

# Political Affairs Digest

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

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

## Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Universities: Hate Crime

**Jo Stevens (Labour)** [165616] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has estimated the number of hate crimes reported on university property in the 2016-17 academic year.

**Sam Gyimah:** The government takes all forms of hate crime extremely seriously. There is no place in our society - including within higher education – for hatred or any form of harassment, discrimination or racism.

Information on the number of hate crimes on university property in the 2016-17 academic year is not held centrally.

The Universities UK Harassment and Hate Crime Taskforce, which was set up in September 2015 at the government's request, makes a number of recommendations on tackling harassment and hate crime on campus, including on improving reporting rates and mechanisms for disclosure in higher education providers. These include, that relevant internal and external support should be signposted, and that reporting procedures should be centralised, accessible, and allow for anonymity if preferred, as well as enabling accurate data to be captured to determine the scale of a problem and track year on-year trends. The government expects higher education providers to take these recommendations seriously and to have robust policies and procedures in place to investigate and address hate crime.

To support providers in implementing the Taskforce's recommendations, the Office for Students is supporting and evaluating over 100 safeguarding projects to the value of £4.5 million. This includes 63 projects to improve responses to hate crime and online harassment on campus, and 11 to tackle religious-based hate crime.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165616/>

#### Post-mortems

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [164846] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's guidance on the practice of second post-mortems in accounting for recent technological advances.

**Edward Argar:** The Chief Coroner, who is responsible for issuing guidance to coroners, intends to issue revised guidance on the practice of second post-

mortems later this year. This will replace existing guidance (Home Office Circular 30/1999

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20040722015642/http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/hoc9930.html>).

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164846/>

## Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

### **Tell MAMA annual report launch**

... it's a real pleasure to be here for the launch of your important report

And to pay tribute to Tell MAMA's vital work – in combatting the scourge of Islamophobia and helping build a strong society – a society that thrives on its diversity.

A diversity that is all the richer for the immense contribution of our Muslim community. ...

And we should not forget how British Muslims, along with so many others, have stepped up so magnificently in times of crisis – after the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London and the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

It's essential we do more to celebrate these tremendous achievements, especially given the challenge we face when it comes to Islamophobia.

In recent months, we've seen some abhorrent incidents of Islamophobia – such as the Punish a Muslim Day letters.

This is utterly unacceptable and it will not be tolerated.

Someone has been charged in relation to it and it will go to trial later this year.

Because the message is clear: if you target any communities in our society in this way, you will be made to answer for it. ...

We need to do more to ensure that British Muslims feel safe to go about their lives as much as anyone else. ...

Whether it happens on our streets or online, we simply cannot tolerate Muslims being harassed, threatened, abused or facing violence and the fear and division this spreads in our society.

This government has been clear that no-one should be a target for hatred because of who they are – be that their religion, race, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. ...

Tell MAMA has also shown incredible solidarity:

- with Jewish communities fighting anti-Semitism
- LGBT communities fighting homophobia, and
- transphobia and people with disabilities fighting hatred and discrimination

You know that Islamophobia cannot be beaten on its own.

That hatred can only be defeated when all of us stand together and work together.

I share this determination. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/tell-mama-annual-report-launch>

## Tell Mama

### **Tell MAMA's Annual Report for 2017 Shows Highest Number of Anti-Muslim Incidents**

Director of Tell MAMA, Iman Atta OBE says ... "We are seeing more aggressive street-based incidents, younger perpetrators, between the ages of 13-18, increased vandalism and international interference by well organised social media accounts playing groups off in the UK. More than ever, we need to come together and redouble our efforts against those who seek to divide and play communities off against each other". ...

In 2017 Tell MAMA recorded a total of 1,330 reports. Of these reports, 1,201 were verified as being anti-Muslim or Islamophobic in nature and as having occurred in the UK ... More than two-thirds of verified incidents occurred offline, or on a street-level ... which represents a 30% rise in offline reports when compared to the previous reporting period ...

Crimes or incidents that are classified as 'online' occurred on social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, or on other Internet-based platforms, were verified as having happened within the UK, and account for a third of reports in 2017 ... which represents a 16.3% rise in reports when compared to the previous year ...

