

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Israel

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office

#### **Gaza ceasefire, November 2019**

A Foreign Office spokesperson said: "We welcome the ceasefire reached between Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. We are grateful to Egypt and the UN for their mediation efforts. The indiscriminate attacks against civilians by Palestinian Islamic Jihad were completely unacceptable. We greatly regret the loss of civilian life in Gaza and urge all parties to adhere to the ceasefire arrangement."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gaza-ceasefire-november-2019-uk-statement>

### United Nations

#### **Speakers Voice Concern over Attempts to Alter Status of Holy Sites in Jerusalem, as Fourth Committee Concludes Debate on Israeli Practices in Occupied Arab Lands**

Delegates expressed concern ... over Israel's attempts to change the status of holy sites in Jerusalem, as the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization) concluded its general debate on that country's practices that affect the human rights of people in occupied Arab lands. ...

**Ido Bromberg (Israel)** recalled claims that Israel has disobeyed more than 100 United Nations resolutions, while saying the resolutions are built upon each other, self-referencing and adopted by a pre-declared majority. Citing the Jordanian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement of 1949, he said that when his country took control of the West Bank in 1967, it did not cross any agreed or accepted international border, and therefore did not take land from any sovereign Palestinian entity. He emphasized that Palestinians have not acknowledged the Jewish people's right to self-determination, despite claims to the contrary, and pointed out that Palestinian textbooks contain maps that exclude the Israeli territory from any configuration.

If the Special Committee were truly interested in Palestinian human rights, it would address all factors affecting those rights, including the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, he continued. Recalling that more than 360 rockets were launched into Israel from the Gaza Strip over the past three days, he stressed that launching rockets at Israeli civilian centres

from behind Palestinian civilians is a war crime rather than a defensive action. Such tactics by Palestinian militants place the people for whom they claim to fight at risk, he said, underlining that Israel does everything in its power to avoid civilian casualties, in accordance with international law. ...

**Mohammad Reza Sahraei (Iran)** ... noted that the Special Committee's report contains disturbing findings as to how the Israeli regime treats the Palestinian people, with 180 Palestinians killed and more than 19,000 injured between September 2018 and August 2019. Emphasizing that Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands is at the epicentre of all conflicts in the Middle East, he said the Palestinians are denied their right to self-determination under the pretext of "one Jewish State". Israel has also taken measures to alter or eliminate the presence of Jerusalem's Palestinian Christians and Muslims, with the support of the United States. ...

**Youssef El Mezouaghi (Morocco)** called for an end to the violence against the Palestinian people, describing it as a flagrant violation of international law undermining the prospects for a two-State solution. Rejecting attempts to undermine the status of Al-Quds, he recalled that King Mohammed VI of Morocco and Pope Francis agreed that the special status of Jerusalem as a multi-religion city must be maintained ...

**Nasria Elarja Flitti, observer for the League of Arab States** ... noted that unarmed demonstrators are subjected to violence in the occupied territories. During the Great March of Return, she recalled, many children were victims of Israel's use of excessive force, she observed, reiterating her delegation's condemnation of that country's actions in the Syrian Golan as well. Palestinians are living under the yoke of violence and instability, with no hope for a secure life, she said, emphasizing that the solution to the Palestinian question must involve ending Israel's colonization. ...

**The representative of Israel**, noting that his country is ranked thirtieth on the world democratic index, pointed out that Palestinians can approach the Supreme Court in Israel and seek support from Israeli non-governmental organizations. ... Rejecting claims that his country is attempting to change the status of Al-Quds, he said the very fact that the resolution under discussion does not refer to the Temple Mount by that name but only by its Arabic name is outrageous and proves Palestinian intentions to sever Jewish ties to Jerusalem. ... Recalling the expulsion of Jews from Arab countries in 1948, he said Jewish refugees did not have an UNRWA or Special Committee to investigate their status, although they are also victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict. ...

**The observer for the State of Palestine** rejected the distortions made by the representative of Israel. ... she emphasized that the international community must not remain silent while Israel belittles international law, pointing out that Palestinian children have lost their lives since the last meeting of the Special Committee. ... Criticism is on the side of international law, which Israel violates through occupation, colonization and de facto annexation ... Regarding that country's standing as a democracy, she underlined that a democracy does not privilege one part of its population as superior to all others, behaving like an apartheid State. ...

