



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

Department of Health and Social Care

Updated Guidance: An overview of the death certification reforms

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-death-certification-process/an-overview-of-the-death-certification-reforms>

Scottish Government FoI Release

Correspondence with Jewish community groups

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202300385691/>

and

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/foi-eir-release/2024/07/foi-202300385691/documents/foi---202300385691---information-released---annex/foi---202300385691--information-released---annex/govscot%3Adocument/FOI%2B-%2B2023003>

TOP

Holocaust

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

80th anniversary of the Genocide of the Roma ceremony at Auschwitz: Lord Pickles speech

Here, we stand at the epicentre of evil, remembering the murdered and the lost. Remembering those that suffered and survived the murder factory of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the other death camps of Europe run by the Nazis and their collaborators. ...

For me, this uniquely depraved time is symbolised by two haunting photographs, both of children. Symbolising the waste and the loss of young life cut short and its unfulfilled

promise.

Firstly, the photograph of a frightened and confused seven-year-old Tsvi Nussbaum, with his hands raised over his head, surrounded by heavily armed German soldiers at the end of the Warsaw Uprising—a child victim surrounded by adult bullies. Tsvi may have survived; I hope he did.

Secondly, “The Girl with the Headscarf” is a nine-year-old Dutch Romani girl looking out of a railway truck. In this case too, we have a name: Anna Maria ‘Settela’ Steinbach. The terror and hopelessness in that young girl’s face will stay with me forever. Sadly, Settela did not survive. ...

The village of Szczurowa had been home to Polish Roma families for centuries.

But on July 3rd, 1943, a German police unit used local farmers to round up the Roma of the village and take them to the local churchyard on carts.

They were murdered and buried in a mass grave. Afterwards, the Nazis and their collaborators burned the Roma homes. ...

The murder of the ninety-three Szczurowa Roma was not an isolated incident.

We know of over one-hundred-and-eighty sites in Poland alone where Roma were executed in large groups, sometimes together with Jewish people. ...

But one thing remains constant: none of this could have happened without deep-rooted prejudice against Roma. This prejudice continued after 1945 ...

We are here because we refuse to neglect this history. ...

In 2020, the Member Countries of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the IHRA, pledged their political commitment to remember this history, to honour the victims and the survivors.

That same year, we adopted the IHRA working definition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination, which provides a starting point for raising awareness and for taking action.

In 2018, the Czech government closed down the industrial pig farm at Lety on the site of a former concentration camp for Roma. In March this year, I attended the moving ceremony which saw the opening of the Lety Memorial.

Remembrance triumphed over neglect and a government took ownership of their duty to history.

Earlier this year the groundbreaking online Encyclopaedia of the Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe was launched.

It marks the first comprehensive overview of the existing knowledge on the persecution and murder of the Sinti and Roma under National Socialism.

And as you heard yesterday, the IHRA is now finalising a set of recommendations to help policy makers include this history in education curricula. ...

Democratic values can only be built on truth and the truth can never harm us. ...

It’s up to us to remember the truth.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/80th-anniversary-of-the-genocide-of-the-roma-ceremony-at-auschwitz-lord-pickles-speech>

The IHRA definition referred to above can be read at

<https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antigypsyism-anti-roma-discrimination>

The Encyclopaedia of the Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma in Europe, referred to above, can be read at

<https://encyclopaedia-gsr.eu/eng/>

TOP

Israel

See also the Scottish Government Fol release “Correspondence with Jewish community groups” that is included in the Home Affairs Section above.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Palestinians have nowhere safe to turn: UK statement at the UN Security Council

The UK is appalled by the Israeli military strike on al-Tabeen school where Palestinian civilians were sheltering. The UN tells us this strike killed dozens of Palestinians, many of whom are reported to be women and children. Sadly, this was not the only Israeli strike on schools, turned-shelters, we have seen. There were 17 such attacks in July alone.