In 2017, vandalism replaced threatening behaviour as the third most common anti-Muslim hate incident. There was a 56% increase in anti-Muslim vandalism when compared with 2016, with one in ten 'real-world' incidents being classed as vandalism. (The most widely reported anti-Muslim hate incident was classified as 'abusive behaviour' with the second most reported frequency of incident classed as a 'physical attack'. This demonstrated a rise in physical intimidation and actions against Muslim faith institutions and property.) ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mamas-annual-report-for-2017-shows-highest-number-of-anti-muslim-incidents/>

**Beyond the Incident: Outcomes for victims of Anti-Muslim Prejudice**

<https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Tell-MAMA-Report-2017.pdf>

TOP

## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **Gaza: Reconstruction**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [164264] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent discussions she has had with international counterparts on the (a) Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism and (b) planned review of that programme.

**Alistair Burt:** My officials are discussing the future of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism with international counterparts, including the UN. On July 17<sup>th</sup> the UK met the UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General to discuss the priorities of the planned review.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-16/164264/>

#### **West Bank: Internally Displaced People**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [164266] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to (a) victims of forcible transfer and (b) people at risk of forcible transfer in the West Bank.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK supports Palestinian communities at risk of forcible transfer in Area C of the West Bank through our legal aid programme, which helps residents challenge decisions in the Israeli legal system. In around 97% of the cases supported by this programme demolitions and evictions have been suspended. Additionally the UK supports nearly 500 Palestinian families living in Area C to remain on their land by improving infrastructure and enabling access to education and health services.

We are currently considering how best we can further support Palestinian communities at risk of forcible transfer in the West Bank, and I will update the House once this is confirmed.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-16/164266/>

### **Gaza: Fisheries**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [164843] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on that country's decision to reduce the fishing area off the coast of Gaza from six to three nautical miles; and if he will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:** Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised our concerns regarding the additional restrictions imposed on Gaza with the Office of the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) on 18 July. The further restrictions that Israel has placed on Gaza will have a detrimental effect on the ordinary citizens of Gaza. A further deterioration in the already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza is in no-one's interests. Israel should therefore reverse this decision.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164843/>

### **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [164847] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether she plans to publish the first quarterly update and progress report on her Department's People for Peaceful Change project in the occupied Palestinian territories before the House rises for summer recess.

**Alistair Burt:** DFID is committed to ensuring the transparency of all UK official development assistance. The first annual review for this programme has been completed and submitted for publication on the Dev-Tracker website. It can take up to two months for the document to appear on the website. The first Quarterly Update will be distributed to interested Parliamentarians before summer recess.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164847/>

### **Israel: Human Rights**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [165453] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the decision of the Israeli Government not to attend the adoption of its recent Universal Periodic Review report at the UN Human Rights Council; and if he will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:** Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have expressed our deep concern to officials from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressing that the Universal Periodic Review deserves universal respect.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165453/>

### **Israel: Human Rights**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [165454] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the Government of Israel to act upon the three recommendations that the UK made to that country at its recent Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council.

**Alistair Burt:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made clear to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Universal Periodic Review deserves universal respect. Israeli officials have informed us that they will engage with the Universal Periodic Review process, and have noted the three recommendations made by the UK at Israel's recent Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165454/>

### **Occupied Territories: Health Services**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [165455] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 2286 and the protection of medical facilities and personnel in the context of the occupied Palestinian territory.

**Alistair Burt:** We regularly raise issues relating to medical facilities and personnel with the Israeli authorities. We have stressed the need for safe and unimpeded passage for medical personnel. In particular we raise our concerns about medical facilities in Gaza, and medical permits, with the office for the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). The UK has announced £1.5 million in funding for International Committee of the Red Cross appeal, which will help to treat patients in 11 hospitals under pressure in Gaza

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165455/>

### **Gaza: Health Services**

**Richard Burden (Labour)** [165457] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, whether her Department plans to extend long-term assistance to Gaza's health system in order to address the needs of patients with complex limb injuries who require specialist treatment and rehabilitation.

