

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Social Media: Radicalism

**Jim Cunningham (Labour)** [142759] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent meetings he has had with leading social media companies to discuss the prevalence, removal and prevention of hate speech and other extreme content on social media platforms.

**Margot James:** Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with social media companies on a range of issues including the removal of hate speech and extreme content. Details of ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the Gov.uk website.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-10/142759/>

### Scottish Parliament Written Answer

#### Funeral and wedding celebrants

**S5W-16397 Gail Ross (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government what plans it has for the introduction of regulation in relation to the practice of celebrants performing funerals and weddings.

**Angela Constance:** There are no plans to regulate celebrants performing funerals. In relation to marriage and civil partnership, the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 amended the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 and the Civil Partnership Act 2004. As a result, the Scottish Ministers have powers to lay down qualifying requirements for religious and belief bodies solemnising marriage and registering civil partnership to meet. These powers have not yet been used but the Scottish Government did issue an initial discussion paper in 2014 <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00459045.pdf>

Before laying down any qualifying requirements, the Scottish Government would need to carry out further consultation with religious and belief bodies, local authority registrars and other interested organisations.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-16397>

TOP

## House of Commons Oral Answers

### Israel-Palestine Peace Process

7. **Matt Western (Labour):** What recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on prospects for the peace process in Israel and Palestine. [905287]

11. **Jim Cunningham (Labour):** What recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on prospects for the peace process in Israel and Palestine. [905291]

**The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt)** At this highly sensitive time in the region, there is an urgent need to restart the peace process between Israel and Palestine. We regularly press both parties to resume direct negotiations towards the two-state solution.

**Matt Western:** Last week, the Secretary of State suggested that President Trump could be in line for a Nobel peace prize. Does the Minister welcome the move by the US to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem, and does he agree with the White House today that the 52 Palestinians killed and more than 2,200 wounded in yesterday's violence in Gaza were the responsibility of Hamas?

**Alistair Burt:** In answer to the first question, our position is known: we did not agree with the decision, which is a sovereign decision, of both the United States and Israel to move the embassy. We have no plans to do anything similar. In relation to the second question, there is an urgent question after Question Time, and we will go into the difficult circumstances of the past few weeks. I will be happy to deal with that question then.

**Jim Cunningham:** May I push the Minister a little? Why has he not called for the United Nations Security Council to be recalled so that it can look at this situation? Does he agree with the Secretary-General that there should be an inquiry into what has been happening over the last six or seven weeks?

**Alistair Burt:** The House may not yet be aware, but there will be a UN Security Council meeting this afternoon or this evening in relation to this matter. The UK has already said that it supports an independent investigation into the circumstances of what has been happening, and we will continue to take that position.

**Hugo Swire (Conservative):** The simple truth is that the realignment of power in the middle east between Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and their now closer friendship with Israel in this increasingly Sunni-Shi'a divide has left the Palestinians marginalised, and in danger of being marginalised further. Will my right hon. Friend, following the 100th anniversary of the Balfour declaration, restate categorically the United Kingdom's commitment to the Palestinian people and rule out moving the British embassy to Jerusalem?

**Alistair Burt:** In answer to the second part of my right hon. Friend's question, as I have indicated, that is the United Kingdom's declared position: we are not moving our embassy. On the wider issues, as we will discuss later, the United Kingdom's commitment remains to a just settlement of this issue which recognises the need to respond to Palestinians' concern at the same time as ensuring the safety and security and the existence of the state of Israel. That remains our position.

**Paul Masterton (Conservative):** When the Hamas Prime Minister has said, "We will take down the border and we will tear out their hearts from their bodies," what are this Government doing to build international pressure on Hamas to renounce violence and disarm?

**Alistair Burt:** The United Kingdom regards Hamas as a terrorist organisation. It is proscribed and we have no dealings with it. It speaks for itself in relation to its threat to the state of Israel, and that should always be remembered in issues

where Hamas is involved and is exerting pressure on the population of Gaza to do its bidding.

**Stephen Gethins (SNP):** Does the Minister agree with the Foreign Secretary that Trump's Jerusalem embassy move is a "moment of opportunity" for peace?

**Alistair Burt:** I always agree with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, because all circumstances in the region, and even the tragedies of yesterday—we will get on to this—have to be used as an opportunity for a springboard to peace, rather than further confrontation. We have made our view clear on the embassy. We did not agree with it, but it is a reality now. It will not be our position, and we will continue to work for peace in the region.

**Stephen Gethins:** Yesterday was the worst day of violence in Gaza for four years. Will the Minister look at yesterday's violence and agree with me that the embassy move was reckless and irresponsible and stoked tension? Does he also agree, in terms of long-term peace, that there is a need for an impartial and independent investigation?

**Alistair Burt:** In relation to the second part of the question, I have made it clear that the UK supports an independent investigation into what has happened, and I repeat: the move of the United States embassy yesterday was not supported by the United Kingdom. We do not see that as being conducive at present to peace in the region, and the timing, of course, was incredibly difficult.

**John Howell (Conservative):** The Minister has already mentioned the importance of face-to-face negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Would he please say how important that is for the future of the area?

**Alistair Burt:** The events of yesterday were the culmination of many things, but one of things they were the culmination of was the failure of respective leaders over time to grapple with the situation and to realise how urgent and desperate it has become. The situation in Palestine and Gaza and the occupied territories will not simply be managed; it will get worse unless it is grasped and something is done to make it better.

**Liz McInnes (Labour):** At this moment of abject crisis, following yesterday's events in Gaza and west Jerusalem, the Palestinian people are sorely pressed to retain hope and faith in a two-state solution. Will the Foreign Secretary give them some hope and faith today by choosing this moment officially to recognise the state of Palestine and will he lead a global effort to persuade other countries to do the same?

**Alistair Burt:** We have said before that we will recognise the state of Palestine at a time when it is most conducive to securing peace in the area, but the hon. Lady is absolutely correct in saying that the absence of hope and the increase of despair in the area is of great concern to all of us and needs to be recognised and dealt with.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/4C0F8C59-D313-464C-B591-570AEEC4C8D7/Israel-PalestinePeaceProcess>

### **Palestinian Refugees and Displacement of Palestinians**

8. **Tracy Brabin (Labour Co-op):** What recent assessment his Department has made of the extent to which the human rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan are protected. [905288]

16. **Andy Slaughter (Labour):** What assessment he has made of the effect of the long-term displacement of Palestinians on stability in the middle east. [R] [905296]

**The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt):** We are committed to protecting the human rights of Palestinian refugees. In 2017 and 2018, we provided £50 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to support Palestinian refugees across the middle east. Ultimately, to promote stability across the region, there must be a fair, agreed and realistic solution to the Palestinian refugee question.

**Tracy Brabin:** This year, the United States more than halved its aid to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees, piling further pressure on

people trapped in an already hellish situation. In the light of that, can the Minister tell us what representations he has made to his American counterparts about this decision and whether he intends to bring forward a new funding settlement?

**Alistair Burt:** I have indeed made representations to US counterparts in relation to this. We have brought forward our own next tranche of support to UNRWA, and we continue to believe that support for UNRWA is vital, particularly in the present circumstances. We will be further reviewing what we can do—not just ourselves, but with other donors as well.

**Andy Slaughter:** Today, Nakba Day, is the 70th anniversary of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from what is now Israel. Israel chooses to mark it by escalating the murder and maiming of civilians in Gaza, including hundreds of children. Can we hear from the Minister and the Foreign Secretary, as we have from the shadow Foreign Secretary, an unqualified condemnation of the actions of the Israeli Government and security forces and support for international law, including the right of return? Is the Minister prepared to take action, starting with the suspension of arms sales to Israel?

**Alistair Burt:** That were three questions in one there. I will deal with the centrality of the issue in Gaza later. However, I can tell the hon. Gentleman that our statements make it clear that we deeply regret the extent of the use of live fire yesterday. We understand the reason that Israel would seek to protect its border and its border fence—it knows what would happen if there were a significant breach of it—but we are also concerned about the events that will have led to people being pushed towards the fence. However, it is a complex situation and we will cover it in more detail shortly. ...

**Tom Tugendhat (Conservative):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am grateful. As we are talking about the status of refugees in the middle east, does the Minister agree with me that his excellent work in the region has promoted peace but, more than that does he also agree that many others could contribute to it? I am particularly thinking of the Iranian Government, who rather than spending their money on missiles and terrorists in Syria and elsewhere, could instead spend some of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps money on the fate of refugees in Lebanon, Syria and indeed the areas of Gaza and the west bank. Those Palestinians are so often linked through political means to the Iranian regime, yet somehow the money seems to go only on weapons, with none of it going on education, schools or hospitals.

**Alistair Burt:** There are elements of my hon. Friend's question that I cannot comment on, but I can say that in the longer term the engagement of Iran with the region, in a supportive rather than a disruptive manner, towards the causes that he mentioned, is, of course, what we look for. But we are some way away from that yet and we will continue to press the case with Iran in relation to its behaviour.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/E62F45C0-72E7-4DE3-B63B-8E980D9B65AE/PalestinianRefugeesAndDisplacementOfPalestinians>

### Israel: Arms Exports

12. **Richard Burden (Labour):** What steps his Department is taking to monitor the use of arms and arms components exported from the UK to Israel. [905292]

**The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt):** Export licensing applications for all countries, including Israel, are considered on a case-by-case basis against strict criteria. Human rights and international humanitarian law considerations are important parts of that assessment. We keep the situation in Israel under continual review, as we do with other countries.