Palestinians have nowhere safe to turn. 86% of Gaza is now under evacuation orders. And in recent days we have seen some of the largest orders to date, impacting tens of thousands of people, displaced multiple times over. Families are forced to move back and forth, back and forth but with none of these places offering the safety or security they so desperately need. On top of that, some of these orders have been issued by Israel in the middle of the night with minimal notice to allow civilians to flee. Israel must ensure it complies with its obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians.

The UK is also horrified by the reports of sexual violence and abuse faced by the hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli detention, many of whom are children. Hamas must release all the hostages immediately. Hamas must also stop endangering civilians. And Israel must grant the ICRC access to prisoners immediately and ensure accountability if anyone is found to be responsible for the abuse of detainees.

We have also heard completely unacceptable rhetoric from Israeli Ministers relating to the mistreatment of detainees and starvation of civilians in Gaza. We call upon the Government of Israel to retract and condemn these remarks. International law could not be more clear – systemic mistreatment of detainees and the intentional starvation of civilians are war crimes.

President, another deadly threat is on the horizon for the people of Gaza. They stand on the precipice of a polio outbreak with 600,000 children under the age of 8 in desperate need of vaccinations. We call on the parties to cooperate urgently with the World Health Organization to facilitate vaccine rollouts and ensure the safety of humanitarian workers. We call on Israel to allow unfettered aid access into Gaza and to put in place an effective deconfliction mechanism to ensure aid can be delivered safely.

Finally President, I reiterate the UK’s call for regional de-escalation, as my Prime Minister made clear in his call with Iranian President Pezeshkian last night. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the US, Qatar and Egypt; there is a ceasefire deal on the table for Gaza. My Prime Minister joined with his French and German counterparts to urge the parties to resume discussions on 15 August and get the deal done. We need an immediate ceasefire, we must get the hostages out, get much more aid in and move quickly towards a two-state solution with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/palestinians-have-nowhere-safe-to-turn-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

David Lammy Thank you @ChiefRabbi Mirvis. We will work together to stand up for the Jewish community, combat antisemitism, and promote Holocaust remembrance. This government will continue to press for peace and stability in the Middle East, a ceasefire in Gaza and release of all hostages. [plus photo and link to the following post from the Chief Rabbi]

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1824040204992123270>

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis I was pleased to have a wide-ranging conversation with the Foreign Secretary @DavidLammy this afternoon. We discussed the imminent and vast threats facing Israel across the Middle East, UK Government decisions relating to the conflict, the urgent importance of freeing the hostages, achieving long term peace, and the deep impact of the war in this country. [plus photo]

<https://x.com/chiefrabbi/status/1823775232924201333>

David Lammy The UK strongly condemns Minister Ben-Gvir's deliberately provocative visit to Jerusalem's Holy Sites. Such actions undermine the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's role as custodian of the sites and the longstanding Status Quo arrangements. The focus of all parties must be on securing an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages, and restoring regional stability.

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1823743461478064209>

Hamish Falconer I was glad to speak to Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mustafa today. I shared my concern for the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and the risk of regional escalation. We need an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages, and de-escalation in the region. [plus photo]

<https://x.com/HFalconerMP/status/1823699681496490455>

Scottish Government

John Swinney Last week the Cabinet Secretary for External Affairs met the Israeli UK Deputy Ambassador to express the Scottish Government's clear and unwavering position on the need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

<https://x.com/JohnSwinney/status/1823705081679897012>

John Swinney The Scottish Government received the meeting request and accepted on the basis it would provide an opportunity to convey our consistent position on the killing and suffering of innocent civilians in the region.

<https://x.com/JohnSwinney/status/1823705194112418098>

John Swinney I understand why some believe a face-to-face meeting was not appropriate, however, I thought it necessary to outline our long-standing position on an immediate ceasefire directly, and explicitly, to one of Israel's representatives in the UK.

