

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Andrew Murrison: We have not made an assessment of this matter. However we have stressed to Israel the need for independent and transparent investigations of deaths. We are deeply concerned by the significant deaths and injuries of civilians in Gaza over the last year. We urge the Israeli Government to publish the findings of the investigations launched by the Military Attorney General on 13 March. The UK remains concerned about the use of live ammunition and excessive force by the Israel Defense Forces. While Israel has the right to self-defence, it is vital that its actions are proportionate and seek to avoid civilian casualties. Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories remains a human rights country of concern.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-07-16/277647/>

Palestinians: Health Professions

Virendra Sharma (Labour) [278456] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent to which the Israeli Government's internal investigations into the killings of Palestinian health workers comply with international standards of independence, impartiality, promptness, thoroughness and transparency.

Andrew Murrison: While we have not made an assessment of this matter, we have stressed to Israel the need for independent and transparent investigations of deaths. We are deeply concerned by the significant deaths and injuries of civilians in Gaza over the last year. We urge the Israeli Government to publish the findings of the investigations launched by the Military Attorney General on 13 March. The UK remains concerned about the use of live ammunition and excessive force by the Israel Defence Forces. While Israel has the right to self-defence, it is vital that

its actions are proportionate and seek to avoid civilian casualties.

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UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN human rights experts call on Israel to halt demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem

Two UN human rights experts have condemned Israel's demolition of 10 buildings comprising approximately 70 housing units in Sur Baher, a Palestinian neighbourhood of East Jerusalem.

"We are following the developments in this matter very closely," said Leilani Farha, the Special Rapporteur for the right to housing, and Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur for human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

"We are deeply concerned that, following the dismissal by the Israeli High Court on Sunday of a petition by the residents of the designated housing units against the impending demolition order, the buildings have now been demolished.

"The demolition of these apartment buildings aggravates the coercive environment that many Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, face. The international community has critically commented on a number of occasions about the extremely low rates of housing construction permits allowed by the Israeli authorities for Palestinians seeking to build, or add to, homes in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem."

The demolition of these housing units in Sur Baher is part of a larger pattern of home demolitions occurring in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. According to information available to the UN experts, Israeli authorities have demolished a total of 63 East Jerusalem housing units so far in 2019. Over the same period in 2018, 37 East Jerusalem housing units were demolished.

"What is required in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are fair and equitable planning policies for the construction of housing," said the UN experts.

The area in Sur Baher where the housing units were located is technically within the West Bank, but it lies on the Jerusalem side of Israel's separation wall. The apartment buildings were built with the proper construction permits issued by the Palestinian authorities. However, the Israeli military issued an order in 2011 prohibiting construction within 100-300 metres of the wall.

According to the Fourth Geneva Convention, any destruction of private property by an Occupying Power is prohibited except where it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations. "As the International Court of Justice found in its 2004 advisory opinion on the construction of the separation wall, the route of the wall, including those parts of the wall which are constructed inside of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is not justifiable on the basis of military exigencies nor by national security," Lynk said.

"The home demolitions in Sur Baher appear to be forced evictions in violation of article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other human rights," the experts said, calling upon the Government of Israel to ensure that it upholds its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Earlier this week, the UN human rights experts raised their concerns directly with the Government of Israel. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24854&LanglD=E>

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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

Civil Partnerships: Next Steps Conversion (closing date 20 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/civil-partnerships-next-steps-and-consultation-on-conversion>

Regulation of pre-paid funeral plans (closing date 25 August 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/regulation-of-pre-paid-funeral-plans-consultation-on-a-policy-proposal>

Islamophobia in Scotland (closing date 26 August 2019)

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

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