



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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See also the Commons debate “*Hamas Attacks: First Anniversary*”, and Ministerial Statement and Q&A “*Anniversary of 7 October Attacks: Middle East*”, Lord Cryer’s comments in the Lords debate “*Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill*”, and the NI Assembly Members Statement “*October 7 Attacks: Antisemitism*” that are included in the Israel section below.

House of Commons Written Answers

Faith Schools: VAT

John Hayes (Conservative) [5267] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of introducing VAT on independent schools on faith groups.

James Murray: On 29 July, the Government announced that, as of 1 January 2025, all education services and vocational training provided by a private school in the UK for a charge will be subject to VAT at the standard rate of 20 per cent. This will also apply to boarding services provided by private schools.

Any fees paid from 29 July 2024 relating to the term starting in January 2025 onwards will be subject to VAT. Furthermore, where a school in England has charitable status, the Government will legislate to remove their eligibility to business rates charitable rate relief. This is intended to take effect from April 2025, subject to Parliamentary passage.

A technical note setting out the details of these two tax policies has been published online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-on-private-school-fees-removing-the-charitable-rates-relief-for-private-schools>

Draft VAT legislation was also published alongside this technical note, forming a technical consultation, which closed on 15 September. As part of this technical consultation, the Government engaged with a broad range of stakeholders.

Whilst developing these policies, the Government has carefully considered the

impact that they will have on pupils and their families across both the state and private sector, as well as the impact they will have on state and private schools. Following scrutiny of the Government's costings by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), details of the Government's assessment of the expected impacts of these policy changes will be published at the Budget on 30 October in a Tax Information and Impact Note.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-09-11/5267>

The announcement referred to above can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-29/debates/24072928000015/TaxMeasuresNextSteps>

The draft legislation referred to above can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66a7a1f8a3c2a28abb50d8c1/Private_Schools_Draft_Legislation_-_DIGITAL.pdf

Funerals

Richard Foord (Liberal Democrat) [5425] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the National Association of Funeral Directors report entitled Picking up the pieces, published in April 2023, if she will (a) make an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of that report's findings on the number of families that have waited more than four weeks for a funeral and (b) hold discussions with local authorities on coordinating work between (i) health services, (ii) coroners, (iii) undertakers and (iv) others highlighted in that report.

Alex Davies-Jones: Death management is a complex and sensitive area, spanning the work of multiple government departments. Whilst the Government does not have operational responsibility for the provision of funeral services, we are aware of funeral delays in some areas and acknowledge that these are often exacerbated by pressures from within the wider death management system. Death management policy sits across a number of government departments and responsible departments take a collaborative approach to addressing concerns in this area and are committed to continuing to work together, and with local authorities, to improve timeliness and services provided to the bereaved.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-09-11/5425>

The report referred to above can be read at <https://www.nafd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Picking-up-the-pieces-Funeral-delays-and-capacity-issues-April-2023-Final.pdf>

Terrorism: Iran

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [5548] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the threat of pro-Iranian front groups operating in (a) Parliament and (b) Westminster.

Dan Jarvis: While we do not routinely comment on the detail of specific threats, it is an absolute priority for this Government to protect our democratic and electoral processes from interference by any foreign state, including Iran.

The National Security Act 2023 provides the security services and law enforcement agencies with tools to deter, detect, and disrupt modern-day state threats, including foreign interference. Alongside this, the Defending Democracy Taskforce is working to safeguard our democracy from threats we face.

The Government's top priority is our national security, and we will use all the tools at our disposal to protect the UK, and its people, from state threats.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-09-12/5548>

The National Security Act 2023, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/32/contents>

Department for Education

£7 million to tackle antisemitism in education confirmed

The Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson has announced that the government is resuming the procurement of £7 million worth of funding to tackle antisemitism in schools, colleges and universities.

The commitment comes after the number of incidents of antisemitic abuse nationwide more than doubled in the first five months of 2024, compared to the same period a year earlier. On university campuses, the number of incidents grew by 465%.

The funding will aim to educate people about antisemitism and better equip schools, colleges and universities to stamp out antisemitic abuse.

To mark the anniversary of the worst terrorist attack in Israel's history, the Education Secretary is visiting a Jewish school in North London to meet with students and staff and demonstrate her support for the Jewish community.

£500,000 of the £7 million funding has been awarded to the University Jewish Chaplaincy for welfare support for Jewish students in universities.

Writing for the Daily Telegraph, the Education Secretary said the government was "resolutely committed" to tackling antisemitic abuse.

She said: "It is completely unacceptable for Jewish students to feel they cannot fully participate in university life out of fear for their safety. All students, regardless of race or religion, should be free to focus on their studies rather than worry about their safety."

Some of the funds will go towards funding a project to upskill teachers and university staff in tackling antisemitism. It will also pay for an innovation fund to tackle antisemitism in Education, with a slightly broader focus on settings building resilience to mis-information.

The Education Secretary said it was "vitally important that staff in our education system have the confidence and skills to act quickly to root out antisemitism as soon as it emerges."

To support this, the Department for Education also plans to launch an innovation fund that will offer opportunities to support work at all levels of education on tackling antisemitic misinformation on social media alongside the Curriculum and Assessment Review.

The Education Secretary also voiced her outrage at the "shocking" acts of violence and Islamophobia seen after the Southport attacks earlier this year, with anti-Muslim incidents more than trebling in the months after October 7.

She said: "With a foundation of knowledge about history and the world, critical thinking, logical reasoning and empathy, we can build children's resilience not just to antisemitic hate, but all other forms of hate too. A child who is equipped to dismantle antisemitic conspiracy theories is ready to reject Islamophobic ones as well."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/7-million-to-tackle-antisemitism-in-education-confirmed>

The Telegraph article referred to above can be read at

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/10/07/anti-semitism-cannot-be-allowed-to-flourish-in-our-schools/>

Scottish Parliament Written Answer

Justice System: Misogynistic and Racist Attitudes

Pam Gosal (Conservative) [S6W-30143] To ask the Scottish Government what guidance it provides to the relevant authorities to tackle any misogynistic and racist attitudes within the justice system.

Angela Constance: Justice agencies are operationally independent of the Scottish Ministers.

However, misogyny and racism should play no part in the operation of the justice system. We will continue to support all justice agencies and bodies who operate within the justice system to eradicate racism and misogyny.

In April 2023, Scottish Government published a [landmark summary of data on Ethnicity and Justice](#). This presents a picture of what is currently known about the experiences of minority ethnic people within Scotland's justice system and supports the development and delivery of evidence-led actions.

Through our Cross Justice Group on Race Data and Evidence, the Scottish Government continues to improve our understanding of the experiences of minority ethnic people within Scotland's Justice system. Generally, our approach supports the commitments contained within the [Race Equality Framework](#) (2016-2030) and [Immediate Priorities Plan](#) (2021-2023).

In relation to policing specifically, in May 2023, the former Chief Constable of Police Scotland declared that it is institutionally racist and discriminatory. This is an important recognition of the work still to do to ensure that policing and justice feel trusted by, and provide the right service to, all our communities. Their Policing Together programme is taking forward a range of actions to move towards this goal.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-30143>

Northern Ireland Assembly Oral Answers

Racism

Gerry Carroll (People Before Politics Alliance) [AQO 900/22-27] asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of how their Department's work has reduced racism within communities.

Emma Little-Pengelly (Deputy First Minister): The annual racial equality indicators report monitors the progress of the racial equality strategy 2015-2025 on four key outcome areas: equality of service provision; increased participation, representation and belonging; celebration of cultural diversity; and eliminating prejudice, racism and hate crime. The most recent report, which was released on 19 September, showed that, compared with the 2014 baseline, levels of acceptance of, for example, eastern Europeans, Irish Travellers and Muslims as residents, work colleagues or family members had all increased significantly by 2022. That is a key indicator of progress against the targets.

While it remains a key priority to deliver fully the commitments in the current strategy, it is important that, post 2025, there be a clear mechanism and overarching framework for achieving racial equality in our society. As part of that, we will be examining how best to use ethnic equality monitoring and other measurements to assess the effectiveness of actions taken and to inform the new approach.

Gerry Carroll: Minister, you have repeatedly used the phrase "legitimate concerns" when talking about migration. There is nothing legitimate to be concerned about when you are talking about migration. There is misinformation that definitely needs to be challenged and refuted. Will you commit to not again publicly using the phrase "legitimate concerns" when you talk about migration? Ministers need to be careful about language and not give a wink and a nod to people who may be engaged in racism or are perhaps racist thugs.

Emma Little-Pengelly: ... Let me be clear: all racism and hate and all public disorder or violence that is based on it is wrong. It is incredibly important to draw a strong differentiation between that and concerns that are raised in communities. I have made it clear that, as Ministers and political representatives, we must be there to listen to people's genuinely held concerns. ...

Deidre Hargey (Sinn Féin): Following on from that question, does the deputy First Minister agree that there is a duty on all of us as political leaders actively to promote a zero-tolerance approach to racism and to build a future defined by inclusivity, tolerance and respect?

Emma Little-Pengelly: ... I absolutely oppose racism, sectarianism and hate, on whatever it is based. ... All of that is wrong, and we should stand strongly united as political leaders and representatives against it.

Brian Kingston (DUP): Mindful of today's date, I ask how important strong political leadership is when responding to violence and racism, including antisemitism, on our streets.

Emma Little-Pengelly: not just on our streets, albeit by a small minority, but on social media. As the Member reminds us, today is the anniversary of the horrific terrorist attacks on 7 October 2023 in Israel. We must remember that date as one of the darkest days. Today, we remember the men, women and children who were brutally murdered one year ago and recognise the strength of those who have lost loved ones or had them taken from them.

We should all be concerned about the ongoing situation in the Middle East. We should all be calling for all hostages to be returned safely to their families and for calm to be restored in Gaza, Lebanon and the wider region. Israel, of course, has a right to defend herself. I am deeply saddened by the antisemitism and racism that has been demonstrated on social media, on the streets and in other forums on the issue. We should all stand united against all forms of racism and sectarianism, no matter where that is found. ...

Cara Hunter (SDLP): Deputy First Minister, should Northern Ireland have a stand-alone hate crime Bill, and, if so, will you ask that the Justice Minister brings that forward?

Emma Little-Pengelly: ... The Member will be aware that that issue is under active consideration. ... Concerns have been raised about balance in all of this, particularly the absolutely core protection of the basic human rights and civil liberties in relation to freedom of speech and expression. ... we need to be careful, on the way forward, to have the right balance between tackling the scourge of hate online and in the world around us and those basic human and civil liberties.

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2024-10-07&docID=412366#AQO%20900/22-27>

The annual racial equality indicators report, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/racial-equality-indicators-report-2014-2022.pdf>

Tell Mama

Tell MAMA recorded almost 5,000 anti-Muslim cases a year on from 7 October

A year on from the Hamas terror attacks of 7 October and the war on Gaza, Tell MAMA recorded 4,971 cases, a level of anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia – unlike anything we recorded in over a decade of our work.

On the first anniversary, Tell MAMA Director Iman Atta made clear that: “Since 7 October, we have seen peaks and rises of anti-Muslim hatred where Middle Eastern communities (irrespective of faith), Muslim communities and Muslim women who are visible in their faith, who have supported Palestinian rights have been called ‘terrorists’, ‘Hamas’, ‘bombers’ and ‘Nazis’ on our streets, threatened, abused and in some cases subjected to violence or discrimination – harming their social mobility, careers or studies, and undermining their fundamental rights. It falls on politicians, the media and other public bodies to do more to help Muslim communities, but also challenge stereotypes and falsehoods and undo the normalisation of tropes that link communities to violence and criminality or as cultural

threats. The challenge is collective: we must not lose sight of what brings communities together.”

“In total, Tell MAMA recorded 4,971 incidents of anti-Muslim hate and discrimination cases between 7 October 2023 and 30 September 2024, the highest total ever recorded in over a decade. ...

“Almost two-thirds (63%) of the cases reported were abusive behaviour in nature, and 27% were threatening behaviour cases, the majority of which took place in London, Northwest, Yorkshire and the Midlands.

