



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Lords Written Answers

Hate Crime

Lord Blencathra (Conservative) [HL5161] To ask Her Majesty's Government, following reports that the Home Secretary will seek to change how non-crime hate incidents are recorded, what plans they have to compensate people who have been recorded as having committed such incidents; and how any such compensation would be calculated.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government recognises the concern surrounding the recording of non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs). We have also noted the recent Court of Appeal judgment in the *Harry Miller v College of Policing* case that was handed down on 20 December 2021. The Court found that the recording of non-crime hate incidents is lawful provided that there are robust safeguards in place so that the interference with freedom of expression is proportionate.

Accordingly, we are bringing forward amendments to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to ensure that the recording of NCHIs is governed by a Code of Practice that is subject to Parliamentary approval. The content of the Code will be drafted in due course, and will make the processes surrounding the recording and retention of NCHI data more transparent and subject to stronger safeguards.

There are no plans to introduce a compensation scheme.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-06/hl5161>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Miller-v-College-of-Policing-judgment-201221.pdf>

The following five questions all received the same answer

College of Policing: Hate Crime

Lord Blencathra (Conservative) [HL5089] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Court of Appeal ruling that the College of Policing guidance on non-crime hate incidents was unlawful, what plans they have to suspend any guidance issued by the College of Policing.

Lord Blencathra (Conservative) [HL5090] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the 110,000 people who have been recorded as having committed non-crime hate incidents; and what plans they have, if any, to assist such individuals in bringing legal action against the College of Policing.

Lord Blencathra (Conservative) [HL5091] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to suspend guidance produced by the College of Policing until such guidance can be laid before Parliament as regulations.

Lord Blencathra (Conservative) [HL5093] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, (1) to investigate, and (2) to dismiss, those in the College of Policing who approved the non-crime hate incidents guidance.

Hate Crime

Lord Blencathra (Conservative) [HL5092] To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to remove the people recorded as having committed non-crimes hate incidents from police records.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Government recognises the concern surrounding the recording of non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs). We have also noted the recent Court of Appeal judgment in the Harry Miller v College of Policing case that was handed down on 20 December 2021. The Court found that the recording of NCHIs is lawful provided that there are robust safeguards in place so that the interference with freedom of expression is proportionate.

Accordingly, we have tabled amendments to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to ensure that the recording of NCHIs is governed by a Code of Practice that is subject to Parliamentary approval. The content of the Code will be drafted in due course, and will make the processes surrounding the recording and retention of NCHI data more transparent and subject to stronger safeguards.

The College of Policing will also reflect on the Court of Appeal's judgment carefully and make any changes that are necessary to its existing guidance which will remain in force in the interim period before the new Code enters into effect.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-05/hl5089>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-05/hl5090>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-05/hl5091>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-05/hl5093>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-05/hl5092>

The judgement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Miller-v-College-of-Policing-judgment-201221.pdf>

A revised version of the guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/hate-crime/responding-to-non-crime-hate-incidents/#recording-non-crime-hate-incidents>

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Cabinet Office

Updated guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, receptions and celebrations

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-wedding-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-receptions-and-celebrations>

Department of Health and Social Care and UK Health Security Agency

Coronavirus (COVID-19): updated guidance for funerals and commemorative events during the coronavirus pandemic

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Sandesh Gulhane (Conservative) [S6M-02860] Scottish Jewish Archives Centre Heritage Walking Trail – That the Parliament commends all those involved in the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre at the Garnethill Synagogue in Glasgow for the creation of a new heritage walking trail; understands that, by using collections from the Archive Centre, the trail showcases buildings connected with Jewish refugees who came to Glasgow from Europe before, during and after the Second World War, and tells the story of many individuals who came to the city at that time; believes that this initiative will prove to be an invaluable resource and will encourage local people and visitors alike to find out more about the fascinating history of Garnethill, and is grateful to the Archive Centre for making information on the trail available through its website for download at sjhc.org.uk

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/votes-and-motions-search/S6M-02860>

Scottish Government

Updated Guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): safe use of places of worship

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-places-of-worship/>

Northern Ireland Assembly Written Answer

Places of Worship/Key Buildings Security Scheme

Stephen Dunne (DUP) [AQO 2941/17-22] To ask the Minister of Justice for an update on the introduction of a Places of Worship/Key Buildings Security Scheme for Northern Ireland.

