district of Wola; is aware that the uprising was intended to last only a few days until Soviet forces arrived, however, Soviet assistance never materialised; considers that, despite their courageous resistance, the lightly armed Polish fighters faced overwhelming odds, and eventually the uprising was brutally suppressed; believes that the aftermath of the uprising led to significant changes in Poland, including post-war repression under the Soviet-backed communist regime, and that the uprising’s leaders faced political persecution, and supports fostering international solidarity with Polish organisations and communities to ensure that the memory of those who sacrificed their lives for a free Poland is honoured and preserved, recognising that the uprising’s legacy continues to inspire people worldwide in their pursuit of justice and liberty.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-14015>

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Israel

House of Lords Written Answer

Visas: Palestinians

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour) [HL267] To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of proposals for a temporary Palestinians visa scheme.

Lord Hanson of Flint: The government is keeping all existing pathways under review in response to events in Gaza.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-23/hl267>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Development Minister calls for peace and security in Middle East, announcing new aid for Gaza on first trip to region

... Anneliese Dodds calls for peace and security in the Middle East amid escalating tensions, on her first visit to the region in her role ...

As tensions rise between Israel and Lebanon, the minister will call for calm in the wider

Middle East, and continue [diplomatic efforts made by the Foreign and Defence Secretaries in Qatar, Lebanon and Israel last week](#) to lead a renewed push for peace.

She will also [repeat calls for British nationals to leave Lebanon now](#), due to rising risks associated with the ongoing conflict between Israel, Lebanese Hizballah and other non-state actors in Lebanon.

Amid the threat of growing instability in the wider region, Gazans continue to face a devastating humanitarian crisis.

During her visit to Jordan, the minister will announce £6 million in funding for UNICEF's work to support vulnerable families in Gaza.

The £6 million package will help tens of thousands of Gazans access food and water, as well as health, education and wellbeing services. ...

Development Minister Anneliese Dodds said: Now is the time for calm, if we are to achieve lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. It is in no-one's interests for tensions to escalate and spread across the wider region.

We are seeing the humanitarian impact of conflict on Gazans. This new UK support will provide a lifeline for vulnerable families, giving them access to basic food and water during a desperate time. I am grateful to the Jordanian Government for supporting UK efforts to get aid to those in such desperate need.

But this appalling situation cannot continue. We must see an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages and unfettered access to lifesaving aid for those in Gaza.

UK funding will support the vaccination and immunisation of over 20,000 children, provide over 8,000 school-aged children with recreational activities to boost their wellbeing and help over 55,000 people in Gaza access clean water and sanitation. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/development-minister-calls-for-peace-and-security-in-middle-east-announcing-new-aid-for-gaza-on-first-trip-to-region>

David Lammy Further escalation in the Middle East is in no one's interests. I spoke to Iran's acting Foreign Minister, Ali Bagheri Kani, and cautioned that any Iranian attack would have devastating consequences for the region. Iran and all parties must urgently and immediately de-escalate. [plus photo]

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1820891457190031502>

United Nations

Nurturing hope and leadership among Gaza's young people

"My message to the world is how important it is to strengthen the role of youth in societies and to invest in their potential," said 23-year-old Sarah Al Shamali from Gaza City, ahead of [International Youth Day](#), marked annually on 12 August.

... Ms. Al Shamali has currently been displaced for the ninth time and lives in a crowded refugee camp as the conflict with Israel enters its 10th month.

Before the latest eruption of violence, she ran her own media and graphic design company, where she honed the leadership skills she is now teaching to hundreds of her fellow Gazans. ...

Ms. Al Shamali and her colleagues are providing practical support, from educational programmes to distributing safe water in displacement camps and cultivating a spirit of solidarity among Gaza's youth. She described her experience as a volunteer as "transformative," explaining that it has helped her to navigate crises, strengthened her resilience and confirmed her belief in the potential of future generations "because young people embody the soul and energy of our country". ...

Such efforts are essential not only to meet the immediate psychosocial needs of young people, but also to equip youth affected by conflict and trauma with skills to rebuild a more peaceful future. Studies from conflict- and post-conflict settings show that support programmes led by peers and survivors can significantly improve the health and wellbeing of women and young people who are vulnerable to violence. ...

Ahmed Halabi was born and raised in Gaza City and now volunteers with local NGO and UNFPA partner Save Youth Future Society.

“Children are experiencing what I endured in my youth: pain, siege and war,” said Ahmed Halabi. “No child should suffer like this.” ...

One initiative encourages young men and boys to assume positive gender roles in their families and lessen their stress and anger by playing such sports as football. Doctors also dress up as clowns to visit children and provide first aid while local NGOs the Charity Fund and Eid Lantern distribute gifts and lanterns for Eid, a commitment to restoring some sense of normality amid the chaos of war. ...

What began with 10 volunteers assisting 50 children has now expanded to 40 volunteers reaching over 300. ...

Extraordinary challenges remain, namely a lack of fuel, exorbitant rental and operational costs and a severe lack of supplies.

To help plug these gaps, UNFPA is supporting six safe spaces in displacement camps in Gaza City and northern Gaza, which provide psychosocial support, sexual and reproductive health care, referrals for legal services and essential hygiene kits. Youth volunteers at these spaces engage other young people in arts and crafts, sport, singing, theatre and games.

Although themselves traumatised by the suffering of their families, friends and fellow Gazans, those working in these roles are carrying on, relentless in their dedication.

“If you ask me about my biggest gains from this volunteering,” Mr. Halabi said, “I would say everything I have been able to provide to the displaced children of my city.”

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1152901>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Independent experts condemn escalating violence in the Middle East, urge ceasefire and accountability

Independent experts today deplored escalating violence in the Middle East, including a rocket apparently fired from Lebanon that killed 12 children in Syria’s Golan Heights, occupied by Israel, and Israel’s alleged killing in response of Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur in Lebanon.

They also condemned the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas’ political chief and a former prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, in Iran.

“We are extremely concerned by these killings, which violate the human right to life and risk perilous further escalation of violence and displacement in the region,” they said.

The experts strongly condemned a rocket attack on 28 July reportedly launched from Lebanon against Majdal Shams, a village in the occupied Syrian Golan, which killed 12 Druze children and injured 42 other people. Israel has occupied the Golan Heights since 1967 and purported to annex it in 1981, in violation of international law. Israel claims that Hezbollah was responsible, but Hezbollah has denied the attack.

“This attack appears to be in violation of both international humanitarian law and international human rights law”, the experts said. “In addition, all countries have a [duty](#) to prevent the use of their territories by non-state actors to launch cross-border violence endangering civilians, and to investigate and prosecute or extradite those who commit such acts,” the experts said.

Israel responded by killing a Hezbollah commander, Fouad Shukur, in a residential area of Beirut on 30 July, in a strike that also reportedly killed a boy and a girl and three women and wounded 74 people. “We are alarmed at such reckless disregard for the human right to life, in violation of international humanitarian law, and the dangerous escalation of the border conflict with Hezbollah to the peaceful capital city of Lebanon,” the experts said. The experts also condemned the alleged killing of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on 31 July, which bears the hallmark of an Israeli operation. “If confirmed, this would amount to an extrajudicial killing and the crime of murder. All states are [prohibited](#) from arbitrarily depriving individuals of their right to life, including in military operations abroad,” they said. “Killings abroad are further illegal when they violate the prohibition on the use of armed force against another country under [Article 2\(4\)](#) of the United Nations Charter”, they said. “The killing of Haniyeh, a key political leader, amidst urgent and delicate ceasefire negotiations also thwarts the best immediate chance for peace and the safe release of those taken hostage on 7 October 2023”, the experts said. It has also destroyed efforts to bring Haniyeh to justice before the International Criminal Court. “This assassination not only exacerbates a dire conflict but destabilises the whole region, undermines multilateralism, and impedes the United Nations’ search for a diplomatic solution according to international law.”

All three incidents highlight the vital need for full, independent and impartial investigations, including access to all pertinent evidence and full cooperation from relevant countries, to establish the facts of the killings and ensure accountability.

To protect innocent civilian lives, the experts urged all parties to immediately cease fire on all fronts. They also called on the Security Council to fulfill its responsibility to effectively respond to all actors in the region whose actions threaten international peace and security.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/independent-experts-condemn-escalating-violence-middle-east-urge-ceasefire>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3741>

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 in 4 days**

£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>

**** closes in 9 days**

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/

**** closes in 9 days**

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/

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