



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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Our reference: MIN/107455/2017

Mia Hasenson-Gross
René Cassin
853 Finchley Road
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NW11 8LX

60h March 2017

Dear Mia Hasenson-Gross,

Thank you for your letter of 8 February to the Prime Minister regarding the UK being a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). I am replying as Minister responsible for human rights.

Let me start by saying that I very much agree with you about the significance of International Holocaust Memorial Day. Every year, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is proud to co-host a Holocaust memorial event with the Embassy of Israel. It provides us with an opportunity to mark the day and remember the victims, and to promote deeper understanding of post-Holocaust issues. As you will be aware, the Prime Minister too is personally committed to strengthening Holocaust education and remembrance.

The UK respects and seeks to bolster the rules based international system; we depend upon its strength and integrity. This is as true today as it was in the times you write about in your letter. The UN continues to be the primary body for international standard setting and monitoring on human rights worldwide. It contributes to early warning, upstream prevention, and helps shape and deliver our short and long term responses to foreign policy priorities. We are committed to working through the UN to protect and promote human rights, particularly through the Human Rights Council, to which we were re-elected for the 2017-2019 term. We also work through the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe and the Commonwealth on human rights objectives.

Your letter refers to the possibility of the UK withdrawing from the ECHR. The ECHR continues to be an important instrument to hold states parties to account for their protection of human rights and democratic freedoms, and adherence to the rule of law. The Government has no plans to withdraw from the ECHR.

If you would like more information about what the Government is doing to promote and protect human rights, you may wish to look at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Human Rights Report, which is available on our website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/human-rights-and-democracy-reports>

Yours sincerely,
Jayce Anelay

RT HON BARONESS ANELAY OF ST JOHNS DBE
Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the UN
Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict