

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary statement on Gaza Flotilla

The Foreign Secretary William Hague has called on the Government of Israel to open all crossings for aid to enter Gaza and deplored the loss of life during the interception of the Gaza Flotilla. In a statement this morning the Foreign Secretary said:

"I deplore the loss of life during the interception of the Gaza Flotilla. Our Embassy is in urgent contact with the Israeli Government. We are asking for more information and urgent access to any UK nationals involved. We have consistently advised against attempting to access Gaza in this way, because of the risks involved. But at the same time, there is a clear need for Israel to act with restraint and in line with international obligations. It will be important to establish the facts about this incident, and especially whether enough was done to prevent deaths and injuries.

This news underlines the need to lift the restrictions on access to Gaza, in line with UNSCR 1860. The closure is unacceptable and counter-productive. There can be no better response from the international community to this tragedy than to achieve urgently a durable resolution to the Gaza crisis. I call on the Government of Israel to open the crossings to allow unfettered access for aid to Gaza, and address the serious concerns about the deterioration in the humanitarian and economic situation and about the effect on a generation of young Palestinians."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22300860>

United Nations

Secretary-General 'shocked' by deadly raid on Gaza aid flotilla

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today expressed his shock at the deadly raid on boats loaded with relief supplies headed for Gaza, calling on Israel to fully explain its actions. According to media reports, early this morning in international waters, Israeli forces raided the six-ship aid convoy, also carrying hundreds of activists, with more than ten people having been killed. "I condemn this violence," Mr. Ban said ... "It is vital that there is a full investigation to determine exactly how this bloodshed took place," he said. "I believe Israel must urgently provide a full explanation."

The Security Council is scheduled to meet this afternoon to discuss the incident, and Mr. Ban said that the League of Arab States could also be holding an urgent session on the matter. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34863&Cr=gaza&Cr1=>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN human rights chief condemns violent interception of Gaza aid flotilla

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay ... condemned the Israeli military interception, in international waters, of a flotilla of ships carrying aid to the blockaded Gaza Strip, which reportedly led to several deaths and numerous injuries, called for an immediate and credible independent inquiry, and urged the lifting of the blockade. "We need to establish exactly what happened. However, nothing can justify the appalling outcome of this operation, which reportedly took place in international waters, ... I unequivocally condemn what appears to be disproportionate use of force, resulting in the killing and wounding of so many people attempting to bring much-needed aid to the people of Gaza, who have now been enduring a blockade for more than three years."

The High Commissioner called for an immediate and fully independent inquiry into today's operation and killings. "When people are killed there must be serious investigations, and there must be accountability" ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/media.aspx?IsMediaPage=true>

Gaza aid convoy killings: "Those responsible must be held criminally accountable"

The UN Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Richard Falk, urged the international community to bring to justice those responsible for the killing of some 16 unarmed peace activist, when Israeli armed commandos stormed a convoy of ships carrying aid to Gaza. "Israel is guilty of shocking behavior by using deadly weapons against unarmed civilians on ships that were situated in the high seas where freedom of navigation exists, according to the law of the seas," Mr. Falk said. "It is essential that those Israelis responsible for this lawless and murderous behavior, including political leaders who issued the orders, be held criminally accountable for their wrongful acts. ... I find this latest instance of Israeli military lawlessness to create a situation of regional and global emergency. Unless prompt and decisive action is taken to challenge the Israeli approach to Gaza all of us will be complicit in criminal policies that are challenging the survival of an entire beleaguered community."

Mr. Falk urged the world community "to take urgent action in response to this flagrant flouting of international law. It is time to insist on the end of the blockade of Gaza. The worldwide campaign of boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel is now a moral and political imperative, and needs to be supported and strengthened everywhere."

To read the full press release see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10080&LanglD=E>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

Scottish Parliament

End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

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Consultations

** new or updated

Revised Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (England and Wales only) (closes 15 June 2010)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1671&external=no&menu=1>

Continuing need for a controlled activity category in the Vetting and Barring Scheme (England and Wales only) (closes 17 June 2010)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1710&external=no&menu=1>

Reform of the coroner system (closes 1 July 2010)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/reform-coroner-system.htm>

Amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 (closes 15 July 2010)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/cons-2010-pathogens-toxins/consultation-paper2835.pdf?view=Binary>

Welsh Assembly Review of Standing Orders (closes 16 July 2010)

http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-bc-home/bus-committees-third-bc-comm/bc3_inq_so.htm

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