



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office



Department  
for International  
Development

Mr Owen Griffiths  
Chairman  
The Beau Bassin Jewish Detainees Memorial and Information Centre  
St Martin, Beau Bassin  
Mauritius

31 July 2020

*Dear Mr Griffiths,*

I am writing as the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights ahead of the commemorative ceremony taking place on Monday, 10 August 2020, at the St Martin Jewish Cemetery to remember the more than one and a half thousand Jews who were detained in Mauritius in the 1940s.

During this significant year for Holocaust commemoration, it is important to recognise the suffering endured by those who fled persecution in Nazi-occupied Europe, as well as acknowledge the hardship that many Jews, and members of other communities, continued to face after they left Europe. As the UK's Minister of State for Human Rights, I would like to pay tribute to the Beau Bassin Jewish Detainees Memorial and Information Centre for their work to commemorate the history of Jewish refugees in Mauritius. As the former Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt MP, alluded to last year, there are open questions about whether things could have been done differently, such as the 1939 White Paper, which capped the number of visas issued to Jews wanting to go to the British mandate of Palestine. I would like to commit personally to you that the UK will continue our work to remember and honour all victims and survivors around the world.

We believe that it is essential both to remember those who suffered, and to strive for a better future. Earlier this year, I spoke at an International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance event, during which I reaffirmed the UK's commitment to honouring the victims of Nazi persecution, as well as pledged that the victims and survivors of the Holocaust would never be forgotten.

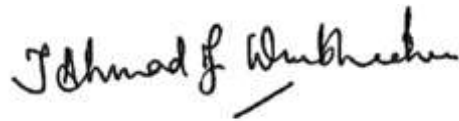
Under the leadership of the UK's Special Envoy for Post Holocaust Issues, Lord Eric Pickles, the UK has continued to strengthen, advance and promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance around the world. This includes creating a new Holocaust memorial and learning centre in the heart of London to honour the six million Jewish people murdered, and all other victims of Nazi persecution,

including the Roma, LGBT and disabled people. We must not fail in our collective efforts to remember the horrors of the Holocaust, as well as the fate of those who fled Europe. I personally remain totally committed to this.

The British High Commissioner to Mauritius will represent the UK Government at the commemoration event on 10 August. I am sure that the ceremony will be a fitting commemoration to all those who suffered while detained in Mauritius.

I am copying this letter to Lord Pickles for information.

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "T. Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**  
Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth  
Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict