



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Two-State Vision Farther Away as Situation Deteriorates, Secretary-General Tells United Nations International Media Seminar on Peace in Middle East

... Our goal of achieving a peaceful and just solution of the Palestinian question remains elusive. As I have repeatedly said, this can only be achieved through realization of the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Unfortunately, over the past year, we have only moved farther away from that objective as the situation has deteriorated. Palestinians and Israelis continue to suffer from deadly cycles of violence.

The ongoing political, economic and humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has reached alarming proportions. The situation in Gaza is of special concern as approximately 2 million Palestinians remain under severe movement and access restrictions, mired in increasing poverty and unemployment, with limited access to adequate health, education, water and electricity.

The international community must act with speed and determination to address Palestine's urgent economic and humanitarian needs. Yet no amount of humanitarian or economic support will resolve the conflict. The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to end the conflict on the basis of international law, relevant UN resolutions and previous agreements. I count on your support and engagement in making peace in the Middle East a reality.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sqsm19730.doc.htm>

International Media Seminar Opens with Exploration of Challenges, Opportunities for Journalists Telling Human Stories from Occupied Palestinian Territory

... The Seminar opened with a panel discussion on the theme "The Humanitarian Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory". ...

Ms. Pumpyanskaya [Director of the Strategic Communications Division in the United Nations Department of Global Communications] said that after more than 70 years of conflict, the situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza has degenerated into a political, social, economic and humanitarian quagmire. Despite international attempts to find a viable solution, the conflict continues, and the humanitarian

situation has deteriorated. Opening the discussion, she asked panellists to elaborate on the factors that triggered the current crisis.

Ms. Hary [Executive Director, Gisha] ... [emphasized] that human rights violations and the humanitarian crisis are not “the sad outcome of a lack of resolution to conflict” but rather intentional attempts to further the occupation ... Israel controls Gaza by imposing serious restrictions on movement and access. The man-made crisis must be viewed more broadly and cannot be resolved simply by building water plants or providing aid or jobs — though all those are urgently needed. Instead, what is most needed is hope and freedom. ...

... she added that the annexation plans announced by Prime Minister Netanyahu will only exacerbate the Palestinians’ isolation. ...

Mr. Mansour [Permanent Observer, State of Palestine] agreed that the situation on the ground in Gaza is tragic and arises in large part from the long-standing economic blockade. However, the isolation of those living elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is no less tragic. “Our people are struggling, like all people living under occupation, for freedom, independence and dignity,” he stressed. ...

Noting that occupations are meant to end after a short time, he said that after decades, an occupation becomes colonialism. ...

Mr. Mansour said the international community has demonstrated massive political support for UNRWA in the face of efforts to dismantle it. ... As Israel attempts to gain the political upper hand by seeking to take the issues of refugees and Jerusalem off the negotiating table, and the United States engages in financial blackmail, he called on the international community to fund UNRWA and persuade capitals not to move their embassies to Jerusalem. ...

Ms. Hary said that surviving and thriving is a revolutionary act in the context of Israel’s attempts to empty out the Occupied Palestinian Territory. ...

Ahmed Shihab-Eldin, a senior correspondent for *AJ+*, cited reports about Israel’s attempts to limit the number of calories and medical supplies entering the Occupied Palestinian Territory and asked panellists how Israelis can justify such actions. ...

Ms. Hary replied that a recent poll showed that about two thirds of Israelis are aware of the Gaza crisis, but the majority feel they are not responsible for it. ...

... the day’s second panel discussion, titled “The situation in Gaza: Ongoing Challenges for Media Reporting” ...

Ms. Waheidi [researcher and former reporter for *The New York Times* in Gaza] ... Stressing that there are no civil liberties or political rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, she said local journalists — who often serve as sources of information for foreign reporters — have been detained, targeted and killed. Both traditional and non-traditional journalists must work together to present the facts, she said, noting that the larger question is about their ability to report without being shot and killed by the Israel Defense Forces. ...

Ms. Hass [journalist and columnist for *Haaretz*] said that whereas the Government does not restrict her reporting, no structural change is possible because the Israeli public still feel they have a “duty to know”. To illustrate that point, she shared an anecdote about a Palestinian farmer whom she assisted in small ways — given her status as an Israeli journalist — but whose broader life she was unable to impact. ...

Ms. Waheidi said she once covered the story of a young Palestinian man shot by Egyptian soldiers in 2015 while crossing the border, who died after failing to gain access to medical care. She described attacks against journalists, including intentionally wounding them by shooting at their legs, as symbolic actions against press freedom. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/pal2233.doc.htm>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill

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

Domestic Abuse Bill

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

International Development Assistance (Palestinian National Authority Schools) Bill

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

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

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

Online Forums Bill

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

Palestinian Statehood (Recognition) Bill

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

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Islamophobia in Scotland (closing date 30 September 2019)

<https://forms.ncl.ac.uk/view.php?id=13027>

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