



Foreign &
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Office

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UK appoints Envoy for post-Holocaust Issues

Foreign Secretary William Hague has appointed Sir Andrew Burns as the United Kingdom's first Envoy for post-Holocaust Issues.

Sir Andrew, a former UK Ambassador to Israel, will be responsible for leading the Government's efforts on a range of important post-Holocaust work. This includes driving forward implementation of the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets, resolving outstanding issues related to property and art restitution, and ensuring the UK remains at the forefront of discussions on the vital work of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research and of the International Tracing Service.

The Foreign Secretary said:

"The UK is determined to preserve the memory of the Holocaust for future generations. Sir Andrew's appointment will ensure that we continue to support those working to right past wrongs and remain at the forefront of international discussions, to make sure that the lessons of this terrible period in our history are never forgotten."

"As a former UK Ambassador to Israel and chairman of the Anglo-Israel Association, Sir Andrew's wealth of experience means he is ideally placed to tackle the challenges this post presents."

Sir Andrew Burns said:

"I am deeply honoured by the confidence the Government places in me to develop and drive forward policy on such a wide range of post-Holocaust issues."

The UK already plays a leading and active role in promoting Holocaust education, remembrance and research, in tackling and resolving outstanding issues and claims and in raising public awareness of the continuing relevance of the lessons and legacy of that terrible moment in European history. I shall make it an early priority to talk to a broad range of experts and others with an interest in or knowledge of post-Holocaust subjects, in Whitehall and Parliament and in the wider community, in order to understand as well as I can the scope and substance of the issues involved and can develop a properly co-ordinated and strategic way forward in international discussions."

Anne Webber, Co-Chair of the Commission for Looted Art in Europe, and Michael Newman, Director of the Association of Jewish Refugees, said:

"We have worked closely with the Government to achieve this historic post and very much look forward to working with Sir Andrew at this crucial time with several post-Holocaust issues requiring urgent attention and decisive leadership."

Sir Andrew Burns' CV:

Sir Andrew Burns is currently Chair of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) and Chairman of the Council of Royal Holloway, University of London. He also chairs the Executive Committee of the Anglo-Israel Association.

Career

2005 to 2006: BBC International Governor

2000 to 2003: British High Commissioner to Canada

1997 to 2000: British Consul-General to the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau

1995 to 1997: Deputy Under Secretary of State, responsible for the Government's bilateral and trade relations outside Europe

1992 to 1995: British Ambassador to Israel

1990 to 1992: Under-Secretary for Asia

1988 to 1990: Press Secretary to the Foreign Secretary and Head of the FCO News Department

1983 to 1986: Information Counsellor and Head of British Information Services in the United States

Notes to editors:

1. As part of its ongoing work on post-Holocaust issues, the UK government provides funding to the Holocaust Educational Trust "Lessons from Auschwitz project". This aim of this project is to achieve the participation of two students (aged 16-18) from every school/sixth form college in England in visits to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Since 2006, almost 6,000 students and over 1,000 teachers have taken part.
2. In June 2009 the Czech Government hosted the Prague Conference on Holocaust Era Assets to assess progress on Holocaust Era Assets restitution since the 1997 London Nazi Gold Conference and the 1998 Washington Conference. Issues covered included looted art, Judaica, property, social welfare for survivors and Holocaust remembrance and research. Forty-six countries attended. The key outcome of the Conference was the Terezin Declaration, a political and non-legally binding document that set out measures and principles for advancing the various restitution issues.
3. The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) was initiated in 1998 by Swedish Prime Minister Persson, President Clinton and Prime Minister Tony Blair to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research both nationally and internationally. When the Stockholm Declaration on the Holocaust was adopted in 2000 it became the Charter of the Task Force. There are currently 28 member countries.
4. The main work of the (ITF) is to finance projects aimed at improving Holocaust education, remembrance and research. Examples of projects financed by the Task Force are teacher training courses, travelling exhibitions, memorials, teaching materials and academic research. Whilst the focus of the Task Force is on the Holocaust, the aim is to spread an understanding of the forces that led to it, and the lessons and relevance for today.

5. The International Tracing Service was set up towards the end of the Second World War to discover and document the fate of victims of Nazi persecution and their families and to help individuals trace family members. It holds a unique archive of records from concentration camps and from post-war displaced persons' camps from the four Allied sectors, as well as the records of tracing enquiries made over the past 65 years. It responds to tracing requests, other humanitarian requests, and provides formal confirmation of persecution for compensation or pension purposes. It has also provided evidence for the prosecution of people alleged to have committed war crimes. It is based in Germany. The UK is one of the 11 member countries of its governing board.

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