Minister of Justice: Following discussions with interested groups in 2020, I agreed to consider the potential development of a Places of Worship/Key Buildings Security Scheme for Northern Ireland after a more formal engagement process with interested stakeholders to hear their views.

My officials previously explored evidence based information in relation to attacks to assess if a scheme for Northern Ireland is required, similar to existing schemes in England, Wales and Scotland which relate to religious hate crime. They also met with members of the faith sector to listen to their experiences and concerns in relation to attacks on Places of Worship and to discuss action they believe may be supportive moving forward.

Due to constraints on budgets and staffing resources, I am unable to proceed with further engagement or commit to considering funding for any security scheme at this time.

I will review this position when the budget has been finalised, expected in early 2022, as I recognise the effect that an attack on a place of worship and other key buildings can have in terms of the distress it causes and the disruption that resulting

damage can have.

In the meantime, my priority is to take forward the out-workings of Judge Marrinan's Review of Hate Crime Legislation, including a Hate Crime Bill to be brought forward in the next mandate.

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/questions/printquestionssummary.aspx?docid=363838>

Judge Marrinan's Review, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/justice/hate-crime-review.pdf>

Northern Ireland Executive

Independent Review of Charity Regulation NI

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/communities/independent-review-of-charity-regulation-ni.PDF>

TOP

Holocaust

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Ian Paisley (DUP) [871] Holocaust Memorial Day – That this House notes that on 27 January 2022 the UK will observe Holocaust Memorial Day marking the 77th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, where an estimated 1.1 million Jewish men, women and children were murdered; commemorates the six million victims of the Holocaust and the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution; further notes that the House pays tribute to the commitment of Holocaust survivors and Kindertransport refugees who share their experiences with young people across the country; acknowledges the importance of the Holocaust Educational Trust's work in schools across the UK and in particular the Lessons from Auschwitz Project, which has so far given more than 41,000 students and teachers the opportunity to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau; welcomes the establishment of a permanent National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre adjacent to Parliament; pays tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for organising the national Holocaust Memorial Day event; and urges all Right hon. and hon. Members to observe this day so that the appalling events of the Holocaust are always understood by future generations.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/59369>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Liz Truss: The UK is proud to co-sponsor an historic @UN resolution to combat Holocaust denial brought forward by our Israeli & German friends. Together we continue to stand against antisemitism in all forms and reject any attempt to deny the facts of the Holocaust.

<https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1484200565802663938>

Secretary-General Welcomes General Assembly Resolution Rejecting Holocaust Denial

... The Secretary-General welcomes the adoption today by the General Assembly of the historic resolution which rejects and condemns without any reservation any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event.

As the Secretary-General has often said, we can never let down our guard in the face of increasing attempts to deny, distort or minimize the Holocaust. We must also adapt and respond to new forms of antisemitism fuelled by ignorance or conspiracy theories, also circulating online. Today's resolution, adopted by consensus, makes it clear that all Member States must condemn and actively combat Holocaust denial.

The United Nations — including through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Holocaust Outreach Programme — will continue to develop and implement educational and advocacy programmes aimed at countering Holocaust denial and distortion.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sgsm21112.doc.htm>

Condemning Holocaust Denial, General Assembly Adopts Resolution Urging Development of Educational Programmes to Prevent Genocide Acts among Future Generations

... Adopting a draft resolution titled “Holocaust denial” (document A/76/L.30) without a vote, the 193-member organ also urged Member States and social media companies to take active measures to combat antisemitism and Holocaust denial or distortion in cyberspace. “L.30”, tabled jointly by Israel and Germany, was cosponsored by more than 100 Member States. ...