“The war on Gaza has left some questioning their safety and sense of belonging in the UK – a feeling compounded by the far-right violence in parts of the country following the horrific stabbings in Southport. ... The long-term impacts on social and community cohesion and economic insecurity risk more significant threats to communities that the government must not overlook in the months and years ahead.

“The abhorrent and profoundly troubling rise in antisemitism, as recorded by the Community Security Trust and police forces since 7 October, cannot be ignored either. The strains between Muslim and Jewish communities will take time to repair. However, it must also not deter us from reaching out to check on each other and stand together against the racists and the extremists who seek to divide and harm our communities. ...

We saw cases of violence, abuse, and discrimination – Muslims targeted for displaying pro-Palestine views, hostility in the workplace, or even losing out on employment or job opportunities based on their social media posts about Palestine or the war.

Individuals described harassment or abuse when speaking Arabic in public areas. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mama-recorded-almost-5000-anti-muslim-cases-a-year-on-from-7-october/>

TOP

Israel

See also Commons written answer 5548 “Terrorism: Iran”, and NI Assembly oral answers “Racism” that are included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Commons Debate

Hamas Attacks: First Anniversary

col 131 Jon Pearce (Labour): ... Today is the anniversary of Hamas’s terrorist attack on Israel. It was a pogrom in which at least 1,195 Israelis and 79 foreign nationals from some 30 countries were murdered, over 4,800 people were injured and more than 250 men, women and children were taken hostage. It was the worst terrorist attack in Israel’s history and the bloodiest day in the history of the Jewish people since the Holocaust.

Dan Tomlinson (Labour): ... It is worth pausing to reflect on the fact that the atrocity was so bad and so many people lost their lives at the hands of Hamas because Hamas intended for that to be the case. ...

Jon Pearce: ... Hamas is a terrorist organisation that set out that day to murder as many innocent civilians as it possibly could. ...

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... I bring to his and the House’s attention a lady I met when I was in Israel ... Amanda Damari, who spoke yesterday about her daughter Emily, who was kidnapped. She has lived that kidnapping every day. Does he agree that we salute the bravery, the courage and the determination of those families to have those hostages ... home to enjoy life once again?

Jon Pearce: ... Their strength and resolve is extraordinary and empowers all the rest of us. ...

There are four other individuals being held hostage who are connected to Britain, and they also need to come home as soon as possible.

col 132 I want to touch on some of the other groups from that day: the group of pensioners on a day trip in the Dead sea who were gunned down in Sderot after their minivan developed a flat tyre; the young partygoers massacred at the Supernova music festival, some of whom, like many women elsewhere that day, were subjected to “unspeakable violence perpetrated with shocking brutality”, according to the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and the 12-year-old British-Israeli twins Yanni and Liel, who were murdered alongside their great aunt and their grandfather at Kibbutz Be’eri. So little of Liel’s body was recovered that some of her toys were buried instead. ...

Mike Reader (Labour): I will never forget the smell of smoke that hung in the air when I visited that kibbutz in March this year. It will stay with me forever, as will the feeling of isolation as I stood at the site of the Nova festival. ...

Jon Pearce: ... Hamas were indiscriminate in their killing and in those that they dragged back to their terror tunnels in Gaza. ...

Luke Akehurst (Labour): ... One of the tragic ironies is that this was an attack on ... were idealistic communities founded on a co-operative ethos, the residents of which practised what they preached about co-existence and peace. ... The people there spoke about sending money across the border to people they knew in Gaza through third countries, in order to support them. They organised transport to hospitals for people from Gaza. They were people straining every sinew to bring about peace and who believed in a two-state solution. ...

col 133 **Jon Pearce:** ... In July 2023 I visited Kibbutz Kfar Aza, which was founded by the Mizrahi refugees from Morocco and Egypt in 1951. The kibbutz is so close to Gaza that it is possible to hear the mosques’ call to prayer. Over lunch with the kibbutzniks, they told us about the ever-present danger of rocket attacks and the terror tunnels that Hamas had attempted to dig nearby. They also spoke of their compassion for the ordinary people of Gaza just a couple of miles away. ...

The kibbutzniks we spoke to used to stage an annual festival in which they would gather to fly kites adorned with the words “peace”, “shalom” and “salam” at the nearby border. Last year, the annual kite festival was set for Saturday 7 October. As always, the Kutz family, whose brainchild the festival was, had prepared the kites, but there were no kites or messages of hope and peace that dark day. Instead, Aviv Kutz, his wife Livnat and his teenager children Rotem, Yonatan and Yiftach were murdered in their home by Hamas terrorists. ...

The impact of that terrible day has been felt 2,000 miles away in what the Prime Minister has rightly described as the rise of vile hatred in our own communities. Antisemitic incidents have reached their highest total. Nearly seven in 10 British Jews report that they are less likely to show visible signs of Judaism. Nearly half say that they have considered leaving the UK because of antisemitism. Jewish children are unable to wear their uniforms on their way to school. Jewish students are intimidated on their campuses. Jewish places of worship are defaced and graffitied. This is intolerable in modern Britain. ...

col 134 I am sure that the whole House will join me in saying that we stand with and by our Jewish fellow citizens in the face of this hatred. ...

I want to end by talking about Emily ... we have all been touched by the campaign that her mother Mandy continues to run in her name. She says that Emily has never lost touch with her British roots; Emily loves Spurs, Robbie Williams and Cadbury’s chocolate buttons, and makes a fine cup of tea. Emily’s family have not seen her for 366 days. She was violently kidnapped from Kibbutz Kfar Aza. Her beloved puppy was shot and killed in her arms as Emily was dragged from her home in her pyjamas. Hamas has refused the Red

Cross access to Emily and the other hostages, but news of Emily came during last November's hostage release. In the tunnels, those who were released said that Emily had been singing a song to the young girls every morning, called "Boker shel kef"—"It's a great morning".

Emily has not given up hope. Her family has not given up hope, and we must not give up hope. We must bring home the British hostages—Emily, Eli, Oded, Avinatan, Tsachi—and all the hostages. ...

col 135 **The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Stephen Doughty):** ... I pay tribute to the courage and resilience of the families of all those who lost their life, and all those who are still held hostage. A year since the worst terror attack in Israel's history, we remember all those killed at the hands of Hamas in that barbaric attack, their families and their loved ones, and condemn those responsible. Without doubt, it was the bloodiest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust, a day we should never have seen, and would rather we never needed to mark. Distressingly, for some families, the nightmare persists, as their loved ones continue to be held by Hamas. Let me be clear: that is utterly unacceptable. They must be released immediately. ...

... one of the hostages who still remains in Gaza is Emily Damari. She is, as we have heard, a British citizen who was brutally attacked and kidnapped on the morning of 7 October. A year later, as we have heard, she is still held by Hamas ... Emily's story is just one of the painful reminders of the suffering that many families—some British, some British-linked, and many, many more—continue to endure at the hands of Hamas. Their pain is our pain. We continue to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Emily and all the other hostages. ...

My hon. Friend is absolutely right to bring to the attention of the House—we have all seen it in our communities—the deeply worrying rise in antisemitism and hatred across the world, including in this country. There is no place for this hatred in our communities and society. Let us be clear: Hamas wanted to not just attack Israel but send a signal to Jews everywhere. It wanted them to feel scared and unsafe, regardless of where in the world they happened to be. The global rise in antisemitism following the attack highlights the need for urgent collective action to eliminate this abhorrent ideology for good. That is why the Government are resolutely committed to working with the Jewish community to address the challenges that it faces in the UK and, indeed, across the world. ...

col 136 I am proud that this year the UK holds the presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance; that allows us to demonstrate our global leadership in combating antisemitism and promoting Holocaust remembrance, research and education.

Tragically, since that dreadful day, we have seen intolerable death and destruction in Gaza. More than 41,000 people have now died, and over half of all identified bodies are those of women and children. We reiterate that no matter how difficult the circumstances, all parties must act in accordance with international law, but the fact that this conflict is continuing and intensifying by the day is a matter of deep concern to Members in all parts of the House. ... We are particularly concerned about the restrictions on humanitarian aid, with winter approaching. Those restrictions must be lifted, so that the UN and humanitarian agencies can do their jobs safely, in accordance with the UN mandate. ...

The latest escalation, involving Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iranian attack on Israel, is yet another blow to regional stability, and we are deeply concerned about the significant number of civilian casualties. ... the Prime Minister has made it clear that we stand with Israel and recognise its right to self-defence in the face of Iranian aggression. Iran's malign role in the region is moving the region further towards escalation, and we call on Iran to step back from the brink, because we must avoid this conflict spiralling out of control and into a wider regional war. ...

Let me first reassure all Members that we continue to work with partners across the region to secure the release of all remaining hostages, including British nationals and those with a close connection to the UK. ...

col 137 The UK will remain a vital security partner to Israel as it faces threats from Iran and its malign partners in the region, who are pursuing its annihilation. We will also play our full diplomatic role in ending this conflict and creating a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. An immediate ceasefire is an absolutely necessary first step towards that goal. In response to the humanitarian crisis, we trebled our aid commitment to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the last financial year, and we will maintain significant funding for trusted aid agencies on the ground. ...

We need calm heads and an urgent focus on a negotiated political solution to end this cycle of violence, so that Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese civilians can return to their homes and live in peace and security. ...

col 138 In conclusion, a year on from Hamas's horrific attack on 7 October, the United Kingdom remains firmly committed to Israel's defence and security. ... This escalating regional conflict is in no one's interest, which is why we are calling for an immediate ceasefire. Finally, I reiterate that we will continue to use every diplomatic lever to bring that about and secure the release of hostages in co-ordination with our partners. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-07/debates/F87D0013-071A-4CDB-9463-66201032A7AB/HamasAttacksFirstAnniversary>

The comments of the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict referred to above by Jon Pearce can be read at

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15621.doc.htm>

House of Commons Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Anniversary of 7 October Attacks: Middle East

col 23 ... **The Prime Minister (Keir Starmer):** Today we mark a year since the horrific attack on Israel by the terrorists of Hamas. It was the bloodiest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust—a day of sorrow, a day of grief. Over 1,000 people were massacred, with hundreds taken hostage, in an attack born of hatred, targeted not just at individuals, but at Jewish communities, at their way of life and at the state of Israel—the symbol of Jewish security to the world. Fifteen British citizens were brutally slain that day. Another has since died in captivity. Our thoughts today are with the Jewish people around the world, the Jewish community here in the United Kingdom, and all those we lost a year ago. For so many, the pain and horror of that day is as acute today as it was a year ago. They live it every day. Last week I met the families of British hostages and those killed on 7 October. I sat with them as they told me about their loved ones. I will never forget their words. Mandy Damari spoke of her love for her daughter Emily. She said: “my personal clock stopped at 10:24 on the 7th of October”, the moment when Emily sent a desperate, unfinished message as Hamas attacked her kibbutz. She is still held captive today. We can hardly imagine what hostages like Emily are going through, or what the families are going through—the agony day after day. So I say again: the hostages must be returned immediately and unconditionally. ...

Today is also a day of grief for the wider region, as we look back on a year of conflict and suffering. The human toll among innocent civilians in Gaza is truly devastating. Over 41,000 Palestinians have been killed, tens of thousands orphaned and almost 2 million displaced, facing disease, starvation and desperation without proper healthcare or shelter. It is a living nightmare and it must end. We stand with all innocent victims in Israel, Gaza, the west bank, Lebanon and beyond, and we stand with all communities here in the United Kingdom against hatred of Jews or Muslims, because any attack on a minority is an attack on our proud values of tolerance and respect, and we will not stand for it.

With the middle east close to the brink, and the very real danger of a regional war, last week the Iranian regime chose to strike Israel. The whole House will join me in utterly

condemning this attack. We support Israel's right to defend herself against Iran's aggression in line with international law. Let us be very clear: this was not a defensive action by Iran; it was an act of aggression and a major escalation in response to the death of a terrorist leader. It exposes once again Iran's malign role in the region. It helped equip Hamas for the 7 October attacks. It armed Hezbollah, which launched a year-long barrage of rockets at northern Israel, forcing 60,000 Israelis to flee their home, and supports the Houthis, who mount direct attacks on Israel and continue to attack international shipping. ...

col 24 Civilians on all sides have suffered too much. All sides must now step back from the brink and find the courage of restraint. There is no military solution to these challenges, so we must renew our diplomatic efforts. ...

In the weeks ahead, we will continue that work, focusing on three areas. The first is Lebanon, where our immediate priority is the safety of British citizens. ... We have already brought more than 430 people home on chartered flights, and we stand ready to make additional evacuation efforts as necessary. ... We are also working to ease the humanitarian crisis in Lebanon—last week we provided £10 million of vital support, in addition to the £5 million we are already providing to UNICEF—but the situation cannot go on. We will continue to lead calls for an immediate ceasefire, and for the return to a political plan for Lebanon based on Security Council resolution 1701 ...

Secondly, we must renew efforts for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, but we cannot simply wait for that to happen. We must do more now to provide relief to the civilian population. That is why we have restarted aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. ... Crucially, Israel must provide a safe environment for aid workers. ...

Thirdly, we must put in place solutions for the long term, to break the relentless cycle of violence. The ultimate goal here is well understood: it must be a two-state solution. There is no other option that offers stability and security. ... That requires support for the Palestinian Authority to step into the vacuum in Gaza; it requires an urgent international effort to support reconstruction; and it requires guarantees for Israel's security. ...

col 25 Nobody in this House can truly imagine what it feels like to cower under the bodies of their friends, hoping a terrorist will not find them, mere minutes after dancing at a music festival. Nobody in this House can truly imagine seeing their city, home, schools, hospitals and businesses obliterated, with their neighbours and family buried underneath. It is beyond our comprehension, and with that should come a humility. It is hard even to understand the full depth of this pain, but what we can do is remember. What we can do is respect and listen to the voices that reach out to us at these moments, and what we can do is use the power of diplomacy to try to find practical steps that minimise the suffering on the ground and work towards that long-term solution, so that a year of such terrible and bloody conflict can never happen again. ...

Rishi Sunak (Conservative): ... Today is the anniversary of 7 October. This modern pogrom—the worst loss of Jewish life since the second world war—was a horrendous reminder of the antisemitism in our world and the existential threats that Israel faces. Over the past year, many of the hostages kidnapped by Hamas on 7 October have been raped, sexually abused, murdered, and mutilated beyond recognition. Today, a year on, many still remain held by Hamas and other terrorist groups. ...

Too many innocent civilian lives have been lost. It is right that this country continues to play its part in defending Israel against Iranian attacks, but we should not forget the base cause of all these events: Iran's refusal to accept Israel's right to exist, and its desire to destabilise the region through arming and funding its terrorist proxies—Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. ... Let me be clear: Israel has a right to defend itself, it has a right to eliminate the leadership of Hezbollah, and it has a right to restore security for its citizens. This country should support Israel in pursuing those goals ...

col 26 I ask the Prime Minister to update the House on what steps this country, along with our allies, is taking to help to build up the capacity of the Lebanese state so that Hezbollah

cannot simply re-establish itself in southern Lebanon. ...

I welcome the Government's chartering of planes to help British nationals to return home, and know very well the logistical challenges involved. ...

On this sad anniversary, I finish by saying that the United Kingdom stands with Israel against this terrorism today, tomorrow and always. I say to the Jewish community here in Britain that I know that at moments like this, when the Jewish people are under attack in their homeland, Jewish people everywhere can feel less safe. I know that the Prime Minister will agree with me that, across this House, we will always stand against the evils of antisemitism.

The Prime Minister: ... Humanitarian assistance is being provided—aid and money, as well as training ...

On evacuations, we will make sure that any British national has the assistance they need to come home. ...

... but the most important thing today is for this House to do as it is doing: speaking with one voice on the one-year anniversary of an awful terrorist attack.

col 27 **Emily Thornberry (Labour):** On this anniversary, the House unites in its condemnation of the murder of more than 1,000 Israeli citizens and makes a united call for the release of 100 hostages. Parliament also stands behind a belief in the rules-based international order—a belief that all civilian life is equal and must be protected. Today, we mark a year during which more than 41,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, 742 people have been killed in the west bank and more than 2,000 people have been killed in Lebanon. ...

The Prime Minister: ... everything that we are doing is aimed at de-escalating across the region. It is on the brink, and it is important for all sides to pull back from the brink. ...

Ed Davey (Liberal Democrat): ... On the anniversary of the horrific attacks in Israel, we remember the victims, the people taken hostage and their families, and we stand with the whole Jewish community. ...

The past year has seen terrible violence in the middle east, a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, and an appalling spike in hate crimes here in the UK. We must stand firm against antisemitism and Islamophobia, we must press for an immediate bilateral ceasefire to end the terrible cycle of violence and bring about lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians, and we must do all we can to prevent a regional war in the middle east. UK forces rightly played their part in helping Israel to neutralise Iran's outrageous attacks, and I hope that the Government will now try to convince Israel that keeping her citizens safe and secure is best achieved by restraint, not retaliation and the risk of a regional war. ...

We are horrified by the new crisis unfolding in Lebanon. Will the Government go further on humanitarian aid? Most importantly, we join the Prime Minister in calling for the cessation of rocket fire, the protection of civilians, and an immediate bilateral ceasefire, just like the one that we so desperately need in Gaza.

col 28 **The Prime Minister:** ... I absolutely agree with him in relation to the hostage families. ... I also agree with what he said about hate crimes. The message and the messaging is very much de-escalation across the region. He is right that we need to deal with state threats, including the IRGC. ...

Florence Eshalomi (Labour Co-op): ... Sadly, the United Nations has reported credible evidence of sexual violence against innocent civilians on both sides of the conflict. No matter the intensity of the situation, there can be no justification for sexual violence, which leaves victims traumatised for many years. What steps are the Government taking to raise that issue and ensure that innocent civilians across the middle east are protected from the horrors of sexual violence?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend raises an important point about sexual violence, which, as she rightly says, has absolutely no justification. Along with other

issues, we continue to raise any such allegations with our allies.

Edward Leigh (Conservative): There are many different opinions on policy in the middle east, but does the Prime Minister agree that what must surely unite everyone in this House is our profound detestation of antisemitism in all its shapes and forces, as well as our profound love for the Jewish people on their day of suffering, especially as many of those who were murdered at the music festival and in the kibbutz were actively working for peace? Will he reflect that there are still many people—many Jewish and Arab people—who want a moderate solution, and that we should give them our support?

The Prime Minister: I agree wholeheartedly ... on antisemitism, and on our love for—and on standing with—the Jewish people, both across the globe and here in the United Kingdom. Many of them want nothing more than peace and security for themselves and their families, and we will continue to work with them. ...

Clive Betts (Labour): ... Does [the Prime Minister] understand the wider concern at the Israeli Prime Minister saying repeatedly in recent weeks that he does not support a two-state solution, either now or in the future? ...

col 29 **The Prime Minister:** We have to be very clear that the two-state solution is the only viable long-term route through this conflict. Recognition has to be a question of when, not if. Israel has a right to be safe and secure—it is not—and we must have a viable Palestinian state. ...

Bob Blackman (Conservative): We are a year on from when 1,200 Jewish people were systematically murdered. Those who were women were raped and mutilated; 254 were taken hostage into Gaza, and 101 remain unaccounted for. ... we need to make sure the hostages are returned immediately, but the first aspect of that is ensuring that the International Committee of the Red Cross has access to all those hostages in order to assess their state of health and, indeed, whether they are still alive. Will the Prime Minister press for that ...

The Prime Minister: Yes, that is very important. ...

Stella Creasy (Labour Co-op): We in my constituency stand today with our neighbour Sharone in saying the name of her father, Oded Lifschitz, a proud peace activist who has been held by Hamas for over a year now. We stand with our Palestinian neighbours who were able to escape from Gaza, who now fear for their relatives and what harm may befall them. We stand with our neighbour trying to get out of Lebanon, where he was trying to support local children to learn. We reject the lazy stereotype in this conflict that we have to pick a side. We pick peace ...

The Prime Minister: ... We are absolutely working with our allies on de-escalating across the region. That requires Iran to take responsibility and be held accountable for what it is doing ...

col 30 **Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat):** Today is a devastating and sobering day for those who are suffering the pain of grief—it feels that the claws are being run over those wounds again. ... It is clearer now than ever that when the embers finally die down and we can start to rebuild, the Palestinian question must be the No. 1 priority on the Prime Minister's list and those of other world leaders—not because it is the right thing to do, but because it is a security concern that we must address if we want a safer world. ...

The Prime Minister: ... I completely agree that the only way through in the long term is the two-state solution. ... we are working non-stop with our allies on that question, answering “What happens next?” and never losing sight of the fact that the two-state solution is the only way to long-lasting peace. ...

Andy Slaughter (Labour): The Prime Minister rightly says we need a ceasefire now, but after a year and over 45,000 deaths, what more can he do to achieve that ceasefire? ... will he ask the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary to look sympathetically at requests for evacuation from dependants and close relatives of UK citizens?

The Prime Minister: ... we are continuing to work with allies to bring that ceasefire about and to co-ordinate our efforts. ... If anybody across the House has any details

of our citizens who need further assistance, I would genuinely be pleased if they passed them to me, so we can action that straightaway.

Stephen Flynn (SNP): On the anniversary of the terrorist attack last year, may I echo the sentiments of the Prime Minister in condemning Hamas, in supporting our Jewish community and, of course, in calling for the release of all the hostages? I share his concern about the malign influence of Iran. In that regard, can he confirm to the House that there will be no British involvement—be that personnel, facilities or airbases—in any Israeli response to its abhorrent attack last week?

The Prime Minister: ... I will not go into details on the Floor of the House as to our capabilities, but he will know that the involvement so far—for example, in relation to the attack in April—related to Israel's self-defence, when missiles were raining in on Israel. That is the support that we did provide and would always be prepared to provide.

col 31 **Richard Burgon (Independent):** Today, as we remember all those killed in the 7 October Hamas attack and all those killed day after day in Israel's war on Gaza and now Lebanon, the case for peace, the preservation of human life and the protection of human life has never been more urgent and compelling. An immediate ceasefire is desperately needed to stop all the killing, end the war crimes, free the hostages and get aid into Gaza. However, it is clear that Israel's right-wing political leaders will keep rejecting ceasefires and keep violating international law without stronger international pressure. ...

The Prime Minister: I completely agree that we need an immediate ceasefire. ... I do not agree with a complete ban on arms sales. That would include a ban on arms being used for defensive purposes. ...

Priti Patel (Conservative): ... What discussions has the Prime Minister had with Gulf Cooperation Council leaders about the behaviour—the aggressive behaviour—of their neighbour Iran, and what role they can play in de-escalation and preventing Iran from further escalating this terrible conflict?

The Prime Minister: ... We have had numerous discussions with our colleagues and with leaders, and I do think there is an important role that can be played and pressure that can be applied through those discussions. ...

Rupa Huq (Labour): Among those killed in the horrors of 7 October were children, with a number still held hostage to this day. In Gaza since then, there is a grisly new acronym—WCNSF: wounded child, no surviving family—to add to the child death toll, which is now rising in Lebanon as well. Will my right hon. and learned Friend press for the protection of children in advocating for a ceasefire and in his humanitarian efforts, and does he agree that no parent should ever have to bury their child?

The Prime Minister: I absolutely agree with that, whether it is children taken as hostages—it hardly seems possible to say that sentence without recoiling—or those orphaned in Gaza ...

Julian Lewis (Conservative): I appreciate that it is difficult to get into the mind of a theocratic regime such as that of the ayatollahs in Iran, but to what extent have the Government been able to establish whether a principal motivation for what happened on 7 October was the desire of the Iranian regime to prevent a rapprochement between Israel and Saudi Arabia, its great rival?

col 32 **The Prime Minister:** Iran bears huge responsibility across the region, both in its assistance in relation to the 7 October attack and through the other action that it is supporting in the region. That is why we have been clear in our positioning on Iran, and clear about the responsibility that Iran bears in relation to those awful incidents.

