Daily media briefing

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Fri, 27 Oct 2023

Brazen support for Hamas spreading across Britain since terror attack

A wave of brazen support for Hamas has swept Britain since the October 7 massacre in Israel, with extremist imams in Bradford and Manchester using their pulpits to openly attack Jews and lead prayers for a Hamas victory.

The Jewish Chronicle

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Protesters planning action outside Scientology's UK HQ during its 'greatest gathering'

Protesters are planning the largest UK demonstration against Scientology for 15 years, outside what the controversial organisation is calling its "greatest gathering".

The Guardian

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Chief Rabbi says British Jews are more fearful than at any time since 1945

Britain's Chief Rabbi has told ITV News that the Jewish community in the UK are more fearful for their safety than at any time since the end of World War II.

ITV

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Bishops' divisions over same-sex marriage exposed

Despite a majority of C of E bishops supporting allowing priests to enter into same-sex marriage, and the immediate adoption of stand-alone services of blessing for same-sex couples, the House of Bishops has voted to slow progress on both issues in the face of conservative hostility.

Church Times*

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Report: Quran-burning protester is ordered to leave Sweden but deportation on hold for now

Sweden reportedly withdrew the residence permit of an Iraqi man who staged a series of public desecrations of the Quran this year but put his deportation on hold, saying his life would be in danger if he were returned to Iraq.

Associated Press

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Priest kicked out of Jesuits for alleged abuse of women welcomed into Slovenia diocese

A famous priest-artist who was thrown out of the Jesuits after being accused of sexual, spiritual and psychological abuse of women has been accepted into a diocese in his native Slovenia, the latest twist in a case that has implicated the pope and laid bare the limits of the Vatican's in-house legal system.

Associated Press

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Australian Catholic church's insurer launches court bid to cover smaller share of abuse compensation

Facing significant financial turmoil due to the rising volume of abuse claims, the Catholic church insurer wants to establish a scheme that would stave off its own insolvency by paying church bodies only a fraction of the money owed to abuse survivors.

The Guardian

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Manual scavenging: The unending pain of India's lower caste sewer workers

Although the practice is banned in India, 'manual scavenging' is still commonplace - with people forced into it because of rigid caste rules and the lack of other livelihood options.

BBC

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Thu, 26 Oct 2023

Chinese Church is fastest-growing in the UK, study reveals

A survey of the community revealed a 29-per-cent growth in the Chinese Church in just two years.

Church Times*

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Keir Starmer ‘told MPs his visit to mosque could have been handled better’

Labour leader met group of Muslim politicians on Wednesday amid pressure to call for ceasefire in Gaza.

The Guardian

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Guardian has hit new low with ‘unbelievably crass’ Holocaust headline, says Board of Deputies

UK's largest Jewish organisation says the newspaper showed an 'astonishing lack of judgement'.

The Telegraph*

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UK accused of 'assault on free speech' with anti-BDS bill

The UK Government is "encouraging antisemitism" and stifling freedom of speech by pushing through legislation to ban public bodies from boycotting Israel, one of the UK's most senior Jewish MPs has said.

The National

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Czech Republic: Priest apologises for destroying kids ‘satanic’ Halloween pumpkins

Father Jaromir Smejkal, who has dubbed the October festival as a "Satanic feast" stamped on a display of Jack-o'-lanterns he spotted at a park near his church.

Premier Christian News

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US: Georgia supreme court upholds state’s six-week abortion ban

Ruling will allow ban, first passed in 2019, to stay in place while litigation continues.

The Guardian

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Wed, 25 Oct 2023

Former Church of England maternity home should be investigated, says Tim Farron

Former Liberal-Democrat leader, Tim Farron, has called for a police investigation into the deaths of unknown numbers of babies at a former church maternity home.

Church Times*

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Starmer accused of ‘gravely misrepresenting’ meeting with Muslim community

South Wales Islamic Centre apologises for the 'hurt and confusion' of hosting Labour leader.

The Telegraph*

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‘Promises to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir have been heard before’

"In 2005, following the July 7 London bombings, Tony Blair vowed to ban extremist groups such as the Islamist party Hizb ut-Tahrir", writes Sean O'Neill.

The Times*

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We wanted stronger backing from Welby, Palestinian Christians say

Palestinian Christians living in the West Bank have said that they are "utterly perplexed" by the Archbishop of Canterbury's public statements about the "situation in Palestine".

Church Times*

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East London teenager arrested on suspicion of Islamist terror and indecent image offences

A teenager has been arrested on suspicion of terrorism offences and possessing indecent images of a child.

ITV

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NI: New integrated school set to open

A new integrated post-primary school is to open in County Down, following a decision by the Department of Education's permanent secretary.

BBC

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France: church removes paedophile priest’s stained glass windows

A French church has finally bowed to demands to remove artworks by a paedophile priest who became known as the "Picasso of stained glass windows".

The Times*

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Pope accepts resignation of Polish bishop after gay orgy scandal in diocese

Vatican did not say why Grzegorz Kaszak was resigning, but priest from his diocese faced criminal investigation.

The Guardian

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Women will vote at a Vatican meeting for the first time

Critics have said that making women deacons is a slippery slope to making them priests, which would violate 2,000 years of church doctrine and undermine the church's authority.

New York Times*

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Tue, 24 Oct 2023

Shamima Begum’s legal fight reaches Court of Appeal

The 24-year-old previously lost a challenge against the decision to strip her of her citizenship on national security grounds.

ITV

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Former president of Methodist Conference banned from preaching for a year

It follows the conclusion of an investigation after concerns were raised about his safeguarding leadership as chair of district.