**Richard Burden:** When, in a written question, I asked the Foreign Secretary to investigate the uses to which sniper rifles and other weapons exported under licence from the UK to Israel were being put, I received from the Minister a reply which stated: "We do not collect data on the use of equipment after sale."

Does that answer not mean that the Government do not have the first idea whether UK

weapons are being used to shoot demonstrators in Gaza? What does it take for the UK to enforce its own arms export criteria and stop arms sales to Israel?

**Alistair Burt:** I would say two things in answer to the hon. Gentleman's perfectly proper question. First, before any arms sales are considered, a proper risk assessment is carried out as to what will happen in relation to those weapons, as I indicated. Secondly, since the start of the recent difficulties in Gaza, we have looked at all extant licences in relation to Israel. Our sense at the moment is that we have no information to suggest that UK-supplied equipment has been used against protesters.

**Andrew Bridgen (Conservative):** Can my right hon. Friend confirm that Israel has the right to defend itself from external aggression and terrorism—something that it has unfortunately had to do for most of the last 70 years?

**Alistair Burt:** That is quite correct: we support Israel's right to defend itself. As in the cases of all other supplies of UK weapons, strict criteria are imposed on the supply of any weapons for the purpose of defence.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/E353EC79-0D52-473C-9CD7-B04089440D48/IsraelArmsExports>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139368>

#### **Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs**

**The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson):** I am deeply saddened by the loss of life in Gaza, where peaceful protests are being exploited by extremists. I urge Israel to show restraint in the use of live fire, and I take this opportunity to repeat the UK's commitment to a two-state solution with Jerusalem as the shared capital. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/E743CA50-F43C-4B4C-B673-ADDF599FB3D/TopicalQuestions#contribution-F673A1F6-944C-4163-9448-4A432EE420B0>

#### **Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs**

**T4. Chris Law (SNP):** Yet again we are witnessing appalling violence and loss of Palestinian lives in Gaza: 58 dead and 2,271 injured, over half of them wounded by live ammunition. This must end under international law and human rights must be upheld, so what immediate steps will the Foreign Secretary take to ensure that the horrors seen in Gaza yesterday never happen again? [905308]

**Alistair Burt:** Ever since it became clear that these protests were going to continue and the risk of confrontation was very real, we have been at pains to work with both the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government to minimise and reduce the tension. It is a matter of horror and regret to us that yesterday's events happened; we will continue to urge restraint on all responsible and seek the peace agreement that is so urgently needed.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/E743CA50-F43C-4B4C-B673-ADDF599FB3D/TopicalQuestions#contribution-B096BEF3-DE6B-41A5-9CC9-CDA0AE0692EE>

#### **Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs**

**Chris Davies (Conservative):** Hezbollah's arsenal of rockets supplied by Iran is now estimated at 150,000. Does the Minister share my concern at Iran's malign influence in the region, and what recent discussions has he had with his Israeli counterparts about the threat posed by Hezbollah?

**Alistair Burt:** We are in regular contact with the state of Israel about threats to it. Hezbollah's increased weaponry is part of that, and the supply of weapons to Hezbollah contravenes UN resolutions. That threat to Israel is very real.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/E743CA50-F43C-4B4C-B673-ADDF599FB3D/TopicalQuestions#contribution-DD1D6987-5268-4034-B73A-E9BF34EBFAA5>

## Topical Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

**Richard Graham (Conservative):** The stated position of all British Governments for a long time has been support for a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the heightened violence on the Israeli-Gaza border and the casualties coming from it now make that possibility look even more remote?

**Alistair Burt:** It may be difficult, and it may be remote, but if it is the right answer we should continue to pursue it, and we will.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/E743CA50-F43C-4B4C-B673-ADDF599FB3D/TopicalQuestions#contribution-4B10E427-3368-4753-9381-C71395683ACB>

## House of Commons Oral Answers: Urgent Question

### Gaza Border Violence

*col 138* **Emily Thornberry (Labour):** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to make a statement on the violence at the Gaza border and its impact on the middle east peace process.

**The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt):** As I said in the statement I put out from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office yesterday, the violence in Gaza and the west bank has been shocking. The loss of life and the large number of injured Palestinians, including children, are tragic, and it is extremely worrying that the number of those killed continues to rise. Such violence is destructive to peace efforts.

We have been clear that the United Kingdom supports the Palestinians' right to peaceful protest. It is deplorable, but true, that extremist elements have exploited the protests for their own violent purposes. We will not waver from our support for Israel's right to defend its borders, but the large volume of live fire is extremely concerning. We continue to implore Israel to show greater restraint.

The United Kingdom remains committed to a two-state solution, with Jerusalem as a shared capital. All sides now need to show real leadership and courage, promote calm, refrain from inflaming tensions further, and show with renewed urgency that the path to a two-state solution is through negotiation and peace. We agree with the United Nations Secretary-General's envoy that the situation in Gaza is desperate and deteriorating and that the international community must step up efforts.

We call on the special representative of the Secretary-General to bring forward proposals to address the situation in Gaza. These should include easing the restrictions on access and movement, and international support for urgent infrastructure and economic development projects. We also reiterate our support for the Egyptian-led reconciliation process and the return of the Palestinian Authority to full administration of the Gaza strip.

We must look forward and work urgently towards a resolution of the long-standing issues between Israel and the Palestinian people. Now more than ever, we need a political process that delivers a two-state solution. Every death and every wounding casts a shadow for the future. The human tragedies should be used not as more building blocks for immovable positions, which will inevitably lead to more confrontation, but as a spur for urgent change. Yesterday's tragedies demonstrate why peace is urgently needed.

*col 139* **Emily Thornberry:** ... Yesterday's horrific massacre at the Gaza border left at least 58 dead and almost 3,000 injured. Our first thoughts today are with those Palestinians who are mourning their loved ones or waking up with life-changing injuries. What makes yesterday's events all the worse is that they came not as the result of some accidental overreaction to one day's protests but as the culmination of six weeks of an apparently calculated and deliberate policy to kill and maim unarmed protestors who posed no threat to the forces on the Gaza border. Many of them were shot in the back, many of them were shot hundreds of metres from the border and many of them were children.

If we are in any doubt about the lethal intent of the Israeli snipers working on the border,

we need only look at the wounds suffered by their victims. American hunting websites regularly debate the merits of 7.6 mm bullets versus 5.5 mm bullets. The latter, they say, are effective when wanting to wound multiple internal organs, while the former are preferred by some because they are “designed to mushroom and fragment, to do maximum internal damage to the animal.” It is alleged that this was the ammunition used in Gaza yesterday against men, women and children.

On the very first day of violence, the UN Secretary-General called for an independent investigation into the incidents, and last night the Kuwaiti Government asked the UN Security Council to agree a statement doing the same, only to be vetoed by the United States. Although I agree with every word of that Kuwaiti statement, it is easy to see why the US vetoed it, because the statement was critical of its Jerusalem embassy move.

Will the Minister of State take the initiative, not just in supporting a new Security Council statement but in helping to draft a new statement making no criticism of any party and no link to any other issue, but simply calling for an urgent, independent investigation into the violence in Gaza to assess whether international law has been broken and to hold those responsible to account—a statement to which no country could reasonably object, not even the United States, unless it is prepared to make the case that there is one rule for the Government of Israel and another rule for everyone else

I believe the investigation must be the start of an effort at the UN and elsewhere to bring urgent and concerted international pressure on the Netanyahu Government to lift the illegal blockade of Gaza and to comply with all the UN resolutions ordering them to remove their illegal settlements and end their illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories.

If yesterday’s deaths can act as a catalyst for that action, at least they will not have been in vain. In the interim, especially as the protests resume today, will the Minister of State join me in urging the Israeli forces serving on the Gaza border to show some long-overdue responsibility to their fellow human beings and stop this vicious slaughter?

**Alistair Burt:** I am grateful to the right hon. Lady for both the question and her response, and I join her in what she says about the victims. We have no side here except with the victims, and all our concerns should be how to prevent there being more victims. She made a series of allegations about the use of live rounds and the like. It is precisely because of such allegations that of course there should be an investigation into this. The UK has been clear in urgently calling for the facts of what happened to be established, including why such a volume of live fire was used; we are supportive of that independent, transparent investigation. Our team at the United Nations is working with others on what we can do on that. Different forms of inquiry are possible through the UN and we have to find the right formula, but it is important to find out more of the facts and we will work on that. ...

*col 140* ... as we all know, the years of pressure in Gaza, which come from a variety of different sources, not just the blockade—this also involves the governorship and leadership in Gaza—have contributed to the most desperate of situations. ...

May I say in conclusion to the right hon. Lady that an element was missing in her response? She did not mention any possible complicit Hamas involvement in the events. In all fairness, if we are to look at the circumstances of this, we need to take that into account. It is easy and tempting to take one side or the other, and if any of us have made statements about this in the past 24 hours, we see it is clear that the views out there are completely binary. There is no acceptance by those who support the state of Israel of an understanding of the circumstances of Gaza, and there is no understanding by those who have supported the Palestinian cause of any circumstances that might affect Israel and of what the impact would be should the border be breached and there be attacks on the Israeli side of it. ...