Gilad Menashe Erdan (Israel), introducing a draft resolution titled “Holocaust denial” (document A/76/L.30), recalled that 6 million Jewish men, women and children were murdered throughout the Holocaust in the most horrific ways imaginable, which was, due to the Nazi documentation of their crimes, “the most meticulously documented genocide in history”. The victims included the wife and children of his grandfather Chaim, a Holocaust survivor, whose family perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, he said.

“Today, as the number of Holocaust survivors diminishes, Holocaust denial is growing at a terrifying speed,” he said, pointed out that partly due to popular disinformation flowing through social media platforms, only 54 per cent of the world's population has heard of the Holocaust, with one third of them sceptical of the facts. Despite this, such platforms “do little to combat this sick phenomenon”, stating that they are only service providers, he said. Noting that today marked 80 years since the holding of the Wannsee Conference — the meeting in which 15 high-ranking Nazi officials were presented with the Final Solution, the plan to exterminate the Jewish people — he went on to thank five Holocaust survivors who attended the meeting; Germany, for cofacilitating the text; and the more than 100 co-sponsors, and encouraged others who had not done so to follow suit.

The representative of Iran ... strongly rejected the attempt to misuse the concept of the Second World War to provide cover for the continuing practices of racism and expansionism, adding: “The Israeli regime has applied both in its policies and practices over seven decades.” Its brutal crimes against Palestine, which include ethnic cleansing, an inhumane blockage and forced evictions, have continued, he said. Iran condemns genocide as a crime against humanity. Therefore, Iran disassociates itself from the text in its entirety.

The representative of the Russian Federation said the Holocaust was a mass murder of incomprehensible crimes committed by Nazi Germany and its allies across several countries. ...

The Assembly then adopted “L.30” without a vote.

By the text, the Assembly rejected and condemned without any reservation any denial of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, and urged all Member States to reject without any reservation any denial or distortion of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, or any activities to this end.

By other terms, the Assembly urged Member States to develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust to help to prevent future acts of genocide, and in this context commended the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Further, it urged Member States and social media companies to take active measures to combat antisemitism and Holocaust denial or distortion by means of information and communications technologies and to facilitate reporting of such content. Speaking after the vote, **the representative of Germany** said through the adoption of the text, the Assembly stands united in sending a strong message against the denial or distortion of the facts surrounding one of the worst crimes against humanity, in which 6 million people were murdered, including 1.5 million children. She thanked Israel and co-sponsors of the text for their agreement on a text whose substance is focused and balanced. Germany is aware of its special obligation and responsibility in keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive, and will relentlessly oppose any attempts to diminish, distort or deny historic facts. Noting the disturbing spread of disinformation around the Holocaust, especially online, she called on Member States, United Nations agencies and social media companies to combat the trend.

The representative from the European Union ... said the Holocaust happened on European soil and was the most abhorrent crime in history, applauding Israel and Germany for their exemplary cooperation on this important resolution.

The representative of the United States said she was proud to have cosponsored the resolution. Cautioning against the rising tide of antisemitism in her country and around the world, she stressed the need to consistently speak out against hateful narratives. ...

The representative of Poland, associating himself with the statement delivered by the European Union, said the connection between Holocaust denial and antisemitism is obvious. Pointing out that as many as 3 million victims of the Holocaust were Polish citizens, he said his country preserves the sites of Holocaust crimes as museums and memorials, and honours those who fought against the Nazis and liberated concentration camps.

The representative of Ukraine, noting that 1.5 million Ukrainian Jews were killed during the Holocaust, recalled a visit to Yad Vashem, the memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in Israel, where a recorded message reciting the names of the children killed during the Holocaust and the places where they perished took three months to be fully read out, and said he left the dark candle-lit room devastated but determined to prevent such tragedies from occurring. ...

