

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

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United Nations

UN envoy warns of dire crisis as Gaza faces power cuts, gallons of raw sewage pouring into the sea

The United Nations Middle East envoy ... cautioned that unless urgent measures are taken to de-escalate the crisis now spiralling out of control in the Gaza Strip, there will be devastating consequences for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

"In Gaza, we are [walking into another crisis](#) with our eyes wide open," the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, told the Security Council in New York.

The senior UN official noted that the humanitarian situation has worsened since March, when Hamas set up a parallel government institution to run affairs in the enclave resulting in an "intra-Palestinian political tug-of-war." He called for compromise, the implementation of intra-Palestinian agreements and the end of closures.

Of particular concern is the "unprecedented" energy crisis after the lone power plant was shut over a taxation dispute between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, which took over the Gaza Strip in 2007.

Combined with downed power lines from Egypt and possible restrictions on purchase of Israeli electricity, most Palestinians in Gaza receive only about four hours of electricity per day. ...

The lack of power is also preventing sewage from being treated. The equivalent of 40 Olympic-size swimming pools of raw sewage is being dumped into the Mediterranean Sea on a daily basis. ...

Noting that the deteriorating conditions in Gaza and the West Bank only fuel anger and instability, Mr. Mladenov urged all sides to forge a genuine reconciliation.

"If Israelis and Palestinians hope to extract themselves from the immeasurable burden this conflict has wrought, they must be willing to take the painful steps that will ultimately lead to peace," he said. "Neither side can afford another missed opportunity."

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56851#.WSsIJBn96nY>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Press briefing note on Gaza

... We condemn the execution of three men by the authorities in Gaza yesterday. The men were convicted by a special so-called "field military court" of involvement in the murder of Hamas leader Mazen Al Faqhaa on 24 March, as well as on charges of

“collaboration with an enemy party”. The executions amount to an arbitrary deprivation of life.

International law sets very stringent conditions for the application of the death penalty, including meticulous compliance with fair trial standards. This trial does not appear to have met these standards. The “field military court” allows no possibility of appeal or clemency, in breach of international law. Two of the men were civilians and should not have been tried by a military court. Article 109 of the Palestinian Basic Law requires that executions be carried out after the approval of President Mahmoud Abbas. This law too was ignored. We are also appalled by the public and celebratory nature of the executions. Authorities in Gaza have now carried out 28 executions since the Hamas takeover in 2007, nine of them in the last 12 months.

We reiterate our call to the authorities in Gaza to desist from carrying out further executions; to end the practice of trying civilians before military courts; and to comply with all of its obligations under international law. The UN opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances. We call on the State of Palestine to immediately establish an official moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21664&LangID=E>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law (closing date 18 July 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

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