Zarah Sultana (Independent): On the anniversary of the horrific 7 October attacks, I again repeat the call for the immediate release of all hostages. In light of Israel's genocidal assault in Gaza, the violence in the west bank and the invasion of Lebanon, does the Prime Minister believe that Israel's right to self-defence justifies a death toll that, according

to research by US medical professionals who have worked in Gaza, has now surpassed 118,000, as well as the 2,000 people killed in Lebanon? Will he do what is morally and legally right and end the Government's complicity in war crimes by banning all arms sales to Israel, including the F-35 fighter jet, and not just 30 licences—yes or no?

The Prime Minister: No, but it is a really serious point. Banning all sales would mean none for defensive purposes—

Zarah Sultana: F-35 fighter jets.

The Prime Minister: It would mean none for defensive purposes. On the anniversary of 7 October and days after a huge attack by Iran into Israel, that would be the wrong position for this Government and I will not take it.

Sammy Wilson (DUP): The Prime Minister has rightly pointed out that the conflict in the middle east has been manipulated and sponsored by the Iranian regime. We should stand by Israel, which is bearing the burden, taking the risks and standing up to world opinion in taking on Iran and its proxy terrorist groups. What part can our Government play in putting pressure on the Iranian regime, and why is it that the revolutionary guards who are sponsoring much of this terrorism can still operate freely in London?

The Prime Minister: ... we must stand by Israel and be absolutely clear about Israel's right to defend herself, particularly at this time of escalation by Iran. ...

Clive Efford (Labour): May I associate myself with the condemnation of the atrocities committed by Hamas a year ago? That said, there is a growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and the restriction on aid is unacceptable. ...

The Prime Minister: ... we need to get more humanitarian aid in; it is desperately needed, and has been needed for a very long time. ...

col 33 Robert Jenrick (Conservative): Since the barbaric attack on 7 October, we have seen an explosion in antisemitism and extremism on the streets of our own country. Only on Saturday, we saw people flagrantly valorising Hezbollah in London. We must root out those who despise our country and our values. What will the Prime Minister do to revoke the visas, where appropriate, of those in the UK who are conducting themselves in this manner, to encourage the police to enforce our existing laws without fear or favour, and to further ban and proscribe organisations such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps which do not support the UK, our values, and the way we wish to conduct ourselves in the world?

The Prime Minister: We are proud of the democratic right to protest in this country, but supporting a proscribed terrorist group is unacceptable, and we need to be very clear about that and give the police our full support in taking the action they need to take in relation to that ...

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour): ... Iran is no friend of ours. Indeed, it is disliked by many of its neighbouring Arab nations for its destabilising activities in the region. It was abundantly clear to many of us that as soon Iran came to the aid of its proxy Hezbollah, Israel's allies would come to its aid to protect it from Iranian missiles. However, it is extremely frustrating that Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to ignore the international community and the UN Security Council resolutions. ...

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend's comments about Iran are absolutely right. We must stand with Israel in the face of the attacks, wherever they come from and wherever they are sponsored. ... We are working with the US in particular on its plan for a ceasefire, because it is only through a ceasefire that we can create the space for the hostages to be safely released, for the aid to get into the region and for a foot in the door for a political two-state solution, which is the only way to lasting peace.

Christine Jardine (Liberal Democrat): The Prime Minister spoke rightly of the fact that we can barely imagine the pain of the Israeli families and those in Gaza affected over the past year since that Hamas atrocity, but it is also a pain felt acutely in our own communities, by our Jewish communities and by our Muslim communities. We have had 5,000

antisemitic attacks in this country since that atrocity—a record number—so what will the Prime Minister do to reassure the Jewish and Muslim communities and to work with the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA to strengthen their bonds?

The Prime Minister: ... We have upped the support to communities as a result of the dreadful rise in hate crime in all its manifestations in the past year or so, and we will continue to do so. ...

col 34 Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op): Today is a day of mourning for all those who lost family members on 7 October and those hostages in the tunnels lost since then, and for all those civilians in Gaza, the west bank and now in Lebanon. ... The only time hostages got released was when there was a hostage-prisoner deal on 22 November last year and some 150 prisoners and 50 hostages were released. Has the Prime Ministers spoken to the Israeli Government about another deal to allow the hostages to be released through swapping them with political prisoners held in Israeli jails?

The Prime Minister: I accept my hon. Friend's point that it is through a cessation of hostilities that the space can be created for the release of hostages. Yes, of course we talk to leaders, including in Israel, the whole time about how that can be brought about. ...

Greg Smith (Conservative): It is vital that today and every day we remember every life lost at the hands of Hamas a year ago and every life lost in captivity since, and that we renew our calls for the release of every hostage. While I totally agree with the Prime Minister when he says that Israel must have that right to defend herself, some of the decisions he has taken have led to a feeling that the Government have stepped back their support for Israel, not least in the restoration of funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Does the Prime Minister regret that, and will he revisit that decision, so that actions marry up with words?

The Prime Minister: No, there has been no stepping back of support for Israel. ... We will continue to support Israel and we will continue to support Israel's right to defend herself. ...

Mohammad Yasin (Labour): It has been a year of profound suffering, darkness and trauma. Tens of thousands of innocent people have been killed and displaced ... The prospect of a two-state solution is a distant dream and the odds on all-out war in the middle east are growing by the day. ...

The Prime Minister: ... we need to de-escalate across the region. We have seen escalation in recent days and weeks, and all sides need to pull back from the brink.

col 35 Ellie Chowns (Green): On behalf of the Green party, I associate myself with the remarks ... in remembrance of all those who lost their lives and were taken hostage in the horrific terrorist attacks on 7 October last year. One of those was Hayim Katsman, who was murdered by Hamas in Kibbutz Holit. His brother Noy had his words included in a collection of speeches and eulogies published today by Standing Together. Noy said this of Hayim: "I have no doubt that even in the face of Hamas' people that murdered him, in the face of their extreme right wing beliefs, he would still call out against killing and violence of innocent people. Here, too, he would be empathetic to pain and oppression." ... In that spirit, I express my continued and deep concern at the disproportionate response of Israel to the attacks on 7 October and the extent to which that has perpetuated pain, oppression and the killing of innocent people. ...

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member read out some powerful words, which will have been heard across the House. ...

Patricia Ferguson (Labour): ... In any time of conflict, our focus must be on two things: de-escalation and peace; and the plight of the civilian population, whether they be those hostages kidnapped on 7 October, those in Lebanon now sheltering in the street or those in Gaza who seek to find health facilities to treat their loved ones and themselves when they suffer from attacks by Israel. What more can we do to support the health service in Lebanon ...?

The Prime Minister: We do need to help and assist with the health services in Lebanon—along with the other humanitarian support and the support for training and other matters ...

Andrew Murrison (Conservative): Many of us have been fortunate enough to see the good work that UNRWA has done on the ground over many years, but, to be effective, an aid delivery vehicle needs to be rigorously impartial. Given that, will the Government treat UNRWA with caution and carefully, and remember that other aid delivery agencies are available?

The Prime Minister: We of course have to be careful to ensure that any agency absolutely complies with international law and, where there are any allegations, we must ensure that they are properly investigated and any wrongdoing is rooted out. ...

col 36 **Andy McDonald (Labour):** I wish to put on the record my sorrow at the appallingly violent events of 7 October one year ago in southern Israel, and at all the days of violence we have witnessed since. Since the House last met, the forced displacement of almost 2 million residents of Gaza by Israel's military action has been compounded by a further half a million people forcibly displaced in Lebanon, again by Israeli military action. Does the Prime Minister share the concerns of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, that in destroying civilian infrastructure, killing civilians and impacting humanitarian operations, the Israeli invasion is a breach of international law? ...

The Prime Minister: ... I have been absolutely clear that Israel has the right to defend herself in accordance with international law. The displacement is a very serious issue across the region. Very many people have been displaced and many of them simply want to go home. That includes Israelis who have been displaced from their homes as well. ...

Mark Pritchard (Conservative): In just 15 months, Iran will be free of many of the restrictions under the joint comprehensive plan of action on its production of centrifuges and its uranium enrichment. Given the new nexus of evil of North Korea, Iran and Russia on nuclear technology transfer, does the Prime Minister believe the JCPOA is still fit for purpose?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman raises a really important point in relation to the nuclear ambitions that we absolutely have to be alive to. We must ensure that Iran cannot possibly get weapons. ...

Debbie Abrahams (Labour): I extend my heartfelt sympathies to the families who lost loved ones in the terror attack a year ago, as well as to those who have loved ones that are held in captivity at the moment. I would also like to do the same for ordinary Palestinian civilians who have lost loved ones in the violence of the past year. ...

The Prime Minister: I accept that an immediate ceasefire is difficult; I do not accept that it is impossible. The US and Qatar are working hard on this, and they have our full support ...

col 37 **Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat):** ... Despite the trauma of the last 12 months, I am incredibly proud that rabbis, imams and other religious leaders in St Albans have worked hand in glove to make a bold statement called "Five principles for dialogue: why Jews and Muslims refuse to hate each other". ...

The Prime Minister: ... that joint work is really important. Some of the interfaith work done before 7 October did not have the resilience that many of us thought and hoped it would have. Rebuilding it is hard but it should be supported wherever it takes place. ...

Abtisam Mohamed (Labour): ... Human rights and international law apply equally and without favour. All lives matter—Palestinian, Israeli and Lebanese. When breaches of international law are committed, they should be condemned equally. ...

The Prime Minister: We are working constantly with our allies to de-escalate the situation, to hold those responsible to account and to ensure that we bring about

the much sought-after peace that all communities want.

John Whittingdale (Conservative): As well as the terrible loss of life of Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese citizens, a shocking number of journalists have been killed or wounded while covering events in the middle east. Will the Prime Minister pay tribute to the courage of journalists who are risking their lives daily simply to do their job? ...

The Prime Minister: ... Journalists and those working in the media are risking their lives to ensure that the rest of us have information about what is happening on the ground. Too many have lost their lives, and we must respect that and pay tribute to the really important work that they do. ...

John McDonnell (Independent): ... When the Ukraine war started, we set up the scheme to evacuate children who were seriously injured to come here for treatment.

col 38 In January I raised the prospect of that scheme being introduced for Palestinian children and others. I raised it again in May. In July I wrote to my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary and the Foreign Secretary. I wrote again in August, and again in September. There does not seem to be any progress on developing such a scheme, despite the willingness of clinicians here. ...

The Prime Minister: ... We have special responsibilities to children in any conflict. The first step to protecting children is to create the conditions for a ceasefire and de-escalate ...

Kit Malthouse (Conservative): In February I stood in the wreckage of some of the kibbutzim where the atrocities took place on 7 October. I was struck by the families we met and their desire for peace rather than revenge. ... How many more people will have to die before we realise that talking is not enough, and we have to take action with our partners to compel a ceasefire?

The Prime Minister: ... we are working with our allies to bring about a ceasefire. I accept it is difficult; I accept it has not yet happened. I refuse to give up on the idea that, through diplomacy, we can reach that de-escalation and ceasefire. We will continue to work with our allies to do so. ...

Tracy Gilbert (Labour): ... Latest figures suggest that approximately 6,000 Lebanese nationals are in the UK with a temporary right to remain. Lebanese nationals in Edinburgh have recounted to me their fears about returning home and their concerns about the inevitable humanitarian crisis that will follow should the conflict continue. Will the Government commit to looking at options to ensure no Lebanese national currently in the UK is forced to return to Lebanon during the current conflict?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I can give that assurance. ... We need to get British nationals who are in Lebanon out of Lebanon as quickly and safely as possible, and we certainly should not be returning people back to the conflict zone while the conflict is going on.

col 39 **Ben Lake (Plaid Cymru):** Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary delivered important statements at the UN last month, emphasising the importance of upholding both the principles and the purposes of the UN charter as a foundation for the rules-based international order. The Prime Minister rightly states today that a political settlement is the only route to a lasting peace and stability in the region. In working towards that aim, what consideration are the Government giving to official recognition of Palestinian statehood?

The Prime Minister: The question of recognition is a question of when, not if. ... Well, at the point of greatest impact. We need a two-state solution. We need to work with our allies towards that end. ...