**Nicholas Soames (Conservative):** Even allowing for Hamas’s wicked manipulation of the Palestinians, does my right hon. Friend accept that the response of the Israeli defence force was a wholly unacceptable and excessive use of force, and that it was

totally disproportionate? ...

**col 141 Alistair Burt:** ... On the Israeli border, it is clear from repeated statements by the IDF that their concern about a breach of the fence, the statements it has had from Hamas and others, and previous attacks on the Israeli side of the border indicate what would be likely to happen should there be a breach of the border fence by Hamas operatives. Preventing that and stopping the border being infiltrated is a serious thing. But the extent of the live fire and of the injuries beyond the fence, the number of people involved and the sort of people who been caught up in this give a sense of why my right hon. Friend raised that question. If we do not also question that, as well as the engagement of those who might have been involved in inflaming the protests, we would not be doing our job correctly, so we will do both. ...

**Hugo Swire (Conservative):** ... [The Minister] must concede that one reason [Gaza] is a festering hellhole and a breeding ground for terrorists is that each and every time there has been an attempt to improve the livelihoods of the Gazans, by doing something about their water, about their refuge or about their quality of life, Israel has blockaded it. ...

**col 142 Louise Ellman (Labour Co-op):** Yesterday's events were truly horrendous, and it is very important that all the facts surrounding what happened are identified and exposed. Does the Minister have any confidence that this will include the facts about Hamas's involvement, starting from its role in destroying the chances for peace after Israel left Gaza in 2005 and forcibly removed the settlers and soldiers there? Will this include Hamas's postings on Facebook over the past couple of days, which advised the demonstrators to hide guns and knives in their clothing before breaking the barrier into Israel's territory and attacking Israeli civilians across the border? ...

**Robert Halfon (Conservative):** ... Will my right hon. Friend accept that Hamas and Islamic Jihad have fired thousands of missiles on to Israeli territory, despite the withdrawal from Gaza; that Hamas has built tunnels to get from Gaza into Israel; and that there have been terrorist attacks on the aid crossing and the pipelines? Is it not the case that Hamas is using some of these civilians as shields to bring terrorists into Israel? ...

**Alistair Burt:** ... We know that what my right hon. Friend said has significant basis in truth, in terms of what has come out from Hamas to Israel—the statements, the incitement and everything else. ...

**col 143 Hilary Benn (Labour):** All countries, Israel included, of course, have the right to defend themselves, but there is no justification—none whatsoever—for the IDF shooting at and killing unarmed protestors inside Gaza. ...

**Stephen Crabb (Conservative):** Even the staunchest friend of Israel would recognise that yesterday's bloodshed was just appalling and deeply, deeply distressing, but when there is such a highly orchestrated and deliberate attempt by the Hamas regime to use legitimate protests as a cover for trying to breach the security zone and bring chaos and bloodshed on to Israeli soil, what role does my right hon. Friend see for the international community in putting pressure on the Hamas leadership to pull back from this really dangerous activity?

**Alistair Burt:** ... Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation, but the efforts being made in the Palestinian body to try to seek a reconciliation, which can come only with the Palestinian Authority on Quartet terms, where violence has been renounced ...

**col 144 Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat):** ... I am the first MP of Palestinian descent. Were it not for the Nakba—we are commemorating 70 years of that today—perhaps I would not be here, so it would be remiss of me not to press the Government. I absolutely agree that Hamas is partly responsible for this situation, and in between Hamas and a very extreme Israeli Prime Minister, we have the blood of children. ...

**Theresa Villiers (Conservative):** ... Will my right hon. Friend acknowledge that Hamas is a serious roadblock to a peace process, and condemn it for that? ...

**Yvette Cooper (Labour):** ... the large-scale use of live fire against people who are unarmed should be strongly condemned, wherever it happens in the world and no matter

what organisations might try to influence or organise protests ...

**col 145 Joan Ryan (Labour):** The death toll on the Gazan border was truly terrible, and the violence must stop, but Hamas must end its cynical exploitation of the peace process and the Israel Defence Forces must show restraint and do all they can to minimise civilian casualties. ...

**col 146 Mark Harper (Conservative):** ... Does [the Minister] think that that investigation could look seriously at the role of Hamas, a proscribed terror organisation, in this process and get access to the people that it needs? ...

**Alistair Burt:** ... Just because it might be difficult to investigate the circumstances surrounding Hamas is no reason for its involvement not to be included. ...

**Chris Green (Conservative):** Hamas has a record of using innocent men, women and children as human shields to cover terrorist activity. Will my right hon. Friend join me in condemning Hamas and calling on it to stop sacrificing the people of Gaza? ...

**col 147 Philippa Whitford (SNP):** Having worked in Gaza for almost a year and a half as a surgeon, I am one of the few people in this Chamber who has seen the result of live ammunition and what it does to the human body. Various Members talk about breaching the fence, but most of those injured were nowhere near the fence. More than 200 children and 17 medics were injured. They were not trying to invade Israel. How will the British Government push for an inquiry, and will they understand that, while Hamas may have manipulated people to encourage the scale of the protest, the despair that I see when I visit Gaza is the underlying cause? ...

**Alistair Burt:** ... The despair and the hopelessness in Gaza are indeed prime movers in people's concerns and in their wanting to see a change. ...

**Bob Blackman (Conservative):** ... What assessment has [the Minister] made of the role of President Abbas in this whole terrible incident? He has been giving a substantial number of anti-Semitic statements over the past few weeks. Does he not have a role in de-escalating the position?

**Alistair Burt:** President Abbas has been a long-time supporter of a two-state solution and a condemner of violence. He apologised for his recent speech in Ramallah in which he made some remarks about the holocaust, and realised that it was not a contribution to the understanding and peace that was necessary. We continue to see President Abbas as a voice for peace in the region ...

**Michael Fabricant (Conservative):** *The New York Times* has published photographs and evidence that some 30,000 to 50,000 people in Gaza have been at the border fence, and that, I believe, is larger than the size of the standing Israeli army, so, sadly, I can understand how these events have happened, tragic as they are. Does my right hon. Friend not agree with me that taking a unilateral view that it is only Israel to blame merely encourages Hamas to do worse? ...

**col 148 Paul Masterton (Conservative):** ... Will [the Minister] confirm whether the Government consider the use of mortars, explosive-lined tyres, Molotov cocktails, flaming kites painted with swastikas, meat cleavers and other weapons to constitute a peaceful protest?

**Alistair Burt:** No. Again, people have seen what they have seen in relation to parts of the protest. ... It is as wrong to say that everyone who took part in the demonstration is a terrorist as it is to say that everything was perfectly peaceful. ...

**col 149 Caroline Lucas (Green):** ... I condemn violence on all sides, but given the slaughter in Gaza, the condemnation from across this House and the outrage in the international community, how on earth can this Government continue to allow the arms trade to profit from mass murder by the criminal Israeli Government? ...

**Alec Shelbrooke (Conservative):** ... One reason that the blockade was put in place was that such things were used to build tunnels, and the Israelis probably reacted in the way in which they did yesterday for the fear of what would have happened if the border

had been breached. ...

*col 150* **Jess Phillips (Labour):** Israel rightly uses security as a reason to continue the blockade in Gaza. While I was over there recently, I met a mother who had just given birth to triplets, but she was to be removed from the hospital in Jerusalem where she was receiving care because she was a security risk. A woman who has just given birth is not a security risk to be removed from her children; but as soon as somebody removed my babies, I would certainly become one. What are the Government going to do to ensure that people seeking desperate healthcare outside Gaza—in Jerusalem—are able to get it? ...

*col 151* **Stella Creasy (Labour Co-op):** The widespread public distress from Israeli human rights organisations such as B'Tselem reflects the fact that there is deep concern and distress about these horrendous deaths across the spectrum, even given the conduct of Hamas. ...

**Ross Thomson (Conservative):** We have seen Hamas officials actively encouraging protestors to be martyrs and bussing rioters to the border for them to sling Molotov cocktails and fireballs across it and to tear down fencing. Does the Minister share my concern that Hamas is using civilians as a cover to incite violence, and will he join me in calling on Hamas to abide by the Quartet's principles of non-violence? ...

*col 152* **Naz Shah (Labour):** We are on a very dangerous path when even some respected Palestinian figures are moving away from the idea of a two-state solution, moving towards a struggle for one-state control. Does the Minister not accept that this is exactly why we should be moving swiftly towards recognising the Palestinian state while there is still one to recognise?

**Alistair Burt:** ... recognition of itself would not change anything on the ground. It remains for the United Kingdom to make a judgment about that, as I indicated earlier, but we will have to pursue other paths as well. Her point about moving away from a two-state solution is a reminder of the danger that if we cannot find a conclusion to this, others will find it for us, and it will not be good.

*col 153* **Angus Brendan MacNeil (SNP):** I recall that in this House on 15 January 2009, the then Member for Manchester, Gorton, Gerald Kaufman, said: "My grandmother was ill in bed when the Nazis came to her home town of Staszow. A German soldier shot her...in her bed."