<https://x.com/JohnSwinney/status/1823705306867630368>

John Swinney As First Minister and SNP Leader, I will never hold back in expressing support for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages, an end to UK arms being sent to Israel, and the recognition of a sovereign Palestinian state within a two-state solution.

<https://x.com/JohnSwinney/status/1823705435993772345>

Scottish Government FoI Release

Correspondence between the Scottish Government, Israeli embassy and UK Palestinian representative office

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/foi-202300383903/>

and

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/foi-eir-release/2024/07/foi-202300383903/documents/foi-202300383903---information-released---annex-a/foi-202300383903---information-released---annex-a/govscot%3Adocument/FOI%2B2023003839>

and

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/foi-eir-release/2024/07/foi-202300383903/documents/foi-202300383903---information-released---annex-b/foi-202300383903---information-released---annex-b/govscot%3Adocument/FOI%2B2023003839>

and

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/foi-eir-release/2024/07/foi-202300383903/documents/foi-202300383903---information-released---annex-c/foi-202300383903---information-released---annex-c/govscot%3Adocument/FOI%2B2023003839>

United Nations

Israeli Attack on Al Tabi'een School in Gaza Underscores Desperate Need for Ceasefire, Scaled Up Humanitarian Assistance, UN Political Chief Tells Security Council

The Israeli attack on the al-Tabeen school in Gaza City on 10 August underscored the desperate need to reach a ceasefire, free the hostages, and scale up humanitarian aid to Gaza, a senior United Nations official told the Security Council ...

Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, said that, according to local Palestinian sources, the Israel Defense Forces airstrike in the al-Tabeen school compound killed dozens of Palestinians and wounded many others, including women and children. According to Israel, its Forces targeted a Hamas command centre in a mosque inside the compound and killed at least 31 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad fighters. On 12 August, Hamas announced the killing of a hostage and serious injury of two others by Hamas militants while in captivity in Gaza. She said that with hostilities continuing across the Strip — including in the north around Gaza City, in the middle area in Khan Younis, and in and around Rafah — “the situation remains catastrophic for civilians”. ...

She further voiced concern over the worsening situation and ongoing violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. On 3 August, the Israel Defense Forces said it conducted two airstrikes on a Hamas cell in Tulkarem, killing nine Palestinians who they said were planning to conduct an attack inside Israel. Also, their separate operations in Jenin and Tubas early last week killed another 16 Palestinians. On 11 August, a shooting attack claimed by Hamas killed one Israeli civilian and wounded another in the northern Jordan Valley. Another Palestinian shooting attack near Qalqilia reportedly injured one Israeli and two Palestinians. ...

In this regard, she welcomed efforts by Egypt, Qatar and the United States to bring both sides to conclude a deal to bring about a ceasefire, the release of hostages, and desperately needed humanitarian relief. ...

Lisa Doughten, Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, speaking on behalf of acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Msuya, said that — according to initial reports — the strike on Al Tabi'een School was “one of the deadliest attacks” and “at least the twenty-first strike on

a school that has been serving as a shelter recorded since 4 July this year". Painting a grim picture caused by the "unremitting violence" in Gaza, she reported nearly 40,000 Palestinians killed, over 90,000 injured, and around 10,000 unaccounted for, likely buried under rubble. An estimated 115 hostages remain captive.

She highlighted the dire state of Gaza's health-care system, with thousands in critical condition awaiting medical evacuations. Over 60 per cent of residential buildings and 65 per cent of roads are damaged or destroyed. ... With six poliovirus strains detected in June, she warned that "polio looms as a new threat" and stressed that "health workers must be allowed to carry out an immunization campaign." ...

"What we are seeing in Gaza is the result of a war waged with pitiful — if any — regard for the requirements of international law," she said, reiterating civilians' right to seek protection. She went on to detail the challenges hindering humanitarian aid, including attacks on aid workers, fuel shortages and organized crime, which leave thousands without vital assistance. "Can this Council look the children, the people of Gaza, and all those affected by this war in the eye — as humanitarian workers have to do every day — and swear that no stone has been left unturned to end their suffering?" she asked. ...

The Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine said that, while the Council demands Israel to stop killing civilians, its Defense Forces target them in their shelters and tents. "As the genocide continues, you have a responsibility to react," he asserted, adding that the Palestinians in Gaza cannot wait for the tide to turn. "Their agony must stop now, right now," he insisted. "Do you ever think, what if you were born in Gaza? What if the prisoner raped was your son? What if the children starving to death were your own?" he asked.

However, "every time the world pushes for a ceasefire, Israel responds with a massacre", he said, stressing that the country cannot continue to defy every rule of humankind. Israel has no right to commit genocide and nothing can justify its actions, he stated, adding that its Government is killing and abandoning the hostages. To those who continue to arm Israel and have the audacity to call on that country "to investigate" its own crimes, he said: "Wake up". Palestinians are exhausted, "surrounded by death and endless horrors, and they know your words are no match for the bombs and bullets taking away their lives and limbs" ...

Israel's delegate meanwhile countered that the UN is echoing the campaign of lies by the Gaza Ministry of Health — the Hamas — and holding an emergency session based on jihadist propaganda. Once again, "the Council is amplifying terrorist narratives", neglecting its obligation to the truth, he said, adding that Israel did not target an innocent school but dangerous terrorists operating in a Hamas-controlled centre in Al Tabi'een school. "As usual, Hamas cynically abuses civilian facilities which should be protected as their terror basis," he said, adding that the Israeli strike eliminated at least 31 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic jihad terrorists who carried out attacks from inside this compound. ... The building itself is still intact which would be physically impossible if Hamas' claims are to be believed, he continued. While Israel is taking every possible measure to minimize collateral damage, Hamas uses civilians as human shields. In the meantime, millions of Israelis are preparing for a direct attack by Iran whose aggression "threatens the entire region with war", he observed, emphasizing that "Jerusalem will never fall again", no matter how many times its enemies attempt to destroy it.

Voicing deep concern about reports of civilian casualties following Israel's strike on a school compound in Gaza, **the United States' representative** reiterated that country's obligation "to do everything possible under international humanitarian law to protect civilians". Underscoring Israel's right to pursue Hamas, she emphasized that it "must take measures to minimize civilian harm" and stressed the importance of a ceasefire to end the suffering of the people of Gaza and the hostages. ...

Her counterpart from **the United Kingdom** said his delegation is "appalled" by the military strike on the school where Palestinian civilians were sheltering. "Sadly, this was not the

only Israeli strike on schools-turned-shelters we have seen,” he said, noting that there were 17 such attacks in July alone. Noting that 86 per cent of Gaza is now under evacuation orders, he pointed out: “Some of these orders have been issued by Israel in the middle of the night with minimal notice.” Also expressing horror about the reports of sexual violence and abuse faced by the hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli detention, many of whom are children, he said Hamas must release all the hostages and Israel must grant the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to prisoners. [\[click here to read this speech in full\]](#)

France’s delegate said it is crucial to end the war, “for the people of Gaza, for the hostages, for the region’s stability.” Condemning the Israeli strikes on Al Tabi’een school, she called for an urgent, immediate and permanent ceasefire in the Strip and the immediate release, without conditions, of all hostages. Also condemning the terrorist attacks committed by Hamas and other terrorist groups, she said a two-State solution is the only way to guarantee stability and security in the region. ...

Strongly condemning Israel’s airstrikes on the Al Tabi’een school in Gaza, **the representative of China** said that attacking in broad daylight a school where a large number of civilians shelter is “a heinous act”. ... instead of credible signs of Israel’s commitment to a ceasefire, the world is witnessing ever-expanding military operations and uprising civilian casualties. ...

“Extremely shaken by the Israeli strike on the Al Tabi’een school”, **the representative of the Russian Federation** painted a grim picture of the horrors and suffering the civilians in Gaza must face daily. At the time, over 2000 refugees were sheltering there and over 100 people died, many women and children. However, this is not an isolated incident, he stressed, adding that — according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) — since 4 July, Israel has carried out 24 strikes on schools where displaced people were located. ...