Premier Christian News

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Sunak draws up plans for more arrests at ‘jihad’ pro-Palestinian rallies

Rishi Sunak has declared that chants of "jihad" at protests were a threat to British democracy as plans were drawn up to make sure extremists are arrested at future rallies.

The Times*

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Parents have right to see sex education content, says minister

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan will tell English schools this week parents have a right to view the sex education material which is being taught.

BBC

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Salman Rushdie calls for defense of freedom of expression as he receives German prize

The author decried the current age as a time when freedom of expression is under attack by all sides, including from authoritarian and populist voices.

EuroNews

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Melbourne council ditches Christian prayer after concern about potential human rights breaches

Boroondara to stop using prayer at meetings after councillor says there should be separation of church and state.

The Guardian

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Campaign ‘to unite India and save its secular soul’

Journalist Puja Bhattacharjee on a movement to foster mutual understanding between Hindus and Muslims.

The Freethinker

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Ireland: Killer given two life sentences for 'unspeakable' murders

Yousef Palani told claimed homosexuality was "a sin, you wont find many Muslims gay and religious".

BBC

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Spain accuses priest of smuggling stolen treasures out of Ukraine

Police in Spain have recovered 11 pieces of ancient Ukrainian gold jewellery worth €60 million that were stolen after the Russian annexation of Crimea.

The Times*

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Mon, 23 Oct 2023

Met must explain decision over ‘jihad’ chant at protest, says minister

The Metropolitan police will be asked to explain to the home secretary, Suella Braverman, why they failed to take action against demonstrators who chanted about "jihad" in London at the weekend, the transport secretary, Mark Harper, has said.

The Guardian

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Antisemitic hate crimes in London up 1,350%, Met police say

There has been a 1,350% increase in hate crimes against Jewish people as the Middle East crisis erupted, the Metropolitan police have said, with no arrests so far in nine out of 10 alleged offences.

The Guardian

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How Iran is spreading disinformation in Britain

Ex-Labour MP Chris Williamson praises Hamas 'freedom fighters' on Iranian-funded show Palestinian Declassified — in just one example of Tehran's influence.

The Times*

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Tory Chief Whip disputes claims he 'vowed to crush the religious Right' amid rows over the conversion therapy ban

Tory Chief Whip Simon Hart was last night at the centre of extraordinary claims that he had vowed to 'crush the religious Right' amid rows over the conversion therapy ban and the nature of guidance to schools about pupils changing gender.

Daily Mail

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Woman feared being ‘cursed’ if she refused to hand toddler over for FGM – court

A woman feared being "cursed" if she failed to hand over a three-year-old British girl for female genital mutilation (FGM) in Kenya, a court has heard.

The National

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Russia ‘is whipping up’ extreme Islamist sentiment against Sweden

Russia is exploiting and fomenting a wave of Islamist propaganda against Sweden, the head of Sweden's counter-disinformation agency has said.

The Times*

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Oklahoma attorney general sues to stop US’s first public religious school

Oklahoma's Republican Attorney General Gentner Drummond on Friday sued to stop a state board from establishing and funding what would be the nation's first religious public charter school after the board ignored Drummond's warning that it would violate both the state and U.S. constitutions.

Associated Press

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Iran says girl who collapsed on Tehran metro is ‘brain dead’

A teenage Iranian girl who fell into a coma after an alleged altercation with morality police is now considered to be "brain dead", state media say.

BBC

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Fri, 20 Oct 2023

Pro-Palestine protests in UK ‘stirred up by Iranian and Hamas network’, says counter-extremism head

Pro-Palestine protests in the UK have been stirred up by a "sophisticated" Iranian and Hamas network operating within Britain, the Home Office's extremism tsar will warn on Thursday.

The Telegraph*

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Leaders of groups behind London pro-Palestinian march have links to Hamas

The police are under pressure to ban a pro-Palestinian march through central London after an investigation revealed that leaders in several of the groups behind it had links to Hamas.

The Jewish Chronicle

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Extremist clerics ‘must be banned from the UK’

The government must bar Muslim clerics who support beheading people for blasphemy from entering the UK, the counterextremism tsar has said.

The Times*

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Retired priest and author prohibited for life after admitting to inappropriate conduct

A co-founder of York Courses and a former General Synod member, the Revd John Young, is the second priest from one parish in the diocese of York to admit to inappropriate conduct and be banned for life from exercising clerical functions.

Church Times

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Ukrainian parliament votes to ban Orthodox Church over alleged links with Russia

The Ukrainian parliament gave initial approval on Thursday to a law that would ban the Ukrainian Orthodox Church after Kyiv accused it of collaborating with Russia following last year's invasion.

The Guardian

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France pays respects to teacher killed in school terror attack

A French teacher stabbed to death last week by an Islamist former pupil was to be laid to rest on Thursday, after a funeral in the northern city of Arras attended by President Emmanuel Macron.

France24

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Australia: High court to rule on Catholic church’s liability for abuse committed by paedophile priests

The Catholic church has won the right to challenge in the high court a landmark Victorian ruling forcing the church to take on greater liability for the actions of paedophile priests within its ranks.

The Guardian

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Mahsa Amini awarded EU's Sakharov human rights prize

The European Union has awarded its top human rights prize to Mahsa Amini and the Iranian "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement her death triggered.

BBC

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Thu, 19 Oct 2023

UK is ‘permissive environment’ for antisemitism, says extremism tsar

Britain has become a "permissive environment" for anti-Israel extremism and antisemitism because of mass migration and a lack of integration, the UK's counter-extremism commissioner has warned.

The Times*

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FGM: British girl, 3, mutilated on Kenya trip, Old Bailey hears

A woman has appeared at the Old Bailey accused of handing over a three-year-old British girl for female genital mutilation in Kenya.

BBC

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