**Alistair Burt:** Our current support to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) supports the delivery of surgical equipment, drugs and disposables and physical rehabilitation services to around 4,000 Gazans rendered disabled following the recent surge in violence. To help disabled people regain mobility the ICRC will also continue to support the Artificial Limb Centre in Gaza. Our support in the longer term looks to address the underlying causes of humanitarian strife and raise living standards by focussing on increasing trade and job creation, enabling greater movement and access for people and goods, and enhancing the supply of electricity and clean water. Nevertheless, the UK stands ready to provide further urgent health assistance in Gaza, if required.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165457/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [164431] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of violence in Israel and the West Bank.

**Alistair Burt:** The Government remains concerned about violence in Israel and the West Bank, which makes the goal of peace harder to achieve. We press the parties to refrain from incitement and unhelpful rhetoric, and call on all parties to act with restraint, reject violence, and work together to ensure calm and stability.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-16/164431/>

### **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [164436] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May 2018 to Question 141795, what are the terms of engagement for the independent financial audit into DFID's project spending in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [164830] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May 2018 to Question 141795, on Palestinians: Overseas Aid, what the terms of engagement are for that independent financial audit.

**Alistair Burt:** Financial audits are carried out on all individual DFID programmes

operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The body carrying out the audits, and the terms of reference vary depending on the DFID programme, however all independent financial audits provide assurance to DFID that funds are spent and managed in line with agreed programme activities. The overall DFID OPTs portfolio is also subject to the regular audit cycle of DFID's Internal Audit Department and the National Audit Office.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-16/164436/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164830/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

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

### **Palestinians: Overseas Aid**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [165443] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 15 May 2018 to Question 141795, on Palestinians: Overseas Aid, which the auditing body was that was charged with carrying out the independent financial audit.

**Alistair Burt:** Financial audits are carried out on all individual DFID programmes operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). The body carrying out the audits, and the terms of reference for these audits vary depending on the DFID programme in operation in the OPTs, however all programmes receive full independent financial audits to provide assurance to DFID that disbursed funds are spent and managed in line with agreed programme activities. The overall DFID OPTs programme portfolio is also subject to the regular audit cycle of DFID's Internal Audit Department and the National Audit Office.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165443/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

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

### **Palestinians: Terrorism**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [164827] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the PA Minister of Culture declaring March 16 as National Reading Day out of loyalty to the Martyrs.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK Government deplores any act of incitement to violence. Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority (PA) includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. During my most recent visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in May 2018, I personally led this year's high level annual meeting as part of our annual dialogue with the PA where I challenged the PA on a number of issues such as incitement, though I did not raise this specific incident. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle of non-violence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164827/>

### **Palestinians: Terrorism**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [164828] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the

commemoration on Official PA TV on 20 April 2018 of the death of Abu Jihad who was responsible for the murder of 125 Israelis and his declaration that with our skulls we are paving the path to certain victory.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK Government deplores any act of incitement to violence. Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority (PA) includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. During my most recent visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in May 2018, I personally led this year's high level annual meeting as part of our annual dialogue with the PA where I challenged the PA on a number of issues such as incitement, though this allegation was not known at the time. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle of non-violence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164828/>

### **Latifa Abu Hmeid**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [164829] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2017 to Question 8641, and with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the honouring of Latifa Abu Hmeid by PA officials as a crown on all of our heads on 17 June 2018 as a result of her son, Islam Abu Hmeid, having murdered Israeli soldier Ronen Lyubarsk.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK Government deplores any act of incitement to violence. Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority (PA) includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. During my most recent visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in May 2018, I personally led this year's high level annual meeting as part of our annual dialogue with the PA where I challenged the PA on a number of issues such as incitement, though this allegation was not raised as it was unknown at the time. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle of non-violence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164829/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-09-05/8641/>

### **Palestinians: Television**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [165444] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Palestinian Authority (PA), what discussions her Department has had with the PA on the decision by official Palestinian Authority TV to honour Habbes Bayyoud, Muhammad Nawarah, and Jawad Abu Qara, who murdered two Israeli reserve soldiers in October 2000 in an episode of Giants of Endurance, a programme screened on official PA TV on 16 June 2018.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK Government deplores any act of incitement to violence. Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority (PA) includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle language and avoid actions that could incite violence or hatred. During my most recent visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories in May 2018, I personally led this year's high level annual meeting as part of our annual dialogue with the PA where I challenged the PA on a number of issues such as incitement. The UK continues to urge the Palestinian leadership to uphold this principle of non-violence.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165444/>

### **Palestinians: Terrorism**

**Joan Ryan (Labour)** [165445] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 11 May 2018 to Question 141671, whether the Palestinian Authority has made decision on whether to provide payments to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails directly.