The representative of South Africa expressed regret that some Council members continue to support and defend Israel as it commits “the most despicable crimes against humanity the world has ever seen”. ... Recalling the assassination of Hamas leader in Tehran, he cautioned that it will likely “further compound” the situation in a volatile region. Similarly, the continued occupation of Palestine, destruction of infrastructure, collective punishment and extrajudicial assassinations will make the realization of a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question “much more difficult to achieve,” he stressed. ...

Numerous Council ... condemned the “horrific” attack on the Al Tabi’een school compound in Gaza and the violations of international humanitarian law committed by all parties. “Killing militants cannot justify killing civilians, including children,” said **the delegate from the Republic of Korea**, noting that this was Israel’s eighth bombing of a school sheltering civilians so far in August alone. ...

Among many delegates voicing alarm over the exacerbating humanitarian situation in the Strip was **Japan’s representative**. “Gaza is truly in agony,” she said, pointing out the significant shortages of food, medicine, and fuel, experienced by the Palestinians forced to flee “again and again”. “Starving more than 2 million Palestinians in Gaza cannot be morally justified,” she emphasized ...

To read the full press release see
<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15790.doc.htm>

Humanitarians report rise in children killed and injured in the West Bank

The killing, injury and displacement of Palestinians continues in the West Bank against the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in Gaza ...

The number of Palestinian children killed by live ammunition fired by Israeli forces has almost tripled since 7 October 2023, compared with the preceding 10 months, rising from

39 to 115.

Similarly, the number of Palestinian boys and girls injured by live ammunition fired by Israeli soldiers more than doubled during the same corresponding periods, or 1,411 compared to 615. ...

Since the start of the Gaza war though to 12 August, 594 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in addition to two others who died from wounds sustained prior to 7 October.

The majority, 577, were killed by Israeli forces, and 10 by settlers, while it remains unknown whether the others were killed by Israeli forces or settlers. ...

Palestinians also carried out three attacks against settlers, resulting in injury to one person. ...

The agency highlighted an incident during the reporting period in which Israeli settlers assaulted two 15-year-old Palestinian boys by handcuffing them, breaking their legs, and urinating on them in a settler outpost near Bethlehem. ...

Demolition of Palestinian homes, and the destruction of public infrastructure, also continues in the West Bank ...

Between 6 and 12 August, Israeli authorities demolished or forced the demolition of nine Palestinian-owned structures, one of which was a punitive demolition and eight were due to the lack of Israeli-issued building permits ...

As a result, 37 Palestinians were displaced, including 13 children, and around 789 more otherwise affected, mainly children.

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153206>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Gaza: Turk pleads for end to fighting as death toll passes 40,000

Today marks a grim milestone for the world. The people of Gaza are now grieving 40,000 Palestinian lives lost, according to Gaza's health ministry. Most of the dead are women and children. This unimaginable situation is overwhelmingly due to recurring failures by the Israeli Defense Forces to comply with the rules of war.

On average, about 130 people have been killed every day in Gaza over the past 10 months. The scale of the Israeli military's destruction of homes, hospitals, schools and places of worship is deeply shocking.

International humanitarian law (IHL) is very clear on the paramount importance on the protection of civilians, and civilian property and infrastructure. Our Office has documented serious violations of IHL by both the Israeli military and Palestinian armed groups, including the armed wing of Hamas.

As the world reflects on and considers its inability to prevent this carnage, I urge all parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire, lay down their arms and stop the killing once and for all. The hostages must be released. Palestinians arbitrarily detained must be freed. Israel's illegal occupation must end and the internationally agreed two-State solution must become a reality.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/08/gaza-turk-pleads-end-fighting-death-toll-passes-40000>

TOP

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>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

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 tomorrow**

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>

TOP

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