He continued: "My grandmother did not die to provide cover for Israeli soldiers murdering...grandmothers in Gaza."—[\[Official Report, 15 January 2009; Vol. 486, c. 407.\]](#)

That should apply to anybody else—whether 58 or 2,000 more. Will the UK Government borrow from the late Gerald Kaufman's language and state that Palestinian lives are as precious as Israeli lives and that those who reportedly cheered yesterday in Israel, "Burn them, shoot them, kill them," are beyond contempt?

**Alistair Burt:** All lives are indeed sacred. ...

*col 154* **Shabana Mahmood (Labour):** The fate of the people of Gaza is to be condemned to live in an open-air prison camp and to be shot dead when they protest and remind the world of their despair. The actions of the Israeli military yesterday are indefensible on any measure. ...

**Joanna Cherry (SNP):** ... many of my constituents want to know why the British Government refuse to condemn unequivocally the shooting dead of unarmed civilians. ...

**Alistair Burt:** ... if there is evidence of a breach of international humanitarian law in the deaths, that should indeed be condemned, but we need to find out more, and that is why we support an independent investigation. ...

*col 155* **Ivan Lewis (Independent):** The Israeli Government have a moral duty to minimise civilian casualties in defence of their borders. The loss of life yesterday was a horrendous tragedy, but to be clear, Hamas members are not freedom fighters; it is a terrorist organisation sponsored by Iran and using civilians as a human shield. Does the

Minister agree that a new reality whereby Iran is in Syria, Hezbollah runs Lebanon and Hamas controls Gaza means that Israel faces grave security concerns? ...

**Alistair Burt:** The hon. Gentleman understands this situation extremely well ...

*col 156* **Marsha De Cordova (Labour):** If there was proof that UK arms exports were being used by the IDF at the Gaza border, would the Minister feel it was right for the UK Government to suspend those export licences?

**Alistair Burt:** If that was proved, it would be likely to add to the element of risk that is considered when an arms sale is contemplated. ...

*col 157* **Stephen Kinnock (Labour):** We have been issuing stern condemnations of Israeli behaviour for decades, and all the while, the occupation has become more entrenched, illegal settlements have mushroomed and Palestinians have less land, rights and freedoms than ever before. Surely it is time now to move from empty words to tangible actions, starting by banning the trade from illegally occupied territories. ...

**Lisa Nandy (Labour):** The Government's failure to condemn the actions of the Israeli Government and the reckless, inflammatory behaviour of the Trump Administration shames this country, but even more shameful is the equivocation about arms sales to Israel. ...

*col 158* **Gavin Newlands (SNP):** There has been much talk today of the terrorism on the Gazan side of the border fence, but if you kill 58 and injure 2,000 unarmed civilians, including children, is that not an act of terrorism and, if it is, should we not proscribe the IDF as a terrorist organisation?

**Alistair Burt:** I think the hon. Gentleman is probably taking himself into extremely dangerous and serious waters. It is because of allegations like that that we need to see an independent inquiry to find out what has happened, but I do not share the view of the hon. Gentleman. ...

*col 159* **Sarah Champion (Labour):** Fifty-eight Palestinians were murdered yesterday, six of them children, one of whom was eight months old. Does the Minister really believe that the Israeli response was proportionate to the threat or, coming in this historic week, should we see it as a deliberate attempt to undermine the peace process? ...

**Chris Williams (Labour):** Following the massacre of unarmed Palestinians by Netanyahu's apartheid regime, is it not time to support the boycott, disinvestment and sanctions campaign until such time as Israel complies with its obligations under international law? ...

*col 160* **Alistair Burt:** ... I have made it clear that, should there be any investigation and should it be uncovered that any of the deaths or woundings were caused by breaches of international humanitarian law, the United Kingdom will stand four-square for the upholding of international humanitarian law and condemn those who work outside it. ...

**Neil Gray (SNP):** Is not the killing of unarmed child protesters enough for the Minister and the Government finally to work with others not just to see the end of the blockade of Gaza and stop the illegal occupation of Palestinian land, but to suspend arms sales to Israel and recognise the state of Palestine?

*col 161* **Jack Dromey (Labour):** The Palestinians have a right to nationhood and Israel has a right to security, but does the Minister not recognise the wise words of ... Sir Nicholas Soames? Now is not the time for a "limp response" from our Government but the time to be unequivocal: there can be no justification for a thousand people being shot and no justification for the intransigence of the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of Israel, who are a fundamental obstacle on the road to peace. ...

*col 162* **Peter Grant (SNP):** How does it help the cause of moderate voices in Gaza and elsewhere in Palestine when they look to one of the supposedly great diplomatic powers on earth—the United Kingdom—and see a complete refusal to recognise the evil done to people yesterday? ...

**col 163 Alex Cunningham (Labour):** Given the ongoing oppression of the Palestinian people in Gaza and the illegal occupation of the west bank, how confident is the Minister that Israel will ever allow any of the kind of investment and development he said is needed in Palestine—in Gaza, in particular?

**Alistair Burt:** I have some confidence in that. As I said some time ago, I recently had a meeting with the economic development adviser to the Quartet, looking at infrastructure development in Gaza, in which Israel will take a part. As we know, Israel remains concerned about the governance of Gaza, but ultimately anyone in Israel has to know that the people of Gaza cannot keep on as deprived and hopeless as they are, lacking some of the basic facilities of life. ...

**col 164 Andy Slaughter (Labour):** Not a single Palestinian needed to be killed or maimed in the current protest. That they were was the result of the choice of munitions and tactics deployed by the Israelis. ...

**col 165 Paula Sherriff (Labour):** Does the Minister ... share my outrage and sorrow that the Israeli Defence Minister, the man in charge of the Israeli snipers killing Palestinians, has declared that there are no innocents in Gaza?

**Alistair Burt:** ... The statement she quotes is not one with which I agree. I think there have been other statements from Israeli Ministers that everyone in Gaza is a terrorist or that there is no such thing as a peaceful march. The truth is that a lot of people were taking part in the march for perfectly proper reasons: to express their concern about the despair and the hopelessness that we talked about earlier. Equally, it is true to say that there were those who knew that they could exploit it and did so. But the blanket condemnation of everyone in these circumstances does not help a proper understanding of those circumstances ...

**col 166 Alistair Burt:** ... Just because the United Kingdom seeks to be measured in its responses, we should not make the mistake of thinking that they do not come without emotion, determination and a real concern for affecting change. ...

We cannot go on with this, because each time it gets worse and more difficult. We must not use tragedies to find yet more reasons to build up support for the particular position of one side or the other. ... The people who used to reach out to each other are no longer able to. The organs that used to be able to put forward a moderate position in Israel and on the other side find it more difficult to do so. That has only given those who want to build more barriers the freedom to do so. We have to challenge all that. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-05-15/debates/D6170F50-D03A-40D8-B257-5C2A55493561/GazaBorderViolence>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Trade Agreements: Israel

**Jim Shannon (DUP) [141793]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he is taking to strengthen the UK's trade relationship with Israel in medical research and development.

**Graham Stuart:** I refer the hon Member for Strangford to the answer I gave to the hon Member for North Antrim on 14 February 2018, UIN 127029.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141793/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-02-06/127029/>

*The UK and Israel have a strong and important trading relationship, and we are committed to strengthening it. We have a dedicated team in our Embassy in Tel*

*Aviv which actively promotes UK-Israel trade. They have succeeded in increasing the export of medical devices to Israel.*

*The UK-Israel Tech Hub, based at the Embassy, helps to create tech and innovation partnerships across several sectors, including healthcare. One of their projects, the UK-Israel Dangoor Healthcare Initiative, aims to create a pipeline of digital innovation for the NHS.*

*There is also extensive bilateral collaborative medical research between the UK and Israel.*

### **Trade Agreements: Israel**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [141794] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he is taking to encourage and facilitate trade cooperation between the UK and Israel in the agricultural technology sector.

**Graham Stuart:** I refer the Hon Member for Strangford to the answer given to him by the then Minister of State for Investment (Mark Garnier MP) on 7 July 2017, UIN:2645.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141794/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-03/2645/>

*The UK and Israel have a strong and important trading relationship, and we are committed to strengthening that relationship.*

*We have a dedicated team based in our Embassy in Tel Aviv which actively promotes trade cooperation between UK and Israeli companies.*

*We have also established a UK-Israel Tech Hub, which helps to create partnerships between British companies and world class Israeli innovators across a wide range of tech sectors, including agriculture.*

### **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [141795] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what processes her Department has in place to monitor the delivery and spending of UK aid in the Palestinian Territories.

**Alistair Burt:** As for all DFID programmes, officials regularly monitor and review our programmes in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) to ensure they are delivering results and that UK aid reaches the intended beneficiaries and achieves the best development outcomes, with a strong focus on ensuring value for money for the UK taxpayer. The processes in place include comprehensive annual reviews and project completion reports. These reviews are available on the DFID Development Tracker at <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/>. DFID has due diligence assessment processes to provide assurance over the expenditure of our funds, and DFID's project spending in the OPTs is subject to annual, independent financial audit. The overall programme is also subject to the regular audit cycle of DFID's Internal Audit Department and the National Audit Office. DFID has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud and has robust controls against diversion of aid to terrorist groups.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141795/>

### **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [141796] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, how her Department works in cooperation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to ensure that UK aid to the Palestinians facilitates peace-building with Israel.