**Alistair Burt:** The UK is not aware of any plans for the Palestinian Authority to provide direct payments to Palestinian Prisoners.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165445/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-08/141671/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Wera Hobhouse (Liberal Democrat)** [165130] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to help establish an independent inquiry into the violence in Gaza on 14 May.

**Alistair Burt:** The Prime Minister stressed the need for Israel to carry out a transparent, independent inquiry into recent protests in Gaza when she met Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in London on 6 June. We have called for this investigation to include international members.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/165130/>

### **Gaza: Disaster Relief**

**Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op)** [165174] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant the Answer of 10 July 2018 to Answer 160363 on Gaza: Disaster Relief, whether difficulties with permits and access were experienced when the Emergency Medical Team was deployed to Gaza in 2014.

**Alistair Burt:** Members of the UK Emergency Medical Team (EMT) were deployed to Gaza in 2014, through the DFID programme 'Support to the UK International Emergency Trauma Register'. Difficulties were experienced with permits and access during the conflict; however, some of the team were able to secure access immediately after the 2014 conflict to treat 156 patients and train 364 health workers.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/165174/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-03/160363/>

### **Gaza: Health Services**

**Anneliese Dodds (Labour)** [165175] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the potential (a) immediate and (b) long-term effect of the UK-MED specialist rehabilitation team cell on people injured by lower limb gunshot wounds in Gaza.

**Alistair Burt:** Taking into account lessons learned from previous deployments, including safety concerns for deploying UK nationals and problems with access and permits, the current Emergency Medical Team is not designed to be deployed into active conflict zones. Therefore no such assessment has been made.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/165175/>

### **Gaza: Disaster Relief**

**Anneliese Dodds (Labour Co-op)** [165176] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 10 July 2018 to Question 160362 on Disaster Relief, for what reasons the UK Emergency Medical Team was not deployed to Gaza.

**Alistair Burt:** Taking into account lessons learned from previous deployments, including safety concerns for deploying UK nationals and problems with access and permits, the current Emergency Medical Team is not designed to be deployed into active conflict zones.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/165176/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-03/160362/>

### **Occupied Territories**

**Dan Carden (Labour)** [165688] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the Israeli Government's policy of restricting access to the Occupied Palestinian Territories for international visitors; and if he will make a statement.

**Alistair Burt:** We have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities. However we remain concerned about Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement and access into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and we continue to raise these wider concerns with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165688/>

### **Occupied Territories: Foreign Nationals**

**Dan Carden (Labour)** [165689] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the Israeli Government's refusal to grant residency permits and visas to foreign nationals who have made their home and livelihood in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

**Alistair Burt:** We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165689/>

### **Occupied Territories: Tourism**

**Dan Carden (Labour)** [165690] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on ensuring access to (a) Gaza and (b) Occupied Palestinian Territories for international visitors.

**Alistair Burt:** We have not had any discussions with the Israeli authorities on this specific issue, however we remain concerned about Israeli restrictions on freedom of movement and access into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We continue to raise these wider concerns with the Israeli authorities. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, advises against all travel to Gaza however. Permission to access Gaza is granted by either the Israeli or Egyptian Authorities. Entry to, and exit from, Gaza can be very difficult.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-18/165690/>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### China: Middle East

**The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative)** [HL9502] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the government of China's (1) offer of 100 million yuan in aid to the Palestinians reported on 10 July, and (2) proposal to form a strategic partnership with the Arab League to become the keeper of peace and stability in the Middle East.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst we have not made any specific assessment of this issue, we are aware of the offer and will continue to monitor any developments.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-12/HL9502/>

## UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) (1543) Foreign national visa in the Palestinian Territories** – That this House expresses concern over reports that the Israeli Government is increasingly refusing to renew the residency permits and visas of foreign nationals who live and work in the Palestinian Territories; affirms the view that foreign nationals must be granted access to visit, travel and live in the Palestinian Territories unless there are legitimate security concerns; supports those foreign nationals who have made the Occupied Palestinian Territory their centre of life and built their careers in Palestine; believes that actions and policies which isolate Palestinians will harm peace building efforts; and calls on the Government to apply all appropriate diplomatic pressure to ensure foreign nationals, including British nationals, as well as aid workers have unhindered access to Palestine and for Israeli authorities to provide all assistance required to those who seek permits to reside in the Palestinian Territories.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1543>

## United Nations

**Any Further Violence in Gaza, Occupied Territory, Risks Inflaming Already Fragile Situation, High Commissioner Warns in Briefing to Palestinian Rights Committee**

... Riyadh Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine ... [said] "We have just witnessed a latest round of aggression against our people in the Gaza Strip" in which the Israeli forces unleashed firepower on the population there ...

He noted that, in a dangerous recent development, Israel has legislated that the State does not belong to all its citizens, but, instead, to the Jewish people. "Shame on them for giving preference if you belong to a certain religion," he stressed, describing the move as racist and yet another step towards apartheid. ...

South Africa's representative described the situation in Palestine as "the tragedy of our times". Recalling the origins of the crisis — the 1917 Balfour Declaration — he underlined that the United Nations itself has failed subsequently to establish a free and independent State of Palestine. "We are to blame," and the United Nations must take full responsibility, he said. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/gapal1414.doc.htm>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Briefing to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including the ongoing crisis in Gaza: Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein**

... On two occasions in the past two weeks, we have seen the heaviest exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and armed groups in Gaza since the 2014 escalation of hostilities. Just three days ago the situation almost exploded into a serious conflict triggered by the killing of an Israeli soldier, and subsequent killings of four Palestinian civilians. During the weekend of 14 July, the Israeli Security Forces launched at least 28 airstrikes firing over 50 missiles; two Palestinian children were killed and 35 people were injured. At the same time Palestinian armed groups fired some 184 rockets and mortar shells towards Israel, with a number landing in southern Israel, injuring three Israelis. Burning kites and incendiary balloons were also deployed by Palestinians. I remind all parties that any disproportionate or indiscriminate use of weapons which lead to the death and injury of civilians is prohibited by international humanitarian law. ...

Palestinians living in Gaza regularly endure waves of violence which compound the already extreme humanitarian crisis. Skyrocketing unemployment and poverty, crumbling infrastructure, record food-dependency and a bleak political horizon are together creating massive, devastating and multifaceted deprivation which is entirely man-made and entirely preventable.

The Committee is aware of the shocking recent killings during demonstrations along the Gaza fence. Over 100 Palestinians, including 17 children, have been killed by Israeli security forces in this context since 30 March this year. More than 4100 were injured with live ammunition. A Special Session held by the Human Rights Council on 18 May resolved to dispatch an independent, international Commission of Inquiry. ...

It is essential that the authorities cooperate with the future Commission to advance accountability for these killings, as well as all alleged violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Currently, although Israel has put in place a number of accountability mechanisms, there are serious concerns that these are not in compliance with the international standards of independence, impartiality, and effectiveness. Very few investigations ever occur; in the rare cases where an investigation has led to an indictment, the sentence has been extremely lenient in light of the gravity of the crime committed.

It is also vital to address the root causes of the recent demonstrations – including the grossly inadequate living conditions inflicted on Gaza residents ...

Last week's adoption by Israel of the Nation-State Basic Law – which anchors inherent discrimination against non-Jewish communities, most notably the Arab citizens of Israel and residents of occupied East Jerusalem – could also further inflame tensions. ...

Since the beginning of 2018, settler attacks on Palestinians have spiked to the highest monthly average of the past three years. Demolitions and forced displacement in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem have decreased from the peak of last year, but the past 12 months have seen 366 structures demolished in the West Bank alone – including 11 school structures – and recent weeks have witnessed a fresh wave of demolitions across the occupied West Bank. ...

Of great concern at present is the situation of Khan al Ahmar-abu Helu –one of 46 Palestinian Bedouin communities at risk of forcible transfer in the West Bank, and one of 18 communities in the so-called E1 area which the Israeli authorities plan to use to connect the Maale Adummim settlement bloc and East Jerusalem. ...