The representative of Italy ... Quoting writer Primo Levi, who said, “It happened; therefore it can happen again,” ... condemned any denial or distortion of the Holocaust and stressed the need to safeguard the truthful memory of the most appalling crime in human history. ...

The representative of the United Kingdom said that today across the globe, there are malicious people who deny the Holocaust and seek to minimize the atrocities committed. Denying and distorting the Holocaust is a form of antisemitism. His country will chair the Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and is the first to adopt the working definition of anti-Semitism. The United Kingdom also plans to open a new Holocaust memorial and learning centre.

The representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, echoed consensus on the resolution, stating that memory of such a black hole in history must be kept alive in the global consciousness so that it is never repeated. However, this can only be ensured if the international community makes a sincere effort to strive for peace, and recognize the

rights of others, including the right to self-determination and mutual coexistence. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/ga12400.doc.htm>

Holocaust Denial (A/76/L.30)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/76/L.30>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Written Answer

Palestinian Authority

Steve McCabe (Labour) [106624] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to support the efforts of the Israeli government in respect of building confidence in the Palestinian Authority.

James Cleverly: The UK welcomes continued engagement between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), including direct meetings between Israeli Defence Minister Gantz and President Abbas, as well as discussions between the Ministries of Finance aimed at improving economic cooperation. I attended the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) in October 2021 where I held meetings with Prime Minister Shtayyeh, Israeli Regional Minister Frej and the wider international community to urge the parties to accelerate efforts to improve the financial situation of the PA and the economic conditions in the OPTs.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-01-18/106624>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Middle East: Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

Lord Polak (Conservative): To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the destabilising activities in the Middle East of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. ... [I] refer the House to my registered interest as the honorary president of Conservative Friends of Israel.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, the Government regularly assess the impact of the IRGC's destabilising activity throughout the region, including its political, financial and military support to several militant and proscribed groups, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen. Such activity compromises the region's security and ability to prosper and it escalates high tensions. It is for this reason that we have over 200 UK sanctions listings in place against Iran, including the IRGC in its entirety, and support the enforcement of UN prohibitions on the proliferation of weapons to non-state actors. ...

Lord Polak: I thank my noble friend for the Answer, but has he had time to read Roger Boyes' article in today's *Times*? We have failed to hold the IRGC to account for its regional destabilisation activities, such as the downing of Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 in January 2020 or the killing of British citizen Adrian Underwood on "MV Mercer Street" in July 2021. Roger Boyes concluded that "Iran is led by a toxic alliance of aggrieved religious leaders and a corrupt revolutionary guard with a brief to sow discord". Her Majesty's Government rightly proscribed Hezbollah. Hezbollah was a creation of the IRGC, so can I ask my noble friend to press his colleagues at the Home Office to fully proscribe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I thank my noble friend for his question. I have read Roger Boyes' article and agree with his sentiments. We have been clear about our concerns about the IRGC's continued destabilising activity throughout the region. It is for this reason that the IRGC is sanctioned in its entirety by the UK, as I mentioned. The list of proscribed organisations is kept under constant review, but we do not routinely comment on whether an organisation is or is not under consideration for proscription. ...

Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, when we debated the proscription of Hamas, the noble Baroness, Lady Williams, agreed to meet me and the noble Lord, Lord Anderson of Ipswich. Her office has not been in touch, so could the Minister chase that for us, please? Hamas is one of the organisations with a link to that malignant group, the IRGC. Since America proscribed the corps in April 2019, the UK presumably has been in constant contact. The Government gave a lot of detail on the proscription of Hamas, so I am not sure why the Government are not prepared to say what differences we have from the United States, given the fact that the US has proscribed it.