Apsana Begum (Independent): It is with profound sadness that we take stock of the past year in which 1,200 Israelis were killed by Hamas's horrific attack and over 41,000 Palestinians and thousands in Lebanon have been killed by the Israeli military onslaught. Does the Prime Minister agree with me that all lives should be cherished—Israeli, Palestinian and Lebanese—and that nothing can ever justify the deliberate targeting of

civilians and civilian infrastructure? ...

The Prime Minister: I certainly agree that all lives should be cherished ...

Brendan O'Hara (SNP): ... As South Africa's Foreign Minister said, the decision to stop the fighting in Gaza is in the hands of those who supply Israel with weapons. [The Prime Minister] knows that international law does not differentiate between offensive weapons and defensive weapons, so why does he continue to license 90% of weapon sales to Israel when there is ample proof that UK weapons are still being used to prolong this catastrophe?

The Prime Minister: For the reason I have twice stated. If the sale of weapons for defensive use by Israel were banned, that is a position I could not countenance a year after 7 October. It is not a position I could countenance in the face of attacks by Iran. ...

Chris Murray (Labour): The scale of the devastation that we have seen in the middle east is appalling. In recent weeks, 127 innocent children have been killed in Lebanon. The scale of death is appalling, and the potential for further escalation is terrifying. ...

col 40 **The Prime Minister:** We are working constantly with our colleagues and allies ...

John Lamont (Conservative): Hezbollah began its latest assault on Israel on 8 October, the day after Hamas's attacks on Israel. The Iran-backed terror group has fired more than 12,000 rockets towards Israel over the past year, but the international community called for a ceasefire only after Israel had responded. ...

The Prime Minister: ... We do need to address state threats; we are looking into how we can do that, and will continue to do so.

Melanie Ward (Labour): As the Prime Minister has said, the horrific Hamas attacks a year ago inflicted unbearable pain and loss on Israeli civilians, and we continue to condemn those attacks in the strongest terms. I remember clearly, too, the fear that my then colleagues in Gaza, Palestinian aid workers, felt as bombs began dropping on them that night. The healthcare system in Gaza is now all but destroyed, and according to the United Nations there have been 36 recent attacks on healthcare facilities in Lebanon. Israeli forces are also now using fighter jets to bomb refugee camps in the west bank. Does the Prime Minister agree that this is unacceptable? ...

The Prime Minister: ... we need to protect aid workers, because that is the only way in which the aid can get to where it is needed.

Alec Shelbrooke (Conservative): Today we mark that terrible anniversary of the biggest slaughter of Jews since the second world war. We must also note that since that day, more than 60,000 Israelis have been displaced in northern Israel by the actions of Hezbollah. The Israeli Government have had no choice but to mobilise the Israel Defence Forces, and any Israeli citizen can have to be involved in that.

I am proud of the fact that yesterday Leeds held a multi-faith remembrance service in Millennium Square, attended by more than 1,000 people. Does the Prime Minister agree that that is in marked contrast to the individual who drove the Jewish chaplain of Leeds into hiding because, as an Israeli citizen, he had to serve as a member of the IDF? Is that not an act of pure hatred and antisemitism?

col 41 **The Prime Minister:** We must hunt down that hatred wherever we see it, and the right hon. Gentleman is right to raise it and to call it out. ... He is also right about the displacement in northern Israel. Many families simply want to return to their homes, on both sides of the border, and we must never forget the impact that it has on them.

Nesil Caliskan (Labour): ... In my constituency are communities who have links with Israel, with Gaza, with Palestine and also with Lebanon, and they raise with me regularly the need for an immediate ceasefire. Does the Prime Minister recognise that that ceasefire is a critical step towards what, in the end, can be the only solution: a political solution for the region?

The Prime Minister: Yes, and that is why we are working with allies, including the United States, on seeking to bring it about.

Richard Holden (Conservative): There have been 1,200 butchered and more than 250 hostages taken, more than 100 of whom are still there, including Emily Damari, a 28-year-old British citizen. Will the Prime Minister recommit himself today to doing whatever it takes—to leaving no stone unturned—in ensuring that she is returned to her family, and that, if necessary, British assets are used to help to extract her?

The Prime Minister: Yes, absolutely ...

Alex Barros-Curtis (Labour): ... Since the heinous terrorist attack one year ago, we have seen here at home a consequential increase in crimes of hate, antisemitism and other forms of hatred. ... will [the Prime Minister] assure me that his Government will continue to challenge all such forms of hatred, both here and abroad?

The Prime Minister: Yes, absolutely; we can and we must. ... we have all been horrified by the increase over the last 12 months. ...

Ayoub Khan (Independent): ... Given what [the Prime Minister] said in relation to self-defence, which is a moot point, is he stating to the House that all offensive weapons are banned and that only defensive weapons are being supplied?

col 42 **The Prime Minister:** ... We have domestic legislation in place that was passed and applied by successive Governments, and we have international obligations. We have taken our decisions in accordance with that legislation ... and we have published a summary of our reasons for doing so ...

Joani Reid (Labour): May I, too, express my heartfelt sympathy and condolences to all those affected by the terrorist attacks on 7 October? ... Does [the Prime Minister] agree that the sharp rise in antisemitism that we have seen since 7 October—it has now reached the highest level ever recorded in the UK—is a stain on our democracy? ...

The Prime Minister: ... I think we are all shocked by the sharp rise in antisemitism, and we need to work with all communities to bring down hate crime, whichever community it is aimed at—whether it is the Jewish community, the Muslim community or any other community.

Joyn Morrissey (Conservative): I thank the Prime Minister for clarifying the Government's position on Israel's right to defend itself. Will he and the Home Secretary clarify to the House what steps are being taken to tackle violent disorder and antisemitism in London? Many members of the British Jewish communities here in London feel under threat, and this weekend we saw violent protest. What will the Government do to tackle that and to make our British Jewish communities feel safe again?

The Prime Minister: We have to support the right of freedom of protest but, at the same time, be absolutely clear that support for terrorist organisations is not to be tolerated. ...

Matthew Patrick (Labour): Today, as at so many times in the history of the Jewish people, we are bound in grief and mourning. Will the Prime Minister assure the Jewish community that we are not alone in that grief ...

The Prime Minister: Let me give that assurance that they are not alone, and let me pay tribute again to the families. It is incredibly moving to spend any time with them and to hear at first hand what they are going through. ...

col 43 **Iqbal Mohamed (Independent):** ... Over the last 12 months, more than 950 Palestinian bloodlines have been wiped off the face of the earth—no family member remains from those generations. Over 1,000 families have only one sole survivor remaining living today. What message does the Prime Minister have for the British Palestinians and the surviving Palestinians in the affected region, and what is he doing to protect them from the same fate as the 42,000 and counting?

The Prime Minister: There has been far too much bloodshed and killing, and far too many children orphaned. ...

Andrew George (Liberal Democrat): The Prime Minister said that I stand with Israel. I

stand with peace; I stand with the Israeli people and with the Palestinians and the Lebanese equally. This is not mere semantics. I applaud the involvement of the UK military in protecting Israelis at the weekend, but where is the equivalent for the people of Gaza, Beirut and elsewhere?

The Prime Minister: It is in the work that we are doing to bring about de-escalation and a ceasefire ...

Jeremy Corbyn (Independent): The tragedy of the deaths a year ago has now been compounded by tens of thousands more deaths in Gaza, the west bank and Lebanon. Gaza is now reduced to a place of rubble, famine, thirst and premature death, and lots of children looking for their families. The bombs that have rained down on Gaza and other places are in part supplied by this country. The International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court have both given strong opinions on the situation there. Will the Prime Minister revisit the whole situation of the sale of British arms that are being used to bomb Gaza and kill wholly innocent Palestinian civilians?

The Prime Minister: We have set out our position: domestic law is clear, international law is clear, and we have taken our decision and put a summary of that before the House.

Jim Allister (TUV [Traditional Unionist Voice]) If we in this House, at this distance, can feel the pain of that dastardly attack a year ago, we can but imagine its indelible imprint on the people of Israel and on Jewish folk across the world. What is the Prime Minister's view of the fact that our national broadcaster, the BBC, refuses to call those who perpetrated this heinous terrorist attack "terrorists", and likewise now with Hezbollah? ...

col 44 **The Prime Minister:** The Government's position is that Hamas and Hezbollah are terrorist organisations. We stand very firm on that and rightly call them what they are.

Richard Foord (Liberal Democrat): I join the Prime Minister in condemning the Iranian ballistic missile attack on Israel last Tuesday, and I support the role of UK armed forces in defeating it. Back in January, the Prime Minister said that parliamentary approval of military action is needed only when deploying troops. We do not know how Israel will respond to the Iranian attack, and the Government could find themselves asked to contribute at short notice. Can the Prime Minister set out what he meant when he said that a parliamentary debate and vote would happen only when deploying troops?

The Prime Minister: The whole House condemns Iran's attack of a few days ago—we all saw the impact—and the whole House will understand that there will be occasions when it is important for a Government to act without first coming to this House.

Tim Farron (Liberal Democrat): Like others, I recently had the sobering experience of meeting some of the hostage families. One person described how his brother had seen his wife, the mother of their new baby, murdered before his eyes, just before he was taken by Hamas. Despite their ordeal, the hostage families I met showed a desire for peace and reconciliation that I found utterly breathtaking and humbling, and it gives me hope. Does the Prime Minister agree that the release of the hostages is not only the right thing to do, in and of itself—of course, it is—but a major key to ending the conflict? Any ceasefire without the release of the hostages is, de facto, not a ceasefire.

The Prime Minister: I agree, which is why we must continue to press for the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages. ...

Jim Shannon (DUP): ... In the light of recent events, it has become clear that Israel's right to defend itself, though verbally supported, is effectively condemned when it takes action. Ever mindful of the 1,200 Israeli citizens who were so brutally murdered a year ago, will the Prime Minister condemn the disgraceful antisemitic demonstrations that took place on the streets of London on Saturday? Will he ensure that all military aid is made available to Israel against the murderous intentions of Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and Iran?

The Prime Minister: I condemn antisemitism, wherever and whenever it happens.

We must stand together across this House to stamp it out.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-07/debates/D011AA57-3CC8-4CBB-84AF-40A6CF71552A/AnniversaryOf7OctoberAttacksMiddleEast>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above by the Prime Minister, can be read at [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

The St Albans statement referred to above by Daisy Cooper can be read at <https://www.facebook.com/StAlbansMasortiSynagogue/posts/pfbid0cHePBhprQpnFJvhFyu2iAYvRNHRcYh2HtwxzuAYyqqi6Cq6wrNA6A9ckGH1gPiwJI>

The summary referred to above by the Prime Minister can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summary-of-the-international-humanitarian-law-ihl-process-decision-and-the-factors-taken-into-account/summary-of-the-ihl-process-decision-and-the-factors-taken-into-account>

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Arms Trade

Andrew Bowie (Conservative) [5344] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the decision to suspend arms export licences to Israel on relations between the UK and the US.

Hamish Falconer: We have been clear that this is our own independent process, specific to the UK and according to our own law. The Strategic Export Licensing Criteria state that the Government will not issue or maintain export licences if there is a clear risk that the items might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law. We have deemed that there is such a risk and have taken the necessary decision. The US-UK relationship remains strong and we are united by decades of unrivalled security and defence cooperation. Our priority remains achieving a ceasefire in Gaza in which we see hostages released, civilians protected and aid floods in.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-09-11/5344>

The Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, referred to above, can be read at <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-12-08/hcws449>

Defence Equipment: Israel

Andy McDonald (Labour) [5324] To ask the Solicitor General, if she has provided advice on whether F-35 components supplied by the UK to Israel via a third party are used by Israel in Gaza in compliance with international humanitarian law.

Sarah Sackman: Paragraph 2.13 of the Ministerial Code states: 'the fact that the Law Officers have advised or have not advised and the content of their advice must not be disclosed outside Government without their authority'. This is known as the Law Officers' Convention, and it applies to your question.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-09-11/5324>

The Ministerial Code, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministerial-code/ministerial-code>

Israel: Military Aid

Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour) [5365] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 9 February 2024 to Question 12736 on Israel: Armed Forces, how many Israeli armed forces personnel were undertaking training in the UK on 9

September 2024; which courses they took part in; and to which UK military bases they were posted.