The Committee will recall the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the separation wall and its associated régime, encompassing and expanding the settlements in the occupied West Bank. The Court found that the Wall violates customary international law in many respects, including the right to self-determination

and other fundamental rights such as liberty of movement as well as the right to work, to health, to education and to an adequate standard of living. ...

Hundreds of Palestinian children have been detained by Israel – some without charge, under the so called "administrative detention" system, which constitutes a fundamental human rights violation. It should be absolutely clear that international law requires detention only be used for children as a last resort. And whether for children or for adults, detention without trial, on evidence that is often kept secret, under often indefinitely renewable administrative detention orders, contravenes Israel's obligations under international law, and must come to an end. ...

I am disturbed by arbitrary arrests and detentions of activists and human rights defenders by the Israeli authorities, with attempts to undermine and limit the work of human rights defenders and civil society. ...

I also have concerns about restrictions on civil society being developed and imposed by the Palestinian Authority. ...

Above all, as this Committee knows very well, only an end to occupation can bring about lasting peace, and establish the conditions in which the human rights of all can be fully respected and each side respects the humanity and equality of the other. All States have a responsibility to realise this hope – too long promised, and too long denied.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23394&LangID=E>

### **Israel's proposed demolition of Palestine village Khan al-Ahmar could result in war crime, warns UN rights expert**

Israel must stop its planned demolition of the Palestinian Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar, near Jerusalem, and must be held to account if it proceeds as scheduled with its destruction, says a UN human rights expert.

"The very real threat to demolish Khan al-Ahmar further exacerbates the coercive environment in which the village community lives, and could force residents to leave their homes," said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

"Forcing the transfer of a protected community would be a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and could amount to a war crime under the 1998 Rome Statute," he warned.

Khan al-Ahmar is a village of 180 Bedouin Palestinians about 15 km northeast of Jerusalem, within Area C of the West Bank, as defined by the Oslo Accords. The village has repeatedly been denied building permits by Israel, and demolition equipment was moved to its outskirts earlier in July, after the Israeli Supreme Court denied petitions from the villagers.

The people living in Khan al-Ahmar are descendants of Bedouin communities expelled from the Negev by Israel in the 1950s. The communities resettled in the West Bank, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, but they have since been under threat of forcible removal by Israel.

"I applaud the determined efforts of the Khan al-Ahmar residents to bring local and international attention to their plight. These people have practised largely peaceful civil resistance in a situation that is clearly unjust, and they have won support from many quarters for their determination," said the UN expert.

Khan al-Ahmar is in an area between two large Israeli settlements, Ma'ale Adumim and Kfar Adumim, and an Israeli industrial zone called Mishor Adumim. Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations say the village lands are important to Israeli plans to build an urban bridge linking these settlements to Jerusalem.

"I commend the efforts by those in the international diplomatic and political community, and human rights campaigners, to oppose the destruction of Khan al-Ahmar," said the Special Rapporteur.

"International pressure has often been the only source of restraint on Israel's unlawful actions to expand its settlements, annex more Palestinian lands and strangle any future

agreement based on justice, equality and human rights, and one that brings a complete end to the occupation,” he added.

However, the Special Rapporteur warned that international condemnation alone would be unlikely to end the current ominous trend in the occupied territory.

“Many more Palestinian communities in Area C are at risk in the near future of forcible transfer. Within the E1 area alone, there are 17 other Bedouin communities which face the same coercive environment, and the same fate as Khan al-Ahmar,” Mr. Lynk said.

“To be effective, the international community must be prepared to hold Israeli decision-makers legally and diplomatically accountable for their unlawful actions. They must demand that Israel halts all measures that could result in forcible transfer, enlist diplomatic and political support to end the systemic human rights abuses to which Palestinians in the occupied territory are subjected, and ensure the occupation is ended.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23397&LangID=E>

TOP

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **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>

### **Scottish Parliament**

#### **Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

TOP

## **Consultations** \*\* new or updated today

#### **Financial Memorandum of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

(closing date 31 August 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/109042.aspx>

#### **Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 4 September 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/108999.aspx>

#### **20 years of the Human Rights Act** (closing date 14 September 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/20-years-human-rights-act-launch-17-19/>

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