**Agnes Coutou, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**, said the applicability of international humanitarian law to multinational forces depends exclusively on the circumstances prevailing on the ground ... Emphasizing the need for United Nations peacekeeping missions to maintain the "do-no-harm" principle at the centre of their operations and mindset, she suggested that the relevant policymakers increase the ceiling of mission police components, both to enhance community engagement and to better deliver law-enforcement-related tasks. She also recommended that missions focus on unarmed protective activities that contribute directly to gains in protection...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/gaspd712.doc.htm>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **UN expert welcomes ruling on labelling of Israeli settlements products by European Court of Justice**

A UN expert has applauded the 12 November 2019 ruling by the European Court of Justice which held that food products produced by Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory must indicate that they originate from a settlement, and not as a "product of Israel". "This judgement is principled, and an important first step to building a legal culture of accountability when it comes to Israel's settlements," said Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. "These settlements are illegal under international law. They are a purported war crime under the Statute of Rome. So, at the very least, European consumers must have accurate information before them when they make purchasing choices." ...

"Importantly, the Court pointed out that the European Union has committed itself to the strict observance of international law ... According to international law, the Israeli settlements violate the Fourth Geneva Convention's prohibition against civilian settlements in occupied territory, and they obstruct the right of the Palestinian people to enjoy self-determination."

The ruling by the European Court of Justice follows a similar judgement in *Kattenburg v. Canada* by the Federal Court of Canada in June 2019. The Government of Canada is appealing the decision to the Federal Court of Canada.

The Special Rapporteur noted that a study released earlier this week by the European Middle East Project concluded that the European Union has largely failed to enforce its 2015 decision to require the accurate labelling of products from the Israeli settlements. ...

"This is a disappointing finding ... If the Green Line (Israel's pre-1967 border) is supposed to be a red line, why does the European Union not take its own rules seriously?"

The Special Rapporteur stated that the international community, including the European Union, must now turn its attention to prohibiting all Israeli settlement goods and services from entering domestic markets.

"The United Nations Security Council, almost 40 years ago – in resolution 465 – called upon all UN members: 'not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with the settlements in the occupied territories.' Anything short of ending trade with, and investment in, the Israeli settlements provides them with the economic oxygen to continue to grow," he said. "The international community cannot call these settlements illegal and an obstacle to peace, and yet provide them with the economic means to thrive."

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25302&LangID=E>

*The European Court of Justice ruling referred to above can be read at*

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?jsessionid=D1AE7CA04942587AAFC6FF3CA7093F95?text=&docid=220534&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&oc c=first&part=1&cid=1482331>

*The Federal Court of Canada ruling referred to above can be read at*

<https://decisions.fct-cf.gc.ca/fc-cf/decisions/en/item/419068/index.do>

*The European Middle East Project study referred to above is not currently available online*

*The 2015 EU decision referred to above can be read at*

[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20151111\\_interpretative\\_notice\\_indication\\_of\\_origin\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20151111_interpretative_notice_indication_of_origin_en.pdf)

*UN Resolution 465, referred to above, can be read at*

[https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s\\_res\\_465.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_465.pdf)

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## Other Relevant Information

### Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

#### **Hate crime victims disadvantaged by gaps between hate crime legislation and implementation, OSCE human rights head says**

Marking the International Day for Tolerance on 16 November with the publication of its annual hate crime dataset, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) urges countries to implement hate crime legislation that has existed on their law books for many years.

“Legislation that remains without any practical application is of no more value than the paper it’s printed on,” said ODIHR Director Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir. “We must be clear that bias-motivated crime is not a phenomenon that affects minority communities only, but on the contrary is a direct attack on our democracies and the human rights principles on which they are based.”

While 53 out of the 57 countries that make up the OSCE region have laws prohibiting hate crime for a variety of bias motivations, far fewer apply these laws in practice. In particular, many countries do not have mechanisms for police to record hate crimes as a separate category, which means the bias motivation is lost sight of and is much less likely to appear in any final sentence handed down by a court. ...

In recent years, there have been a number of improvements in combating hate crime in the OSCE region. In some countries, bias-motivated crimes have been added to national legislation and heavier sentences introduced. This is a vital step to make clear that hate crimes affect the security not only of individuals and their communities but society more widely, and ensuring perpetrators are aware their actions will not be treated with impunity. ODIHR’s hate crime database is the largest of its kind worldwide. ... This year’s civil society data shows that more than 4,500 people were victims of physical violence or direct threats in 2018. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/439127>

#### **2018 Hate Crime Data**

<http://hatecrime.osce.org/what-do-we-know>

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

### Scottish Parliament

#### **Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 2 days**

**Welsh Government Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-24** (closing date 19 November 2019)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-09/strategic-equality-objectives-2020-2024-consultation.pdf>

**Draft content of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Specified Type A Procedures) (Scotland) Regulations** (closing date 11 December 2019)

<https://consult.gov.scot/population-health/human-tissue-regulations-2019/>

**Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 31 January 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/113449.aspx>

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