Luke Pollard: I thank the hon. Member for her question, I'm sure she will understand I am unable to provide an answer in order to protect personal information.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-09-11/5365>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-02-01/12736>

House of Lords Debate

Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill

col 1869 Lord Cryer (Labour): ... I cannot speak today without mentioning the anniversary of 7 October. A year ago, there was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community that the world has seen since 1945. It was right up there with the activities of the Nazis and the pogroms perpetrated on Jews across the globe and down the centuries for all that time. ... we must remember that anti-Semitism has been on the rise in this country for some time. It is getting broader and deeper. If you do not believe me, just look at the figures produced by the Community Security Trust. It is there for all to see.

I do not enjoy saying this but I point out that anti-Semitism seeped into the pores of the Labour Party—my Labour Party—for a number of years under the previous leader. Nor do I enjoy saying that, as chair of the PLP, I found not just an unwillingness to tackle racism among the then leadership of the party but an obstruction to those of us who wanted to tackle the anti-Semites and kick them out of the Labour Party. I remember once being shouted down at a party meeting because I suggested that, on balance, it maybe was not a bad idea to kick racists out of the Labour Party. Regardless of what happens in the next few years, Keir Starmer deserves every credit—and always will—for tearing anti-Semitism out of the Labour Party by its roots, to use his phrase. He will always have my support and my loyalty for doing that alone, regardless of the other things he has done to great success. Even so, it remains a source of anger and resentment that we had—I emphasise “had”—members of the Labour Party who supported Hamas, Hezbollah and the clerical fascists who run the regime in Tehran. ...

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-07/debates/605EE729-33DE-4E9A-B9C3-C234E1EFA869/PassengerRailwayServices\(PublicOwnership\)Bill#contribution-B16A435C-6F65-4723-B2B6-4A3A8CB6469D](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-07/debates/605EE729-33DE-4E9A-B9C3-C234E1EFA869/PassengerRailwayServices(PublicOwnership)Bill#contribution-B16A435C-6F65-4723-B2B6-4A3A8CB6469D)

House of Lords Oral Answer

European Union

col 1821 Baroness Twycross (Labour): ... As we mark the anniversary of the despicable attacks by Hamas on Israelis, and when we also have war in Europe, a warm and close working relationship with our friends and neighbours is vital. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-07/debates/7B93CA72-2C47-4C74-A073-7E89AF6428B1/EuropeanUnion#contribution-6FBEO6C-2C48-48F3-BBA6-231D399AB1FB>

UK Parliament Early Day Motions

Calum Miller (Liberal Democrat) [207] Conflict in the Middle East – That this House expresses its deep concern at the escalation in the Middle East; recognises the role played

by UK and US forces in response to Iran's condemnable attacks; believes it is right that we have played our part in preventing escalation; expresses gratitude to our military personnel; calls on the UK Government now to urge Israel to act in the interest of the protection of civilians and the long-term security of the region; further believes that Israel, like any country, has a right to keep its people safe and secure, but that having neutralised Iran's attack on 1 October 2024, the best way to do this is not to retaliate and risk a regional war; also believes that a regional war would be devastating to innocent civilians, be they Israeli, Iranian, Palestinian or Lebanese; urges firm action on Iran; notes that Iran continually arms its terrorist proxy groups, Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis; further urges the UK Government to proscribe the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation; further calls upon the Government, with a view to using its sanctions regime, to examine flows of illicit money into the UK from those linked to the Iranian regime; also calls on the UK Government to urge all parties to end the cycle of violence and put their energies to a diplomatic and political solution with immediate ceasefires in Lebanon and Gaza, humanitarian disasters resolved, hostages released and, ultimately, a lasting peace secured.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62537>

Calum Miller (Liberal Democrat) [208] Peace in the Middle East – That this House notes its deep alarm at the escalation of violence in the Middle East amidst the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, 100 Israelis still being held hostage and a new humanitarian crisis in Lebanon; urges the Government to work to bring about immediate bilateral ceasefires in Lebanon and Gaza, including demanding the unconditional release of the hostages and pressing for more access for humanitarian aid; stresses the importance of upholding international law and the role of international courts including respecting in full the ICJ advisory opinion on the occupation and legislating to cease trade with illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank as well as including connected entities in the scope of sanctions against extremist settlers; urges the Government to enact a presumption of denial for arms exports to governments listed by the Foreign Office as human rights priorities and accordingly immediately suspend arms exports to Israel; calls on the Government to recognise the existential threat of Iran including by proscribing the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and conducting an audit of UK-based assets owned by Iranian officials; and further urges the Government to press for a two-state solution based on 1967 borders, including by immediately recognising the state of Palestine, working with peace-builders in Israel and Palestine who call for two-states, working with the international community to identify future democratic leaders of Palestine and investing in peace, such as the International Fund for Middle East Peace, as well as using trade as a tool for peace.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62538>

The ICJ Advisory Opinion referred to above can be read at

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf>

Monica Harding (Liberal Democrat) [209] Immediate ceasefire in Lebanon – That this House expresses its alarm at the escalation of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah; supports steps taken at the UN, including by the UK, to secure a statement supporting an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah; urges all parties to de-escalate and uphold international law, including the protection of civilians; believes that it is important that all those displaced should be able to return home, but that an Israeli ground invasion risks further de-stabilising the entire region; urges the Government to increase humanitarian aid to Lebanon in light of the humanitarian crisis there; further believes it is not in the UK's interest for Lebanon to become a failed state; also believes that only a political and diplomatic solution will deliver security to either side of the blue line and enable hundreds of thousands of displaced people to return home; and urges all parties to work

towards that solution and a lasting peace.
<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62539>

House of Commons Library Briefing

Israel-Hezbollah conflict 2023/24: UK and international response
<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-10108/CBP-10108.pdf>

Downing Street

PM statement on one-year anniversary of the October 7th attacks

7 October 2023 was the darkest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. One year on, we stand together to remember the lives so cruelly taken.

Over a thousand people were brutally murdered. Men, women, children and babies killed, mutilated, and tortured by the terrorists of Hamas. Jewish people murdered whilst protecting their families.

Young people massacred at a music festival.

People abducted from their homes.

Agonising reports of rape, torture and brutality beyond comprehension which continued to emerge days and weeks later.

As a father, a husband, a son, a brother – meeting the families of those who lost their loved ones last week was unimaginable. Their grief and pain are ours, and it is shared in homes across the land.

A year on, that collective grief has not diminished or waned.

Yet their strength and determination to cherish the memories of those they had lost continues, and our determination to bring those still captive home endures. I stand firm in our commitment to bring the hostages home, and we will not give up until they are returned.

One year on from these horrific attacks we must unequivocally stand with the Jewish community and unite as a country. We must never look the other way in the face of hate.

We must also not look the other way as civilians bear the ongoing dire consequences of this conflict in the Middle East. I reiterate my call for immediate ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon, and for the removal of all restrictions on humanitarian aid into Gaza.

We will not falter in our pursuit of peace and on this day of pain and sorrow, we honour those we lost, and continue in our determination to return those still held hostage, help those who are suffering, and secure a better future for the Middle East.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-statement-on-one-year-anniversary-of-the-october-7th-attacks>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Foreign Secretary @DavidLammy's statement on the anniversary of October 7

Today marks one year on from the deadliest day for Jewish people since the Holocaust. The October 7 attack by Hamas in Israel showed terrorism on a scale and brutality that few countries have ever experienced.

The unthinkable pain of the victims' families and loved ones endures to this day.

For some the nightmare continues, hostages still cruelly held by Hamas, including one British national, Emily Damari, and three with strong British links. I met family members again with the Prime Minister last week to hear their stories and reiterate our call for all hostages to be released - their bravery in the most difficult of circumstances is truly

humbling. We cherish the gift of the victims' memory and honour their legacy. Today, we also reflect on the conflict which followed and continues to this day. Again and again in the past year, we have seen the terrible impact this is having on all communities across the region. The unbearable loss of Palestinian civilians, many of them women and children, in Gaza.

The humanitarian catastrophe. My thoughts are with all those who have lost so much.

Our goal is Israel and its neighbours living in peace and security, including a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. This may seem distant right now.

But the UK will continue to make every diplomatic effort with its international partners to push for an immediate ceasefire to create space for a political solution.

This is how we bring the hostages home. How we relieve humanitarian suffering across Gaza. How we prevent further escalation in the region.

How we protect civilians and avoid an endless cycle of devastation.

<https://x.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1843224425254326649>

David Lammy Today I met Rabbi @SDavidsohn to remember the victims of the October 7 attacks. The past year has had devastating impacts on communities across the UK, with antisemitic incidents at a record high. This is unacceptable. We will root out antisemitism wherever we find it. [plus photos]

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1843269651347968327>

Scottish Government

Commemorating victims of 7 October attacks: First Minister expresses sympathy as he calls for peace

First Minister John Swinney expressed his sympathy to the Jewish community as he remembers all those who lost their lives in the Hamas 7 October terror attacks a year ago. Since the attacks, the Scottish Government has consistently called for the immediate release of all hostages, a ceasefire in Gaza, the urgent provision of humanitarian aid to all who need it, and a two-state solution with sovereign Israeli and Palestinian states.

The First Minister said: "The atrocious attacks carried out by the terrorist organisation, Hamas, on 7 October resulted in the worst single loss of Jewish life since the Holocaust. Jewish communities across the world, including here in Scotland, are deeply traumatised by the attacks,

"As we remember those who died, I express my sympathy to the Jewish community and all those who mourn.

"I also remember the thousands of innocent people who have been killed in the crisis over the last year. Now more than ever, an immediate ceasefire is needed in Gaza, and the Middle East.

"As communities across Scotland reflect on the 7 October terrorist attacks and the subsequent loss of further innocent life that has followed, I pledge the unwavering support of my government to ensure our communities remain united, that all communities are kept safe and that we live in a Scotland where people of all faiths, and none, can live in peace."

<https://www.gov.scot/news/commemorating-victims-of-7-october-attacks/>

Welsh Government

Written Statement: Anniversary of October 7th attacks: Rt Hon Eluned Morgan MS, First Minister of Wales

Today we mark a year since the entire world was horrified by the appalling attack by Hamas on Israel, including on a music festival full of young people.

More than 1,000 people were killed, thousands more were wounded and people were abducted from their homes.

Over 250 people were taken hostage and still to this day – 97 remain unaccounted for.

Since that terrible day a year ago, conflict has escalated across the region causing death and suffering to innocent civilians in Gaza, Lebanon, Israel and the West Bank.

As a Welsh Government, we call for the unconditional release of all hostages, an immediate ceasefire and the removal of all restrictions on humanitarian aid.

We acknowledge the work of faith leaders and Jewish and Muslim communities in Wales who have come together peacefully over the past year. As a government, we will continue to support affected communities and will continue to work to bring all our communities here in Wales together.

<https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-anniversary-october-7th-attacks>

Northern Ireland Assembly Members Statements

October 7 Attacks

Matthew O'Toole (SDLP): I want to reflect on the past year. On October 7 2023, Hamas launched an attack in Israel. It was a violent attack that has to be consistently condemned. It was unjustified and unjustifiable. I acknowledge and affirm the profound effect that it had on people living in Israel. They were shocking, shocking acts of violence, and innocent lives were taken. It is, however, impossible to speak of that day in isolation from the year that has followed. The year that has followed has been one of almost limitless violence visited on, first, the people of Gaza by the state of Israel and, subsequently, other neighbours of Israel. We in this place have come to understand that the Old Testament quality of an eye for an eye simply leads to a cycle of never-ending, limitless and ever more depraved violence.

I want to reflect on the innocent lives lost, first, on 7 October, and on the tens of thousands of innocent people, including tens of thousands of children, in Gaza and now Lebanon who are being bombed in their homes. They have no defence and no ability to know what is about to happen to them. There is no justification for the scale of violence wrought by Israel over the past year. I want to be clear in saying that 7 October was a disgraceful, grotesque act of violence visited on people. People around the world are rightly memorialising that day, and I do not in any way want to take away from that. However, it would be impossible to reflect on that day without saying that the memory of those people and, indeed, the broader cause of stability, peace and justice in the Middle East have not been served by the limitless violence that has been visited by Israel on that region since. It must be said that the states that have continued to arm and facilitate that action have, I am afraid, created long-term problems in that region and more globally that we will deal with for generations. There are babies alive now who will be dealing with the trauma — possibly with physical injuries and trauma — at the end of this century.

