



Representing, connecting and supporting Jewish people in Scotland

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Israel

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Joint statement on possible annexation of areas in the West Bank

In a joint statement France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom said:

We are deeply concerned about the announcement of a possible annexation of areas in the West Bank, particularly the Jordan valley and the northern portion of the Dead Sea.

This would, if implemented, constitute a serious breach of international law. France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom will continue to call on all parties to refrain from actions in contravention of international law that would imperil the viability of a two-state solution, based on the 1967 lines, and make it harder to achieve a just and lasting peace.

We are clear about Israel's right to security and strongly condemn recent attacks on Israel from Gaza.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-on-possible-annexation-of-areas-in-the-west-bank>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-18865 John Finnie (Green): Benjamin Netanyahu's Intention to Annex Palestinian Territory – That the Parliament condemns the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu's stated intention to annex Palestinian territory in the occupied West Bank; considers that such action would be in contravention of international law; understands that annexation would pose a threat to peace in the region and further undermine the likelihood of a two-state solution; notes UN calls for the illegal settlements to end; offers solidarity to Palestinians in the occupied territories, and calls on the international community to support the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign in its efforts to support justice for Palestine and pressure the Israeli Government to comply with international law.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-18865>

United Nations

International Media Seminar on Middle East Peace Concludes with Discussion of ‘Hashtag Activism’, Reporting about Women in Occupied Territory

... During the morning panel, titled “Women of the Conflict: Are Their Stories Reported?”, speakers discussed the ways in which women are impacted differently than men by the Israel-Palestine conflict, as well as whether their stories are sufficiently reflected in news reporting. ...

Panellist **Ali Ghaith**, a contributor to the independent global media platform OpenDemocracy, said ... In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, many news outlets paint Palestinian women as victims with no agency of their own. ...

Ms. Saragusti [filmmaker, book editor and freelance journalist and writer] responded that women do face different challenges and their stories are not, in fact, sufficiently reported. Sharing the story of two young women murdered in Israel in 2018 as a result of domestic violence — which led to protests across the country — she said that, while Israel’s media covered the murders, strikes and protests, most failed to link them to the conflict, which has flooded the population with guns and ammunition. Violence against women is also closely tied to discrimination and stereotypical attitudes, as well as women’s exclusion from the public sphere. Describing her own work as a feminist reporter in Gaza, she said that, despite her expertise, male pundits were often invited to discuss the conflict on television programmes “above my head”. ...

Mr. Ghaith said reporting on women is crucial whether there is a conflict or not. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, women suffer under a patriarchal system that is present to some extent all over the world, trying their best to voice their views and engage in their communities. The obstacles they face also extend into workplaces, pay checks, classrooms and homes. “This is what we are not seeing in the media,” he stressed. ...

Ms. Guimond [Special Representative to the Palestine Country Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women] outlined the challenges facing all residents of Gaza, including movement restrictions, settler violence, water shortages, human rights abuses and a decade-long blockade that has resulted in a perpetual humanitarian crisis and aid dependence. However, those elements impact girls and women differently, as families choose to take their daughters out of school due to security concerns and women bear the added burden of finding water for their families when it is in short supply. Moreover, the demolition of homes — the sphere where many women spend most of their time — affects them more heavily than men. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/pal2235.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN expert says Israel’s planned Jordan Valley annexation is illegal, puts at risk two-state solution

A UN human rights expert has denounced comments by Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu that he would order the annexation of the Jordan Valley if re-elected prime minister, saying such action would represent a flagrant challenge to the modern rules-based international order.

“To assert the right to annex in the 21st century is to attempt to re-enter a world that no longer exists,” said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

“Annexation is strictly prohibited under international law under any circumstances, let alone for political or electoral considerations.

“Now, with this announcement, the patina of a temporary occupation has surely come to an end. Israel, the occupying power, has demonstrated no willingness to either fulfill its international obligations or to accept the many United Nations resolutions commanding it to stop its illegal settlement enterprise and to end its 52-year old occupation.”

Annexation was outlawed by the international community in 1945, with the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations. ...

“By annexing these areas, Israel will further confine Palestinians to live in small, fragmented and disconnected cantons while others will continue to live under Israeli military rule,” Lynk said. “The annexation, if realized, will effectively end the illusion of a meaningful two-state solution, and will instead further entrench a one state reality of separate and vastly unequal legal systems, political rights and social opportunities.”

The Special Rapporteur called on the international community to go beyond simply issuing a verbal rebuke of the annexation announcement. “Criticism devoid of consequences can no longer be justified with respect to this conflict. This prolonged occupation will not die of old age. Only by employing meaningful counter-measures to this illegal occupation will there be any chance of reversing this promise of annexation, and ultimately ending the occupation itself,” he said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24981&LanglD=E>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

United Nations

‘Reaffirm the sanctity’ of religious sites, says Guterres, launching new plan to ‘counter hate and violence’

Amidst a global call by Secretary-General António Guterres to “reaffirm the sanctity” of religious sites and keep worshippers safe, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) on Thursday launched a new plan of action to “counter hate and violence around the globe”.

“Religious sites are powerful symbols of our collective consciousness”, said the UN chief. “When people are attacked because of their religion or beliefs, all of society is diminished”.

Mr. Guterres underscored that houses of worship must be “safe havens for reflection and peace, not sites of bloodshed and terror” and all people “must be allowed to observe and practice their faiths in peace”.

In the aftermath of horrific attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand; the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh; three Catholic churches in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday; and an increasing number of hate-based attacks targeting religious sites worldwide, the UNAOC was asked by the UN chief, to develop Thursday’s Plan of Action.

According to the Secretary-General, this is complemented by the [Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#), which coordinates efforts across the UN system to address the root causes of incendiary language and respond effectively.

“Taken together, both plans provide important and mutually reinforcing new tools to combat intolerance and promote peaceful coexistence”, the UN chief said. ...

“The best way to overcome the threat of violence based on unacceptable forms of manipulation of religion and belief is by uniting our voices for good, countering messages of hate with messages of peace, embracing diversity as a richness not a threat, investing in social cohesion and protecting human rights” underscored Mr. Guterres.

He maintained that “together we can help prevent attacks against religious sites and do

our part to secure the safety of the faithful to worship in peace". ...

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1046182>

TOP

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>

The 2017-2019 session of Parliament has prorogued and this Bill will make no further progress.

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>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

Islamophobia in Scotland (closing date 30 September 2019)

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

TOP

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