**Alistair Burt:** Our financial assistance to the Occupied Palestinian Territories helps to maintain stability and is underpinned by HMG's long-standing objective that the only way to allow Palestinians and Israelis to live in peace is through a negotiated two-state solution. As joint-Minister for the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I ensure that my officials liaise closely to deliver development programmes in support of a two-state solution which requires collaborating equally with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141796/>

### **Hezbollah: Weapons**

**Chris Davies (Conservative) [905304]** What recent assessment he has made of trends in the size of Hezbollah's weapons arsenal.

**Alistair Burt:** We remain concerned by reports that Hizballah continues to amass an arsenal of weapons in Lebanon. We condemn the threat this poses to regional stability and that this is done in direct contravention of UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-15/905304/>

## **House of Lords Oral Answers**

### **Gaza**

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon repeated the Answer to an Urgent Question made by the Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt) in the House of Commons (see "House of Commons Oral Answers" above).**

**Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour):** My Lords, all our thoughts are with those Palestinians in Gaza whose loved ones have been either killed or injured as a result of IDF action. During subsequent questions, Alistair Burt appeared to support the Secretary-General's call for an independent and transparent investigation of these actions. He said that a team at the United Nations was working to find the right formulation, bearing in mind that a Kuwaiti attempt failed because it set out to apportion blame. What timescale are the Government working to in respect of a United Nations response, because it is clear that these matters need urgent and independent investigation?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, as my right honourable friend Alistair Burt said in another place, the United Kingdom Government support an independent and transparent process to establish exactly what happened, including why such a large volume of live fire was used. Given the importance of accountability, we want this to be both independent and transparent. On timelines, this is a UN process which needs to be agreed by all relevant parties. As that is updated, I shall inform the House and the noble Lord.

**Baroness Northover (Liberal Democrat):** I associate these Benches with the thoughts expressed by the noble Lord, Lord Collins, about those killed and injured. Under international law, firearms can be used only to protect against imminent threat of death or serious injury. Does the Minister agree that firing on unarmed civilians in Gaza, often at a great distance, must be fully and impartially investigated and that if the law has been broken those responsible must be held to account? His right honourable friend Alistair Burt, the Minister for the Middle East, referred earlier today to the "hopeless" and "desperate" conditions in Gaza. Does the noble Lord agree that the United Kingdom should give some glimmer of hope to Palestinians held in such conditions by recognising the state of Palestine?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... first, of course, I associate myself with the sentiments of the noble Lord and the noble Baroness. Our thoughts and prayers are with all the victims of the tragic deaths that have taken place. That said, on the issue of live fire, as I said in my opening remarks, we continue to implore the Israeli Government, while we respect their right to defend their borders, that the use of live fire should be considered only as a last resort. Indeed, this has been consistently mentioned at bilateral meetings directly with the Israeli Government. The noble Baroness referred to the sentiments expressed by my right honourable friend in the other place. I visited both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories a few weeks ago and saw why it is very important that we make progress. As for providing hope, of course we continue to support UNRWA's efforts to ensure that medical aid and assistance reaches Palestinian communities in Gaza and the West Bank. That is why we are supportive of Egyptian efforts to bring greater peace and reconciliation in Gaza and it is why we welcome the opening of the Egyptian border for a few days to relieve some of those efforts.

**Baroness Morris of Bolton (Conservative):** My Lords, I remind the House of my interests as declared in the register, especially as president of Medical Aid for Palestinians. The World Health Organization has said that the injuries sustained in these appalling events in Gaza are comparable to wartime situations. There are desperate shortages of drugs and equipment at the moment in Gaza. What are the Government doing to help alleviate this desperate situation?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Let me assure my noble friend, as I said in my previous answer, that the UK is a long-time supporter of UNRWA's efforts in this. Indeed, we are committed to continue our funding, which does provide those very basic services that my noble friend has just referred to. It provides basic healthcare to 1.3 million people in Gaza, and I assure my noble friend we are also supporting humanitarian access, which enables basic reconstruction efforts in Gaza as well.

**The Lord Bishop of Worcester:** My Lords, I am grateful to Her Majesty's Government for the careful yet very specific response they have given to the appalling loss of life at the border between Gaza and the state of Israel yesterday. The thoughts and prayers of this Bench are with all those affected. It is good to know that the Minister supports an independent review of what happened. At the same time, will the Minister agree that, while the United Kingdom recognises the integrity of the border—and, indeed, of all Israel's pre-1967 borders—and the security of Israel's prosperous and pluriform society, the defence of its interests must offer tangible hope to those with whom it hopes to engage in dialogue? The phrase, "a glimmer of hope" was mentioned a moment ago. I was in Gaza about four years ago. The situation then was desperate and deteriorating. It is infinitely worse now. What real, substantial hope can be given to those who live in what is effectively a vast open prison?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, that is why the United Kingdom Government, let me assure the right reverend Prelate, are committed to ensuring humanitarian access, as I have said already, and equally firmly convinced that the only way to bring that ultimate hope both to Israel and to the Palestinians is through a two-state solution. We continue to implore both sides that, now more than ever, it is required that they come to the table and that we see that lasting peace that we all desire.

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated):** My Lords, does the Minister remember that the living hell that is Gaza and the creation of Hamas itself are due to successive Israeli Governments, and that the offer from Hamas consistently over recent years of a 10-year truce in return for the lifting of the siege on Gaza has been totally ignored? When will he persuade our partners in the international community and the Government of Israel to consider this offer?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, ultimately it is for both parties to come to

the table. The noble Baroness mentioned Hamas. A positive step forward would be for Hamas to recognise the right of Israel to exist. It has repeatedly failed to do so. That would be the most progressive step and a step forward in that process.

**Lord Green of Deddington (Crossbench):** My Lords, I declare an interest as a former chairman of Medical Aid for Palestinians. Two days ago, we could not have imagined that 58 people would be shot, 2,000 civilians would be injured and explosive bullets—it is alleged—would be used. It is absolutely appalling. Frankly, for the Government simply to say that they are concerned is pathetic. In the face of that, they should condemn it and call for an immediate investigation, particularly into the nature of the ammunition used.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As I said earlier, we continue to implore the Israeli Government to restrain themselves from the use of live fire. I assure the noble Lord that, when I and my right honourable friend Alistair Burt meet the appropriate Israeli Ministers, we continue to call for that very approach of ensuring that alternative methods to the use of live fire are considered. On the noble Lord's second point, of course we have already associated ourselves with calls for an independent investigation. ...

**Lord Campbell-Savours (Labour):** The Liberal Democrats asked a very simple question: if international law was broken, should legal action be taken? Can we have an answer to the Liberal Democrats' question?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** That will be a matter for the independent investigation. Of course, the investigation will look at the principles of international humanitarian law and then report back appropriately. That is why we are supportive of this transparent and independent process.

**Lord Polak (Conservative):** My Lords, at the core of the Jewish religion, as with other religions, is the importance of the sanctity of life—"Kiddush HaShem" in Hebrew. I therefore mourn any loss of life. It is easy to blame one side or the other without having facts. I will give your Lordships just one fact. Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in Gaza, stated just last month: "We will take down the border and we will tear out their hearts from their bodies".

Also last month, Israel destroyed the largest and deepest Hamas tunnel into the territory. Will the Minister join me in condemning all violence, as well as Hamas's continued development of its underground terror structure, its use of Palestinian civilians as human shields and deliberately sending its own people towards the border fence into danger?

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Lords, I am sure I join all noble Lords in condemning violence and the loss of innocent life anywhere in the world. We must now see progressive action to ensure that the lives that were lost recently were not lost in vain.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-05-15/debates/679B968D-4417-4693-B262-48851D26667F/Gaza>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Developing Countries: Education

**Lord German (Liberal Democrat) [HL7502]** To ask Her Majesty's Government with which countries they engage in bilateral education programmes.

**Lord Bates:** The Department for International Development works closely with partner governments, donors, multilateral bodies and non-governmental organisations to ensure children are in school and learning.

We support education bilaterally in 20 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jordan, Lebanon, Malawi, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-05-02/HL7502/>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Jonathan Edwards (Plaid Cymru) (1264) Death of Palestinian protesters on 14 May 2018** – That this House unreservedly and unequivocally condemns the brutal actions of the Israeli Government in Gaza on 14 May 2018; recognises the decision by President Trump to move the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as a deliberately inflammatory and dangerous act that has only served to heighten tensions in the region; believes this action has directly led to the killing of 55 Palestinians and injuring of over 2,000; further recognises the fundamental right of Palestinian people to demonstrate without being shot at with live ammunition, and the duty on the Israeli Government to respect the human rights of civilians; further condemns the US for abdicating all responsibility for leading peace efforts and calls on the rest of the international community to quickly determine how to fill the absence and avoid a more prolonged and open conflict; urges the Government to not simply remain silent on the systematic abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories; and calls on the Government to urge the Israeli Government to put an end to the entirely unnecessary death of protestors, and to work with the Palestinian Authority and the international community to find a peaceful way to negotiate a two-state solution to bring an end to this conflict.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1264>

## Downing Street

### **PM statement with President Erdogan**

... I'd like to start by addressing the troubling situation in Gaza and the West Bank, which President Erdogan and I have discussed today.

The loss of life we have seen is tragic and extremely concerning.