Not only do we need a ceasefire, we need a process to create a just, lasting settlement for the Palestinian people and, yes, security for Israelis. We cannot have what we have had over the past year. It has been the most indescribable year ... of pain and suffering.

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2024/10/07&docID=412366#4578784>

October 7 Attacks

Paul Frew (DUP): I rise today to remember the events of that terrible day, 7 October, in the state of Israel against the Israeli people. It was a day that changed the world for every single Israeli citizen and every single Palestinian. My heart goes out to those people today. That Hamas attack on innocent civilians of the state of Israel has no comparison with anything that that group did in the past.

It changed the mindset of the Israeli state to where we are now.

We can all talk in stats. We can all talk about historical events. Today, however, I want to remember one of the 97 hostages who remain captive and are still missing: a young lady called Emily Damari, who was 27 when she was captured. She was removed from her kibbutz. I have not met Emily, but I have prayed for her consistently because I have met her mum. That was one of the most impactful things that I have ever experienced. How does Emily's mum feel? I met her six months into Emily's captivity; it has now been a year. They have heard nothing about Emily. They do not know whether she is alive or dead. The intelligence reports from six months ago maintained that she was alive, but I do not know whether those reports say the same thing today.

Emily's family spoke at the commemoration services at the Nova music festival today. It is absolutely heartbreaking to hear the pain that that family and all families caught up in that atrocity and the subsequent conflict bear to this day. My heart and my prayers go out to everyone caught up in those activities.

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2024/10/07&docID=412366#4578807>

October 7 Attacks: Antisemitism

Stephen Aiken (UUP): Today marks the first anniversary of the horrific and barbaric terrorist attack on Israel. The horror of that extreme example of racist and sectarian hate goes well beyond the statistics of 1,191 murdered, over 4,834 injured and 218 taken hostage. The violent attacks against the old, women, children and men were accompanied by the wide use of rape, torture, beheading and burning people alive: examples of grotesque violence that, regrettably, have been the mark of terror in this age, especially elsewhere across the Middle East and the surrounding region, in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Sudan.

What adds specifically to that horror and immeasurably to its impact on the people of Israel and our Jewish friends and colleagues is the blatantly antisemitic commentary from far too many politicians, academics, media commentators and so-called activists; commentary that blames the victims. It did not even take a day before that perverse antisemitic gloating, caricature and glorification of crimes against humanity became the normal discourse. It pains me, as it should all right-minded people across this island, that our small and vulnerable Jewish community should become the centre of so many of those ingrained antisemitic tropes.

It is almost as though, to those racist commentators, no matter what sort of racist apologists they are, the lives of women, children, men, members of the LGBT community, the disabled and even a young 12-year-old autistic girl and avid Harry Potter fan, Noya Dan, did not count, just because they were Jewish, and, again, murder, torture, kidnapping and depraved sexual violence somehow do not count because the victims are Jewish. The word "othering", that horrible all-island trait of discounting and dehumanising the lives of those we do not agree with, making them some sort of Untermenschen, applies far too strongly here, especially if it has anything to do with Israel.

It is far too easy for some to rapidly fall into blaming-Israel-for-everything mode, as if that somehow excuses antisemitic race hate. It does not. If there is a lesson we could and should learn, it is that racism and sectarianism, whatever its form, is toxic. Maybe, at least in the Assembly, hopefully, and across wider society on this island, we will. Those so-called commentators should stop and reflect on the additional horror that they have

inflicted on our Jewish community by their espousal of antisemitism.
There is no space for antisemitism in the Assembly or anywhere else.

<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2024/10/07&docID=412366#4578814>

Faith Leaders Joint Statement

Joint letter with faith leaders marking the one year anniversary of 7th October attacks in Israel.

It has been a year since the brutal Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel, and the start of this devastating war in Gaza and beyond.

During this time, the scale of human suffering has been horrific. As people of faith from Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities in the UK, while we may hold different views about aspects of the conflict, we stand united in our grief and in our belief that our shared humanity must bring us together.

Our faiths and our humanity teach us that we should mourn for all the innocent people who have lost their lives.

In these challenging times, we must also reject those who seek to divide us. Anti-Jewish hate and anti-Muslim hate have no place in the UK today. We must stand together against prejudice and hatred in all its forms.

The UK has long been a model of different communities and religions getting along with each other. We commit to upholding and nurturing this proud tradition.

Signed:

Imam Qari Muhammad Asim MBE, Chair, Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board
The Most Reverend Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury
Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis

Julie Siddiqui MBE

Dilwar Hussain MBE, Chair, New Horizons in British Islam

Imam Asim Hafiz OBE

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg OBE

Rabbi Charley Baginsky & Rabbi Josh Levy, Co-Leads of Progressive Judaism

Rabbi Pinchas Hackenbroch, Chair, Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue

<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/news-and-statements/joint-letter-faith-leaders-marking-one-year-anniversary-7th-october-0>

Church of Scotland

Statement from the Moderator on the one-year anniversary of the 7 October attacks There are no words that can adequately sum up our feelings and emotions as we reflect on a year of conflict in Israel and Gaza.

The massacre in Israel on 7 October 2023 and the war, with widespread destruction within Gaza, that followed has brought suffering to hundreds of thousands and elevated tension between communities throughout the world. ...

It is hard to imagine that we are still witnessing scenes of horror and devastation, and yet it is a reality. Innocents are still suffering; families are still mourning; what we see through media images is an everyday reality for so many. We are horrified by the extensive loss of life. While we cannot articulate words to describe what people are living through, we must use words to bring about a resolution to this dreadful situation. ...

As events continue to unfold, we too pray for an end to the war on Gaza and Lebanon, an end to the attacks, and for a just resolution for all the people of Israel and Palestine, and

call upon all parties to lay down their weapons and enter meaningful dialogue to bring this conflict to an end.

Our prayers are with those who are suffering the effects of this year of conflict that they might be comforted. We pray also for an end to hostilities and for meaningful dialogue that gives Israelis and Palestinians their rights to safety and self-determination. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/articles/statement-from-the-moderator-on-the-one-year-anniversary-of-the-7-october-attacks>

European Parliament

President Metsola marked the one-year anniversary of terrorist attacks in Israel at the opening of the 7-10 October plenary session in Strasbourg

Recalling the horror of that day “that will live in infamy”, President Metsola said nothing could ever justify the indiscriminate mass murder, rape, kidnapping and torture that occurred one year ago. Since then, too few have been able to make it back to their loved ones - “this house will continue to do what we can to help bring them all home”, she said. The 7 October attacks triggered a cycle of war, death and devastation that has seen thousands killed in Gaza, and instability across the region, President Metsola stated. In remembering all those lost and taken, the President added that “Parliament’s calls for the immediate release of the remaining hostages will remain steadfast, our calls for ceasefire will remain resolute, and our efforts towards de-escalation will remain strong.” The work for real, dignified, long-term and sustainable peace will remain unwavering, she concluded. MEPs held a minute of silence in memory of all the innocent lives lost.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20241003IPR24419/opening-7-10-october-plenary-session>

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

Statement by PACE President Theodoros Rousopoulos on the anniversary of the 7 October attacks

“It has been one year since the horrific acts of terror carried out by Hamas against Israel, killing over 1,250 men, women and children in a brutal attack, and taking over 250 people hostage,” PACE President Theodoros Rousopoulos said today.

“I reiterate the Assembly’s unequivocal condemnation of these atrocities and the abduction of innocent people, and the need for the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages.

After one year of war in Gaza, the civilian toll continues to rise — marked by hunger, displacement, desperation, and a devastating loss of life. Civilian populations must be protected, with rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access as a matter of absolute priority.

The ongoing cycle of attacks and retaliations in the region has heightened the danger of unchecked escalation. We call on all parties to act responsibly, show restraint, and urgently engage in dialogue to de-escalate the situation.

This past year has been filled with indescribable suffering and profound grief. Continued efforts and collective resolve are needed to secure the return of the hostages, end the violence, and find a lasting solution to the conflict that secures a shared peace and future for Israelis, Palestinians, and the wider region.”

<https://pace.coe.int/en/news/9636/statement-by-pace-president-theodoros-rousopoulos-on-the-anniversary-of-the-7-october-attacks>

Council of Europe

One year after the Hamas attack, Secretary General commemorates victims, reiterates absolute condemnation of terrorism and calls for hostages to be freed immediately

One year on from the horrific Hamas attack on Israeli civilians and civilians of other nationalities, we reiterate our absolute condemnation of terrorism, commemorate those who lost their lives and solemnly call for the prompt release of the hostages still held in Gaza. The Hamas attack has caused immense suffering. We mourn all the innocent victims on both sides and call for an immediate ceasefire that would pave the way for a just and lasting peace, which the people of this region have long deserved.

This conflict has strained our democracies. Anti-Semitic acts have increased on an unprecedented scale, and acts of anti-Muslim hatred have also soared. Our societies are on the brink of dangerous divisions. In this explosive situation, we must welcome the remarkable action of our member states to block the road to extremes. Considering these challenging circumstances, Europe must unite around its democratic values.

The Council of Europe will not shy away from the dangers of extremism and will not accept hatred or fear. We will continue to fight resolutely against discrimination in all its forms. Like our founding fathers, we will stand firm and calm against the ideologies of hatred that undermine the very fabric of our societies. Then as now, we aspire to peace, reject violence and call for respect for our differences. We believe that living together in our democracies is more important today than ever before.”

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/d%C3%A9claration-du-secr%C3%A9taire-g%C3%A9n%C3%A9ral-alain-berset>

United Nations

‘It Is Time for the Release of the Hostages, Time to Silence the Guns,’ Says Secretary-General, Marking One Year since 7 October Attacks

... Today marks one year since the horrific events of 7 October 2023 when Hamas launched a large-scale terror attack in Israel killing over 1,250 Israelis and foreign nationals, including children and women. More than 250 people were abducted and taken to Gaza, including many women and children.

The 7 October 2023 attack scarred souls — and on this day we remember all those who were brutally killed and suffered unspeakable violence — including sexual violence — as they were simply living their lives.

This is a day for the global community to repeat in the loudest voice our utter condemnation of the abhorrent acts of Hamas, including the taking of hostages.

Over the course of the past year, I have met with the families of hostages, learned more about the lives, hopes and dreams of their loved ones, and shared in their anguish and pain.

I cannot imagine the torture they are forced to endure every day. I demand once again the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Until then, Hamas must allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit those hostages.

The seventh of October is naturally a day to focus on the events of that awful day. I express my solidarity with all the victims and their loved ones.

Since 7 October, a wave of shocking violence and bloodshed has erupted. The war that has followed the terrible attacks of one year ago continues to shatter lives and inflict profound human suffering for Palestinians in Gaza, and now the people of Lebanon. I have spoken out about this often and clearly.

It is time for the release of the hostages. Time to silence the guns. Time to stop the suffering that has engulfed the region. Time for peace, international law and justice. The

United Nations is fully committed to achieving those goals. In the midst of so much bloodshed and division, we must hold on to hope.

Let us honour the memory of the victims, reunite families and end the suffering and violence in the whole Middle East. And let us never stop working for a lasting solution to the conflict where Israel, Palestine and all other countries of the region can finally live in peace and dignity and with respect for one another.

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22403.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

7 October: UN experts call for end of violence and accountability after year of human loss and suffering and blatant disregard for international law

... “The past year has seen a devastating escalation in human suffering, with severe consequences for the Palestinian people, Israelis and the entire Middle East region. We express today, our heartfelt compassion to all victims and their families, especially the children, who should have been spared the scourge of war, and recall the heavy human cost of this conflict and immediate need for peace and accountability.

On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups killed approximately 1,200 persons in Israel, of whom at least 809 were civilians, including women, children and older persons. On this day, 252 people were abducted and taken to Gaza as hostages and of these nearly 100 remain in captivity.

