



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Scottish Government

#### **First Minister meets faith representatives and political leaders**

First Minister John Swinney has held positive talks to provide further reassurance to people across Scotland in the context of ongoing disturbances and disorder in parts of the UK. The First Minister met with representatives of faith and refugee groups at Bute House this morning to show solidarity with communities around the country. ...

Speaking after the meetings, the First Minister said: "My positive meetings today were intended to provide reassurance that this is a time for solidarity and that we are united in our opposition to anyone who would seek to use disorder to divide people.

"I have drawn together faith leaders from across communities in Scotland to express our solidarity together - we respect each other and we want everybody to be safe within our society. ...

"The displays of violence, prejudice and Islamophobia seen in other parts of the United Kingdom have no place in democratic society, and I want to reassure people in Scotland that we have plans and preparations in place to ensure everybody is kept safe. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.scot/news/first-minister-meets-faith-representatives-and-political-leaders/>

### Community Security Trust (CST)

#### **Historic total of antisemitic incidents in first half of 2024: recorded anti-Jewish hate doubles in UK compared to January to June 2023**

CST's Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2024 ... shows 1,978 instances of anti-Jewish hate recorded across the UK in the first six months of this year. This is the highest January-to-June total ever reported to CST, and higher than every previous annual total bar two: 2023 and 2021, when the record figures were also driven by anti-Jewish reactions to conflict in the Middle East. It is a 105% rise from the 964 antisemitic incidents reported in the first half of 2023, and 44% higher than the previous six-monthly record of 1,371 cases of anti-Jewish hate in 2021. ...

Discourse relating to Israel, Palestine and the Hamas terror attack was evident in 1,026 incidents, 52% of the total. There were 836 incidents that showed explicitly anti-Zionist motivation alongside anti-Jewish hate speech or targeting, 208 containing the words “Zionism” or “Zionist”, often as euphemisms for “Jewishness” and “Jew” or alongside other antisemitic sentiments, and 186 wherein direct comparisons were drawn between Israel or Jewish people and the Nazis.

In each month, over 200 instances of antisemitism were reported to CST. Before October 2023, CST had only recorded more than 200 incidents per month on five occasions, all of which occurred when Israel was at war. The incident counts in February (443 incidents), January (388 incidents) and March (318 incidents) respectively constitute the fifth-, sixth- and seventh-highest monthly totals for antisemitism in the UK in CST’s records.

Record January-to-June figures were reported to CST in several of antisemitic incident categories. One hundred and twenty-one incidents were taken in the category of Assault, rising by 41% from the 86 incidents of this kind recorded in the first half of 2023. They comprise 6% of the six-monthly total, down from 9% from January to June last year. Unlike in 2023, there was one additional case that was serious enough to class as Extreme Violence. ...

CST recorded 1,037 antisemitic incidents in Greater London, an increase of 120% from the 471 incidents reported in London in the first half of 2023. Meanwhile, there were 268 antisemitic incidents recorded in Greater Manchester, an increase of 96% from the 137 such incidents in the same timeframe in 2023. Combined, incidents in these communal hubs form 66% of the January-to-June total, compared to 63% across the first six months of 2023.

Elsewhere, the UK regions with the highest volume of reports were West Yorkshire with 115 incidents, Hertfordshire with 60 incidents, Thames Valley with 47 incidents, West Midlands with 43 incidents, and Scotland with 40 incidents. CST recorded at least one antisemitic incident in all but two police constabularies across the country.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2024/08/08/antisemitic-incidents-report-january-june-2024>

### **Antisemitic Incidents January-June 2024**

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/e/d/Antisemitic%20Incidents%20Report%20Jan-June%202024.pdf>

## **Tell Mama**

### **Survey Commissioned by Tell MAMA Demonstrates a Significant Rise in Anti-Muslim Hate Rhetoric Post October 7, 2023**

*(Note: These findings are disturbing since they demonstrate a level of fear and apprehension in British Muslim communities prior to the Southport mosque attacks over the recent week. They demonstrate the effects on British Muslims, post the October 7th attacks on Israel and the continuing Israel and Gaza war. ...).*

Tell MAMA commissioned a poll of 550 British Muslims in July 2024. The poll was to assess perceptions around anti-Muslim prejudice and to assess what the impacts of anti-Muslim hate have been on Muslims post October 7 and the subsequent conflict between Israel and Hamas.

The Suration poll was conducted between 15/07/2024 – 29/07/2024 and involved 550 British Muslims of Shia and Sunni theological backgrounds. The survey was representative of the British Muslim population to targets drawn from the Office for National Statistics, representative of age, sex and regional distributions.

The vast majority of interviews were conducted over the telephone with just over 100 interviews being conducted online ...

The Tell MAMA Commissioned Poll demonstrated that:

- 60% of the participants surveyed believed that anti-Muslim hate in British society has increased over the past year.
- Over 1 in 4 – 27% of British Muslims surveyed said that they had experienced an anti-Muslim hate incident in the last year. ...
- There has been a 300% increase in verbal abuse and anti-Muslim prejudice against British Muslims since October 7, 2023. ...
- Nearly 69% of British Muslims who received verbal attacks, did not report these into the police, authorities or third-party services. ...
- About 1 in 3 – nearly 28% of the 550 British Muslims surveyed, fell under 5 in a scale from 1-10, with 10 being associated *with feeling very safe* ...
- This demonstrates that nearly 1 in 3 British Muslims are uneasy or uncomfortable about their safety since October 7, 2023. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://tellmamauk.org/survey-of-british-muslims-after-october-7th-shows-a-rise-in-anti-muslim-abuse/>

**UK Muslim Survey**

<https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Tell-MAMA-Survation-2024.pptx>

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## Israel

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**David Lammy** International law could not be more clear - the deliberate starvation of civilians is a war crime. There can be no justification for Minister Smotrich's remarks and we expect the wider Israeli government to retract and condemn them.

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1821292325680889891>

*The remarks from Minister Smotrich referred to above can be heard (in Hebrew) starting at 1hr 32mins at*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9633tuSyMOI>

### European Union

**Israel/Gaza: Statement by the High Representative on remarks of Minister Smotrich regarding starving civilians**

The European Union strongly condemns recent declarations of Israeli Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich at the Katif Annual Conference.

Deliberate starvation of civilians is a war crime. Minister Smotrich saying that “it might be justified and moral” to let Israel “cause 2 million civilians to die of hunger” until the “hostages are returned” is beyond ignominious. It demonstrates, once again, his contempt for international law and for basic principles of humanity.

We expect the Israeli government to unequivocally distance itself from the words of Minister Smotrich, as well as to establish transparency on the reported acts of torture in the Sde Teiman prison.

The EU continues urging Israel to implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and binding orders of the International Court of Justice, and ensure full and unimpeded humanitarian access to cover the needs of scores of civilians, including hundreds of

thousands of children, living in extremely dire conditions and exposed to famine and disease in Gaza.

The EU reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire that leads to the release of all hostages and a significant and sustained increase in the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-statement-high-representative-remarks-minister-smotrich-regarding-starving-civilians\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelgaza-statement-high-representative-remarks-minister-smotrich-regarding-starving-civilians_en)

The remarks from Minister Smotrich referred to above can be heard (in Hebrew) starting at 1hr 32mins at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9633tuSyMOI>

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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 3 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 8 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/](https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-bill/consult_view/)

#### **\*\* closes in 8 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/](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