Such violence is destructive to peace efforts and we call on all sides to show restraint.

There is an urgent need to establish the facts of what happened yesterday through an independent and transparent investigation, including why such a volume of live fire was used and what role Hamas played in events.

Palestinians have the right to protest, but these protests must be peaceful. We are concerned that extremist elements are seeking to hijack legitimate protests to further their own objectives.

And while we do not question the right of Israel to defend its borders, the use of live fire and the resulting loss of life is deeply troubling. We urge Israel to show restraint.

It is in everyone's interests for peace and stability to prevail in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. ...

***To read the full press release see***

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-statement-with-president-erdogan>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**UK committed to two-state solution, Jerusalem as shared capital: Statement by Ambassador Karen Pierce, UK Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council emergency meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.**

... we've seen a concatenation of loss of life, casualties, volume of live fire in Gaza yesterday and this has been shocking and I think appalling to most of us. It is a familiar - depressingly familiar - pattern that we have seen over recent weeks. And it includes the deaths of children. At a highly sensitive time in the region, we call for calm and we call for restraint. A further escalation of violence serves no one's interest. It is only destructive to peace efforts and to wider regional security. ...

There is an urgent need, we believe, to establish the facts around yesterday's events,

including why such a volume of live fire continues to be deemed justified.

Palestinian right to peaceful protest is undeniable. But at the same time, we are deeply concerned that peaceful protests in Gaza have been exploited by extremist elements. For example, we've seen IDF troops targeted by IEDs, and we've seen the use of Molotov cocktails. This is not acceptable.

The Palestinians have a right to peaceful protest, and Israel has an undeniable right to protect its borders from Hamas and other terrorist groups and threats. The United Kingdom remains strongly supportive of Israel's right to defend itself. We recognize today is a sensitive anniversary for the Palestinians. We implore Israel to act with restraint in accordance with international law, and more than anything, to ensure that its security forces do not resort to the use of excessive force.

The volume of live fire used in Gaza yesterday and the consequent number of deaths is distressing and cannot be ignored by the Council. I want to reiterate the United Kingdom's support for independent and transparent investigations into the events that have taken place, and in recent weeks, and including the extent to which Israeli security forces' rules of engagement are in line with international law. ...

...our position on the status of Jerusalem and the move of the American Embassy is well known. Our position is clear and long-standing. The status of Jerusalem should be determined by a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians and Jerusalem should ultimately be the shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian states. ...

... I'd like to close by making a request of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process that he and his office bring forward proposals to address the situation in Gaza. These should include easing restrictions on access and movement, and it should include international support for urgent infrastructure and economic development projects. We also reiterate our support for the Egyptian-led reconciliation process and the return of the Palestinian Authority to full administration of the Gaza Strip.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uk-committed-to-two-state-solution-jerusalem-as-shared-capital>

## Scottish Parliament Debate

### Nakba 70th Anniversary

**17.06 Sandra White (SNP):** ... In the past 48 hours, we have witnessed the killing of over 50 Palestinian people, and thousands being injured by the Israeli army. Members of the international community have condemned the Israeli army's use of live ammunition and teargas on innocent civilians. I add my voice to that condemnation and stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, who have been denied the right to return to their land and their homes—that is the Nakba. [*Applause.*] ...

It is estimated that there are about 7.98 million Palestinian refugees and displaced people who cannot go back to their houses. The Gaza strip, where some 2 million Palestinians live, has been under Israeli siege for more than a decade. Israel controls the air space, sea and borders. The strip has also witnessed three Israeli assaults that have made the area close to uninhabitable.

Many people are quick to criticise nations that violate UN resolutions or do not abide by international law. That is quite right. If we fail to acknowledge what Israel has been doing in Palestine, we fail to present the situation honestly and we fail to be taken seriously by the rest of the world. I notice that, about 10 minutes ago, the United Kingdom Government issued a statement calling for greater restraint from Israel. That is an insult to every Palestinian who has been killed and injured not only in the past 48 hours but over the years. ...

Let us be clear: regardless of the history, the way forward and the only way to achieve a lasting peace is to recognise a Palestinian state alongside an Israeli one. ...

It is time for the UK to join other UN member states and recognise the state of Palestine. It is morally incumbent on the UK to take that step, given its involvement and its resulting culpability for the current situation. ...

**17.14 Ivan McKee (SNP):** ... Let us be clear: the ethnic cleansing that happened 70 years ago has continued every day through to the present. ...

We visited the village of Susya, the residents of which have on no fewer than six occasions in the past 70 years had their homes destroyed and been moved on, only for them to return, to rebuild and to try to carry on with their lives. ... The Israeli army is there not to police the situation, but is there with the clear intention to protect the settlers and to do whatever is required to make life as difficult as possible for the Palestinians who live there. We witnessed Palestinians who were trying to farm the land and plant trees being thrown off that land by the army in front of our eyes. ...

**17.18 Maurice Golden (Conservative):** ... Just as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were displaced from their homes in the 1948 war, so did hundreds of thousands of Jews flee from Arab states to the newly created state of Israel. Both occurred against a backdrop of war that claimed thousands of lives. I will not attempt to draw equivalence between suffering and loss, but I point out that Israelis and Palestinians are two peoples who are linked by the same tragic events. If we want to see the cycle of anger and violence broken, we must acknowledge that link—that shared tragedy.

In that light, we must recognise that the motion tells only half the story. It refers to the “generations of pain for the Palestinian people”, and so do I, but we should also recognise the generations of fear for the Israelis, who have also found themselves under attack. The United Kingdom rightly favours a two-state solution. If we are seriously to champion the cause of the Palestinian people to live in their own state in peace and security, we must also champion the right of Israel to exist and be free from attack. ...

Israel was born amidst war, but it has come through adversity as an established democracy in the middle east. Of course, Israel is not perfect, nor should we defend every action of the Israeli government. Israel does, however, show the world that a free and democratic society, governed by the rule of law, is possible in the middle east. ...

**17.22 Anas Sarwar (Labour):** ... The events of the past few days will have lasting consequences. The opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem is a direct and deliberate threat to any chance of peace. It is a deliberate attempt to kill any hope of a peace process or a genuine two-state solution. It is a deliberate act to inflame and escalate—not de-escalate—tensions. ...

I ask members to imagine the city of Glasgow surrounded by a wall, with limits on the people and supplies allowed in and no one allowed out, and with intermittent firing of missiles and rockets into the city. What would be the reaction of fellow Scots or the international community? That is what is happening to the people of Gaza every single day. ...

We talk about the peace process, but there is no peace process to revive: there is no peace, and there is no process. ... Innocent people are denied basic rights of access to clean water, food and employment, and they are denied access to any kind of peace, justice or democracy—things that we take for granted every day. ...

**17.26 Ross Greer (Green):** ... Yesterday, Israeli soldiers gunned down more than 60 Palestinians who were protesting their right to exist on their land, and injured thousands more. They killed six children and at least one paramedic. In the weeks since the great march of return protest began, they have killed almost 100 demonstrators. Ibrahim Abu Thuraya, who lost both his legs in a previous Israeli air strike, was shot dead in his wheelchair. Photojournalist Yaser Murtaja was shot wearing a protective vest that clearly marked him out as press. After murdering him, the Israeli Government propaganda machine spun into place to claim that he was a high-ranking member of Hamas. Before concocting that story, the Israelis had not bothered to find out the first thing about him. If they had, they would have known that he was previously arrested and beaten by Hamas.

... They have no hesitation in lying or spreading misinformation in attempts to get away with their crimes. ...

Israel is the only country in the world to summarily prosecute children in a military court system—not Israeli children, of course; just Palestinian children. Those who object to Israel being labelled an apartheid state should look no further than the situation on the West Bank, where two legal systems exist. Maurice Golden talked about Israel being a country under the rule of law, but there are two legal systems that rule it. The legal system that someone is subject to depends on nothing more than their nationality and ethnicity. ...

Israel is not a beacon of decency and democracy. It is a colonial occupier. It is an apartheid state. It is an abuser of children. ...

That is why the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign is so important. Just as apartheid South Africa became an international pariah, so must apartheid Israel. ... We must put pressure on every business and organisation that supports the occupation until they withdraw. ...

**17.32 Pauline McNeill (Labour):** ... The world has remained largely silent and certainly ineffective in challenging Israel, which is the only party in the conflict that can make the necessary concessions to the Palestinians. The events on 15 May 1948 included systematic and violent removal of Palestinians from their homelands. Israel expelled them, colonised their land and annexed their territory. ...

UN resolutions are continually ignored by Israel, and no state actor stands up to Israel. ... If no state actor is prepared to challenge Israel's behaviour and how it conducts its business—it makes no concessions to Palestinians in the peace process—the conflict will, unfortunately, go on for another 70 years. Shame on the international community for doing nothing to stand up to Israel. ...

**17.38 Ruth Maguire (SNP):** ... I almost cannot bring myself to imagine how despairing the seeming absence of any prospect of peace, freedom or justice must be. It is absolutely heartbreaking. The old are still alive and the young will never forget. ...

Boycott, divestment and sanctions are legitimate peaceful actions to take. They have worked before against apartheid and can work again. Boycott Israeli goods, encourage divestment from Israeli companies and contact MPs and the UK Government to urge sanctions against the racist apartheid state. We have to build a wave of support for Palestine that cannot be ignored. ...