The crimes committed on that day, including murder, hostage-taking, and sexual violence against women and girls, amount to serious violations of international law and constitute [war crimes](#), and possibly [crimes against humanity](#).

The ensuing military attack by Israel on Gaza has killed approximately 42,000 Palestinians in Gaza, including 17,000 children injured more than 97,000, many with lifelong injuries, as of 6 October 2024, and displaced nearly 2 million. The majority of those killed are [children](#) and [women](#), while an estimated 10,000 Palestinian bodies remain under the rubble with no possibility to retrieve and identify them to bring solace to grieving families. In the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, nearly 700 have been killed including 176 children. Israeli Forces also killed 986 healthcare workers, humanitarian workers, among them 225 UNRWA staff, and 126 journalists, as well as destroyed hospitals, schools, and refugee camps, leaving no safe place in Gaza.

The serious violations of international law such as, [murder](#), intentional targeting of civilian objects, disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks, [starvation](#), forcible transfer, arbitrary displacement, sexual violence, persecution, and outrages against life and dignity, including disrespect for the dead, committed by Israeli Forces since the beginning of the war in Gaza in October 2023 constitute war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. As a result, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) warned there was a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the right of Palestinians to be protected from genocide.

International judicial mechanisms, the UN and the international community should thoroughly, impartially, and independently investigate these grave violations, establish chain of command, prosecute and punish perpetrators, and ensure full reparation for victims and their families. Parties to the conflict must allow prompt and full access to evidence to establish facts and ensure accountability for perpetrators.

As the Secretary General stated nearly one year ago, the violence on 7 October did not happen in a vacuum. Obscured by false narratives, and years of discrimination, racial segregation and/or apartheid perpetrated against the Palestinian people, as recognised by the ICJ on 19 July 2024, this war risks leading to the erasure of Palestinian presence in the occupied Palestinian territory and an endless reality of insecurity and enormous suffering for the Palestinian and Israeli people alike.

We continue to urge the international community to ensure an end to [transfers of arms](#) by

States and companies to Israel, including through proxies, to avoid responsibility in war crimes and crimes against humanity by complicity.

We are alarmed by the expansion of the violence and hostilities in other countries in the region, in particular the escalation in Lebanon, which has so far resulted in the death of more than 2,000 persons, including women and children, the injury of more than 9,500 persons, and displacement of hundreds of thousands. This spillover of hostilities blatantly undermines international law and the UN Charter and endangers peace and stability of a region that has suffered decades of conflicts.

All parties to the conflict with the support of the international community must:

- Immediately cease hostilities and guarantee safety and security of civilian populations, including through full compliance with UN resolutions and the [ICJ provisional measures](#) to Israel and Gaza;
- Immediately and unconditionally release all hostages detained in Gaza, and thousands of Palestinians arbitrarily held in Israeli detention;
- Establish the fate and whereabouts of victims of enforced disappearances and acts tantamount to;
- Ensure unhindered access of humanitarian relief and humanitarian workers in Gaza;
- Allow full and unrestricted access to UN independent experts to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, to conduct investigations into violations of international law, in particular arbitrary killings, enforced disappearances, and torture;
- Immediately and unconditionally return dead bodies and human remains retained by parties to the conflict, including hundreds of Palestinian bodies withheld for decades, and seek the assistance of international community to retrieve, identify and return bodies to families;
- Halt escalation to other countries in the region;
- Fully cooperate with the international community to realise the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, as necessary to pave the way for sustainable peace and accountability and turn the page on decades of violence and injustice, including through the comprehensive implementation of the [ICJ advisory opinion](#) 2024.

The experts reiterated their availability to assist in genuine efforts to establish truth, justice and reparation for violations of international law in the context of this conflict.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/7-october-un-experts-call-end-violence-and-accountability-after-year-human>

UNRWA

Message from UNRWA Commissioner General Philippe Lazzarini

One year on the horrendous massacre carried out by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on southern Israel, killing more than 1,250 people and taking 250 hostages.

Since that day, the Middle East is sinking deeper into conflict, killing and sheer horrors.

Twelve months of unspeakable suffering for the hostages in Gaza, their families left in limbo and a society deeply traumatized.

Twelve months of brutal war have transformed the Gaza Strip into an unrecognizable sea of rubble, and a graveyard for tens of thousands of people, among them far too many children.

One year has passed and not a day goes by without families in Gaza being subjected to unspeakable suffering, as forced displacement, disease, hunger, and death have become the daily norm for 2 million people trapped in a bombed- out and besieged enclave.

A year of profound loss, grief and suffering.

A year of dehumanization and disregard of international law; a free fall descent into barbarism.

In Gaza, civilians continue to bear the brunt of the war. More than 220 UNRWA team members have been killed: the highest death toll in the history of the United Nations.

Children have been the first and most to suffer. Beyond the killing and injury, every child in Gaza is traumatized many with life-long invisible scars. More than 650,000 children are losing another year of learning. Instead of being in classrooms, they are sifting through the rubble in despair and fear.

The destruction of essential infrastructure has reached catastrophic levels.

More than two thirds of UNRWA buildings have been hit and deemed unusable, the vast majority while sheltering displaced people under the UN flag.

In the West Bank, civilians continued to endure destruction, fear and anxiety amid an escalation and increase in operations by the Israeli military and clashes with Palestinian armed groups. Poverty is deepening as people lose income and as movement restrictions are reinforced.

The expansion of the war into Lebanon is wreaking havoc on civilians, many forced to relive traumas of the past.

It is time for courage: a deal that would finally bring a ceasefire and respite to people in Gaza, Lebanon, Israel and the wider region.

It is time to put the guns down after decades of killing and immense pain.

It is time to release all hostages safely to their families, who are living through unbearable uncertainty.

It is time to bring a standard flow of basic humanitarian supplies including to the hungry and sick in Gaza.

There are no winners in wars. The only way out is through a diplomatic and peaceful solution.

It's time to heal the wounds. It's time to choose peace!

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/message-unrwa-commissioner-general-philippe-lazzarini>

UNIFIL

Joint Statement of UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander Lt. Gen. Aroldo Lázaro (8 October 2024)

One year since near-daily exchanges of fire commenced across the Blue Line, initiated by Hizbullah propelling rockets into Shab'a Farms, in violation of the cessation of hostilities and Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). One year in which far too many lives have been lost, uprooted, and devastated, while civilians on both sides of the Blue Line are left wanting for security and stability. One year in which our repeated appeals for restraint, the protection of civilians and adherence to international humanitarian law, a return to the cessation of hostilities, and a political process anchored in the implementation of 1701 have gone unheeded.

Today, one year later, the near-daily exchanges of fire have escalated into a relentless military campaign whose humanitarian impact is nothing short of catastrophic. With constant Israeli bombardment now part and parcel of daily life in Lebanon, and Hizbullah launching rocket and missile barrages at Israel, far too many people are paying an unimaginable price – with many killed, many more wounded, and hundreds of thousands displaced.

To state the obvious: every missile or rocket launched, bomb dropped, and ground raid conducted pulls the parties further away from the vision set forth in resolution 1701 (2006), as well as from the conditions necessary for the enduring security of civilians on both sides

of the Blue Line. What is also clear is that further violence and destruction will neither solve the underlying issues nor make anyone safer in the long run. Quite the opposite. A negotiated solution is the only pathway to restore the security and stability that civilians on both sides so desperately want and deserve. The time to act accordingly is now.

<https://unifil.unmissions.org/joint-statement-un-special-coordinator-lebanon-jeanine-hennis-plasschaert-and-unifil-head-mission-1>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

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Foreign Affairs

See also Commons written answer 5548 “Terrorism: Iran” that is included in the Home Affairs section above.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Freedom of Religion or Belief: UK Statement to the OSCE Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, 2024

... Human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent, mutually reinforcing and crucial to securing lasting peace and security in the world. With more countries engaged in conflict than at any time since the Second World War, we must work harder to ensure respect for human rights.

Vibrant and diverse civic spaces where people can access and enjoy their rights to the freedoms of peaceful assembly, association, and expression are foundational to governance and democracy. A world where civic space continues to decline is one which is less secure.

Similarly, religious intolerance and persecution fuels instability, impeding both conflict prevention and resolution. However, when freedom of religion or belief is respected, and interreligious dialogue is promoted, we can build trust and understanding between communities, helping to secure sustainable peace. ...

In putting into practice our commitment to Freedom of Religion or Belief, we must learn the lessons of the past. The global surge in both antisemitism and Islamophobia since October 7th 2023 highlights that there is still much work to be done. All forms of religious hatred are completely unacceptable.

Antisemitism has no place in society, and the UK is determined to tackle it in all its forms. We have committed further funding to the Community Security Trust, enabling them to continue their vital work in protecting UK Jewish communities until 2028.

Alongside domestic action, the UK proudly holds the presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance this year. Our presidency’s theme is “In Plain Sight”, drawing attention to the fact that the Holocaust did not happen in a dark corner. ...

We are also taking action to support Muslim communities in the UK. Islamophobia is abhorrent and has no place in society. Our Protective Security for Mosques Scheme provides physical protective security measures in both mosques and associated Muslim faith community centres. The Government is also committed to supporting programmes which monitor and support victims of Islamophobia. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/freedom-of-religion-or-belief-uk-statement-to-the-osce-warsaw-human-dimension-conference-2024>

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Other Relevant Information

European Commission

Message on Rosh Hashanah from Vice-President Margaritis Schinas

I would like to send my warmest wishes for a peaceful, joyful and healthy new year 5785 to all Jews in Europe and around the world.

Jewish life shall thrive, not hide. We are determined to ensure that Jews in Europe see a future for themselves and can go about their lives free from security concerns, free from antisemitism and in line with their religious and cultural traditions.

However, the recent months have been particularly difficult for European Jews. Soon it will be one year that we will commemorate the deadliest pogrom committed against Jews since the Shoah, among the victims were many EU citizens. The European Commission strongly condemned the attacks and expressed its full solidarity to Israel and its people. European and national authorities stand with their Jewish communities in these difficult times. Our thoughts are with the hostages and their families, hoping and working for their release.

Yet, the surge of antisemitic acts has been skyrocketing and is reminiscent of the darkest time in history in Europe: Jewish people violently attacked, Jewish students harassed and unsafe on university campuses, arson attacks on synagogues, Jewish stores vandalized, cemeteries desecrated, demonstrators chanting hate slogans against Jews. These despicable acts are simply unacceptable, we condemned them in the strongest possible terms and they must be prosecuted. ...

Because Jewish life is an inextricable part of Europe's identity, it is part of Europe's DNA. So, any form of antisemitism is incompatible with what the European Union stands for – it goes against our values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, or the respect for human rights, including the – constitutionally protected – rights of minorities. Every form of antisemitism is an attack on us all and the model of society we represent. An assault to our liberal, democratic and pluralistic order. A threat to our ability to coexist in a Europe that strives to attain its unity precisely by embracing, respecting and valuing its diversity.

Rosh Hashana is a time of reflect on our past actions and define the direction we want to take for the new year. A new year with countries and people uniting to actively fight antisemitism and pursue a positive agenda for fostering Jewish life. On behalf of the European Commission, I wish you Shanah Tova U'Metukah!

To read the full press release see

<https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/849090/en>

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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>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3769>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Palestine Statehood (Recognition)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3771>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3765>

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-bil>

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

Northern Ireland Assembly: Inquiry into Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Schools (closing date 29 October 2024)

<https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2022-2027/education/inquiries/inquiry-into-relationship-and-sexuality-education-rse-in-schools/>

Northern Ireland Executive: Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 (closing date 4 November 2024)

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/PfG-consultation>

Curriculum and Assessment Review [England] (closing date 22 November 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/curriculum-and-assessment-team/curriculum-and-assessment-review-call-for-evidence/>

Equality and Human Rights Commission Code of practice for services, public functions and associations (closing date 3 January 2025)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/code-practice-services-public-functions-and-associations-consultation>

Burial and Cremation [Law Commission] (closing date 9 January 2025)

<https://lawcom.gov.uk/project/burial-and-cremation/>

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