**17.42 John Finnie (Green):** ... It is important that we remember, 70 years on. ... We cannot rewrite history and, of course, history will show us that a bullying state will remove a group of people from their own homes and land; it will seize those homes and land and put its own people in; and it will imprison and abuse the original occupants.

That is what the Nazis did; that is what happened under Stalin in the Soviet Union; and that is what is happening on a daily basis in the apartheid state of Israel. ... The gentleman who compiled that term in a UN report was hounded around this planet for evidencing the fact that Israel is an apartheid state—that is an example of the bullying that goes on. ...

Most of all, in this chamber, I have the opportunity to condemn apologists. Mr Golden told us that he came here to debate; he did not come to debate. He could have taken the opportunity to engage in debate; instead, he has kept his head down and read his pre-prepared speech. I do not know who wrote it for him. ...

Like others, I have visited Gaza ... It is a human prison. ... it is a successful live test ground for the munitions of Israel's very successful arms industry. ...

People who have spoken today will be subject to online bullying at the conclusion of the debate. That is the way that things work: people come out of the woodwork, or very nice, mild-mannered wee women want to come and see people and harass them. ... That is how it worked with Nazi Germany. That is how it worked with Stalin. That is how it worked with Pol Pot. That is how it works with this regime. ...

**17.48 James Dornan (SNP):** ... A lot has been said about the Nakba. I will not go over

that except to say that, if that happened today, we would not be calling it a catastrophe; we would be calling it ethnic cleansing. That is exactly what happened: the Israelis ethnically cleansed the area. ...

... we need to make sure that the international community stands up to the bully boys of Israel and tells Trump to get out of his box, go back and build another hotel and leave the world to grow in peace. ...

**17.52 Claudia Beamish (Labour):** ... For me and for many others across the world, it is also a day of disbelief that the United States President has shown total disrespect for a whole displaced, persecuted and imprisoned people—yes, they are imprisoned in what should be their own land—by moving the American embassy from the capital, Tel Aviv, to Jerusalem, which is a holy city for Christians, Muslims and Jews alike and is thus totally inappropriate as a capital city for anybody. ...

**17.58 The Minister for International Development and Europe (Dr Alasdair Allan):** ... It is as well to remember the horrors that we commemorate. In 1948, there were 750,000 evictions and 4 million refugees. ... It is true, as Mr Golden said, that there has been violence on both sides in the history of this conflict, but this week there has been an escalation of violence by the Israeli Government and we have had the highest death rates in the region since 2014. ...

The Scottish Government urges—as does the Scottish Parliament—that every effort be made to prevent further escalation of the situation. In particular, all possible steps must be taken to protect children along the border. ...

The cabinet secretary is writing to the UK Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, to express the Scottish Government's shock over the loss of life and her own dismay over the totally disproportionate response of the Israeli Government. She is also asking the UK Government to do all that it can to urge an immediate solution to the violence and to play a full role in re-establishing a meaningful peace process. ...

... the status of Jerusalem can be determined only in a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians and that, ultimately, Jerusalem should be the shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian states. ...

The Scottish Government strongly encourages the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to work with the international community to secure long-term peace and end the heartbreaking cycle of violence that continues to affect both Palestinians and Israelis. Above all, as a Parliament, we must take this opportunity to call directly on the Israeli Government to stop the wildly excessive and totally unjustifiable use of force against civilians. We condemn the reckless decision to open the US Embassy in Jerusalem at the very height of tensions on the Israel-Gaza border. ...

The Scottish Government ... supports the EU position of a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders and firmly encourages both Israel and Palestine to reach a sustainable, negotiated settlement under international law that has as its foundation mutual recognition and the determination to co-exist peacefully. As we mark the Nakba, with the distressing scenes that we witnessed this week, it is worth reflecting that peace can come only when human rights are respected, international law is upheld and all parties join in a genuine peace process that puts the rights of all at its heart. That very basic respect for human rights is not what happened to the people of Palestine in 1948 and—let us be in no doubt—it is not what is happening to them this week.

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11533&i=104617#ScotParlOR>

## Scottish Parliament Motions

**S5M-12239 Anas Sarwar (Labour) Gaza Violence and US Embassy** – That the Parliament condemns the actions of the Israeli army, which have reportedly resulted in the death of over 50 innocent civilians, including women and children, and the injury of

over 2,500; notes that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, stated "Those responsible for outrageous human rights violations must be held to account"; considers that the actions of the United States Government are deplorable with, it believes, the decision to relocate the US embassy to Jerusalem harming any prospect of a peace process and extending the suffering of the people of Gaza; further believes that President Trump is not an honest broker for peace, and calls on the international community to condemn these actions and act to restore peace, justice and security in the region.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-12239>

**S5M-12240 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative): Netta Barzilai** – That the Parliament sends its hearty congratulations to democratic Israel on its victory in the Eurovision song contest; notes that Netta Barzilai, more commonly referred to as Netta, won with her song, *Toy*; is aware that Israel previously won in 1978, 1979 and 1998, and believes that this is an extra special win in what is Israel's 70th Independence Day anniversary, with 2019's Eurovision now to be held in Jerusalem.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-12240>

## Welsh Assembly Oral Answers

### Business Statement and Announcement

**95 Simon Thomas (Plaid Cymru):** It is not to excuse anything that Hamas or any other organisation does as an authority in Gaza to say that we do not and cannot accept the use of snipers to mow down thousands—literally thousands—of unarmed civilians. That is beyond any civilised Government's response in terms of protecting its borders or protecting its citizens. ... And, of course, the effects on overall peace in the middle east do affect us all because they affect the way we live our lives in our communities here ...

**97 Julie James (Leader of the House and Chief Whip) (Labour):** ... I'm sure the Government will want to pass on its commiserations to the people who lost their lives in such an appalling way. ... I will certainly have a discussion with the First Minister about what can be done in terms of expressing the views of this place as to where we are with some of that. ...

**138 Bethan Sayed (Plaid Cymru):** ... Today, the Scottish Parliament are having a debate on the future of Palestine, and we have had a consensus here in the past whereby most AMs have recognised that we need to have a state for it as a nation, and I wondered whether we could have another debate here in the National Assembly for Wales to take leadership on this issue, because it's clear that international law is being violated, and we cannot sit idly by. ...

**142 Julie James:** ... on Gaza, words are just not enough to describe the horror that we saw unfolding there. As I said, it's such an immensely complex problem in the middle east, and we do seem to be in a particularly accelerating violent cycle at the moment, which is of some serious concern to all of us. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/4983#A42655>

## Welsh Assembly Statement of Opinion

**Bethan Sayed (Plaid Cymru) (OPIN-2018-0087) US embassy move to Jerusalem** – This Assembly:

1. Opposes the Trump administration's relocation of the United States embassy to

2. Jerusalem, in violation of numerous UN resolutions.
2. Condemns the actions of the Israeli Government and IDF in using violence against Palestinians protesting the move.
3. Notes that Trump administration and Israeli government policies in relation to Jerusalem are in violation of international agreements and could cause significant destabilisation to the wider middle-east region.
4. Calls on the Welsh Government to express its solidarity with the UN and others for a lasting two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.

<http://record.assembly.wales/StatementOfOpinion/87>

## United Nations

### **Security Council Briefing on the Situation in Gaza - as delivered by UN Special Coordinator Nikolay Mladenov**

For the people of Gaza yesterday was a day of tragedy. There are no other words with which to describe what actually happened. There is no justification for the killing. There is no excuse. It serves no one. It certainly does not serve the cause of peace. ...

Israel has a responsibility to calibrate its use of force, to not use lethal force, except as a last resort, under imminent threat of death or serious injury. It must protect its borders, but it must do so proportionally and investigate every incident that has led to a loss of human life.

Hamas, which controls Gaza, must not use the protests as cover to attempt to place bombs at the fence and create provocations; its operatives must not hide among the demonstrators and risk the lives of civilians. ...

Tens of thousands of people in Gaza have been protesting for over six weeks now. People who live in abject poverty, who survive in prison-like conditions, who live with no prospect for the day after. These people want their voices heard; they want a future beyond mere survival. Their leaders have failed them. The promises they have made to them have not been delivered. And now the people are angry. But their anger, if not channelled in a constructive manner will lead to more destruction and suffering.

Whatever we may think of their motivation, we have an obligation to hear their plight. ...

Yesterday, an estimated 35,000 people participated in demonstrations in Gaza and hundreds in the West Bank cities of Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Jericho, Nablus, and in East Jerusalem -- all part of the "Great March of Return", as well as in protest of the relocation of the United States Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. While no fatalities were reported in the West Bank, where limited clashes took place between demonstrators and Israeli security forces at several checkpoints, the situation in Gaza deteriorated throughout the day, particularly along the perimeter fence. ...

Under cover of the protests Hamas and other militants have also engaged in violent and provocative acts, including the placing of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at the perimeter fence and other attempts to breach it with the intent of perpetrating attacks. ...

The dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, about which I have reported time and again in this chamber over the past year, has been compounded by the fact that the Palestinian Authority continues to withhold the payment of salaries to some 20,000 civil service employees in Gaza. ...

We must collectively call on all to refrain from unilateral measures that only steer us away from a peace process and instead work to end the occupation and advance the goal of a just and sustainable peace, culminating ultimately in two states, Israel and Palestine – of which Gaza is an integral part – two states living side by side in peace, security and prosperity.

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://unsc.unmissions.org/security-council-briefing-situation-gaza-delivered-un-special-coordinator-nikolay-mladenov>

## **Cycle of Violence in Gaza Must Stop, Top United Nations Official in Middle East Tells Security Council while Reporting 60 Demonstrators Killed Overnight**

**Mansour Ayyad Sh. A. Alotaibi (Kuwait)** ... expressed deep concern over Israel's unilateral actions to change the conditions in occupied territory and about the unilateral moves of other countries, noting that transferring embassies to Jerusalem violated resolution 478 (1980) in addition to causing anger and pushing the region into chaos. Peace began with ending the Israeli occupation on the basis of Council resolutions and ongoing peace processes, he emphasized.

**Nikki R. Haley (United States)** said "we are all concerned about violence in the Middle East", but there was a lot of violence in the region. ...

Some had said that yesterday's opening of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem was the reason for the violence, but that event did not undermine the prospects for peace in any way, she said. Instead, it was the Hamas terrorist organization that had been inciting violence for years, long before the embassy move was announced. ... Asking who among Council members would accept such behaviour on their own borders, she said no one acted with as much restraint as Israel. ...

Jerusalem was Israel's capital and no plausible peace agreement would change that. "We want nothing more than peace, in which the rights of all people are respected," she said, expressing hope that the nations of the world would join her. ...

**Olof Skoog (Sweden)** said his delegation was appalled by the violence witnessed in Gaza since 30 March, particularly yesterday's sharp escalation. While Israel had the right to protect itself and the people within its borders, it must fully respect the right to peaceful protest, protect civilians and ensure the strictly proportionate use of force and other measures. ...

**François Delattre (France)** ... France called for full and immediate respect for international humanitarian law and for human rights, especially the right to peaceful protest. While Israel had a legitimate right to defend its security, it must do so without using disproportionate levels of force, he said. Condemning the indiscriminate fire directed at demonstrators — which nothing could justify — he also called upon the protesters to refrain from violence. ...

**Dmitry A. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation)** expressed deep concern over the escalating tensions that had coincided with the transfer of the United States embassy to Jerusalem and the anniversary of the Day of Catastrophe. Negotiations on pressing issues, including Jerusalem, must be conducted by Israelis and Palestinians, he emphasized. Reaffirming the right to peaceful protest, he said the Russian Federation condemned the use of force against civilians. ... The Russian Federation maintained its offer to host a summit of the Israeli and Palestinian parties, he added, welcoming the involvement in peace efforts of constructively minded regional players such as Egypt. ...

**Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine** [emphasised] that the occupation was the main source of tension, he called for a full investigation and questioned why one State was blocking all other Council members from calling for independent inquiries into what amounted to a war crime against the Palestinian people, who had been exiled for more than 70 years. The oppression continued in occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, while Israel remained immune, he noted. ...

"How many more Palestinians have to die before you take action?", he asked, wondering how members would react if the same killings of unarmed people had taken place in their own countries. ...

The occupying Power had killed more than 60 people, including children, in less than 24 hours, using deadly ammunition and weapons and employing such force against civilians that it could be defined as terrorism, he said. "We do not accept being the exception," he added. Civilians had the right to assemble peacefully and demonstrate. Rejecting the ongoing racist discourse, including the insinuation that Palestinians were responsible for their own deaths because they were protesting the occupying Power's odious actions, he called for urgent action to ensure the protection of

children, women and journalists and the application of international law, particularly because the occupying Power had violated numerous Council resolutions, as well as the Geneva Conventions. ...

**Danny Danon (Israel)** said his country had faced violent riots at the security fence with the Gaza Strip. Rioters had thrown Molotov cocktails, planted explosive devices, rolled burning tyres, thrown flaming materials over the fence — igniting widespread fires across Israel's southern agricultural lands — and attempted to forcibly breach the fence and infiltrate Israeli territory. Hamas, a globally recognized terrorist organization, had radicalized its people, he said, recalling that, on 11 May, a Hamas-led mob had set fire to the Kerem Shalom border crossing, setting gas lines and electricity infrastructure on fire. The Israel Defense Forces had found and destroyed the ninth Hamas terror tunnel since last October, running along the Erez pedestrian crossing and ending metres from a village in Israel.

“Hamas lives on death” of both Israeli civilians and the innocent people in Gaza that it used as human shields, he said, adding that its terrorists hid behind children to ensure their own survival. ...

When a mob terrorized the fence, he continued, too many in the international community legitimized the Palestinian voice of violence. However, when it came to the safety of Israel's public, the world was silent. Describing the Palestinian “cycle of death”, he said that, as soon as Palestinians announced plans for so-called “days of rage”, Israel understood that Hamas would incite people to violence, place civilians in harm's way, count terrorists as civilian casualties and both demand and receive the sympathy of the United Nations. “We predicted this situation many months ago,” he said, noting that some in the international community had fallen into the trap and given Palestinians the attention they sought.

Recalling that, in 1948, when the United Nations had proposed the creation of a Jewish State and an Arab State in the land of Israel, the Jews had been given a portion of their historic homeland and they had taken it, grateful for having returned home. But, the Palestinians could not bear to share what had been Israeli land to begin with — “so they assaulted us”. While Israel had ultimately won that battle, Palestinian violence would not relent and too many in the international community “let them get away with it”, allowing them to inspire resolutions equating Zionism with racism. ...

The international community, with a few brave exceptions, had done nothing to stop Palestinians from terrorizing Israel on the world stage, he said, adding that it was only by breaking the cycle of orchestrated riots, planned casualties and pleas for United Nations sympathy could justice be served. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13338.doc.htm>

### **Gaza medics ‘struggling to cope with influx of wounded’: UN agencies**

Speaking after 58 Palestinians lost their lives and more than 1,300 were injured by Israeli security forces on Monday, the World Health Organization's Tarik Jasarevic said that life-saving drugs were “urgently needed”. ...

Two in every five essential drugs were “completely depleted” already this month, Mr Jasarevic explained, adding that essential life-saving medicines for chronic illnesses such as cancer were also “critically low”. ...

... medical teams at Shifa, in Gaza City, “are overwhelmed, dealing with hundreds of cases of injured, including women and children.” ...

The situation has not been helped by the stop-start delivery of humanitarian supplies.

These usually arrive via Gaza's main supply point, Kerem Shalom, but it was closed after being damaged, although an aid convoy had been allowed in by Israelis in recent days, Mr Laerke said.

“It has been closed indefinitely following extensive damage to the Gaza side of this crossing by Palestinians on 11 May. However, Israeli authorities have indicated that this

crossing will be opened for, 'select humanitarian needs' on a case-by-case basis and the day before yesterday they allowed seven trucks to enter Gaza and I understand that six of those trucks were carrying medical supplies." ...

During the protests some Palestinian demonstrators threw stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers, according to OHCHR's Mr Colville, who added that others had flown kites laden with "petrol-soaked material" over the fence that separates the two communities.

The response from the Israeli side – with tear gas, plastic bullets and live ammunition - had caused "horrific wounds and lifelong disability", Mr Colville said, before calling for "credible investigations" by Israel.

"Latterly we only seem to be seeing investigations carried out when there's a very clear bit of video evidence becoming public through witnesses and bystanders," he said. "And the official statements simply say this is all Hamas's fault and...just ignore the fact that the children are being killed, women are being killed, unarmed protesters are being killed in large numbers." ...

Confirming that Israel had a right to defend its borders, the OHCHR spokesperson said that its soldiers should do so in accordance with international norms on the use of lethal force.

"You just have to look at the casualty figures on both sides to see that it's not being used as a last resort," he said, adding that Israel was obliged "under international law, to handle these demonstrations in a way that preserves life, unless they own lives are very clearly directly threatened, which has not been the case." ...

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/05/1009752>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **\*\* European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/europeanunionwithdrawal.html>

Scottish Parliament debate.

Motion agreed:

*That the Parliament notes the legislative consent memorandums on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill lodged by the Scottish Government on 12 September 2017 and 26 April 2018, and the reports of the Finance and Constitution Committee of 9 January and 10 May 2018, and, because of clause 15 (formerly 11) and schedule 3, which constrain the legislative and executive competence of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government, does not consent to the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, and calls on both the UK and Scottish governments to convene cross-party talks in an attempt to broker an agreed way forward.*

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11533&i=104614#ScotParlOR>

#### **Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Integrated Communities Strategy green paper** (closing date 5 June 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

**Measures to further improve the effectiveness of the fight against illegal content online**  
(closing date 25 June 2018)

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-measures-further-improve-effectiveness-fight-against-illegal-content-online\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-measures-further-improve-effectiveness-fight-against-illegal-content-online_en)

**Home Education** (closing date 2 July 2018)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/home-education-call-for-evidence-and-revised-dfe-a/>

**Ecclesiastical exemption and guidance on scheduled monuments** (closing date 13 July 2018)

<https://beta.gov.wales/ecclesiastical-exemption-and-guidance-scheduled-monuments>

**Antisemitism: Survey of European Jews** (closing date not stated)

<http://www.eurojews.eu/>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438