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, I will certainly take that back and ask the department to get in touch with the noble Lord. I am obviously not qualified to comment on the opinions or actions of the United States. I can only reiterate what I said about the proscription of the IRGC.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): My Lords, does the Minister agree that religious fanaticism, on which groups such as the revolutionary guard, ISIS, and some here in the UK thrive, is best countered by a far more robust questioning of dated negative culture, which attaches itself virus-like to religion? If religion is used in this way, it should be countered by vigorous debate. It is certainly not a private matter. Does the Minister agree that that discussion and debate should be given priority?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: I entirely agree with the noble Lord.

Lord West of Spithead (Labour): My Lords, one month ago the Iranians exercised a practice dummy run attacking the Dimona nuclear facility in Israel using 16 ballistic missiles and lots of drones. A number of agencies are now assessing that Iran will have a nuclear weapon capability within months. Where have we got to in trying to restart the JCPOA discussions to try to stop what is rapidly rushing towards a situation where there will be a war in the Middle East as well as in Ukraine?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: The noble Lord is right to raise the issue of ballistic missiles. It might be worth my pointing out that UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which was unanimously adopted in the Security Council and underpins the JCPOA, calls on Iran not to undertake activities related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering a nuclear weapon, including launches using such ballistic missile technology. Those ballistic missile restrictions remain in place until 2023. The noble Lord will be aware that negotiations under the JCPOA have restarted. They were suspended in the middle of last year while there was a change in the Iranian Government. We still believe that the JCPOA offers the best way forward.

Lord Austin of Dudley (Non-affiliated): How is it possible that the JCPOA has achieved anything, when, since signing up to it in 2015, Iran has carried out several ballistic missile tests, built new fortified missile bunkers, lied about the development of nuclear weapons to target our ally Israel and waged a shadow war against shipping in the Gulf, in addition, as we have heard, to kidnapping and killing British citizens? Do we not need a much tougher and robust approach when dealing with Iran, with a much tougher regime of sanctions, including against the new president?

Lord Sharpe of Epsom: My Lords, the JCPOA is not perfect, but it still represents the best and currently only framework for monitoring and constraining Iran's nuclear programme. Our objective is to realise the benefits of the deal. A restored deal could pave the way for further discussions on regional and security concerns,

including in support of a non-proliferation regime. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-01-19/debates/642CCC50-8FA6-4910-93F2-7295982BF326/MiddleEastIslamicRevolutionaryGuardCorps>

The Times article referred to above can be read at

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/as-the-west-jaw-jaws-iran-dreams-of-war-war-xrq6fcwws>

Department for International Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1048078/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2022-01-21.pdf

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1048135/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2022-01-21.pdf

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Unilateral actions risk undermining engagement between Israeli Government and Palestinian leadership: Statement by Ambassador James Kariuki at the Security Council briefing on the Middle East Peace Process

... The United Kingdom supports [the] call for greater regional cooperation on joint environmental threats. The solar-water agreement between Israel, Jordan and the UAE in November illustrates the value of such efforts. ...

The UK welcomes continued engagement between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, including direct meetings between Defence Minister Gantz and President Abbas, and discussions between the Ministries of Finance aimed at improving the economic conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Such direct engagement is vital given the scale of the current challenges. We urge Israel and the PA to accelerate efforts to improve the financial situation and the economic and humanitarian conditions in the West Bank and Gaza. We welcome the appointment of new Palestinian Ministers of the Interior and Awqaf and continue to urge the Palestinian Authority to deliver reforms towards greater accountability, transparency and efficacy.

Madam President, on 17 January British diplomats witnessed the attempted eviction of the Salhia family who live and run a business in Sheikh Jarrah. Earlier this morning authorities returned to demolish their home and arrested members of the family. We again urge the Government of Israel to cease such policies. Evictions are against international humanitarian law in all but the most exceptional circumstances, and cause unnecessary suffering.

Also on 17 January, as we have heard, approval was given to the 'lower aqueduct' settlement plan representing nearly 1,500 housing units, some of which fall outside the Green Line, and to be built between Givat Hamatos and Har Homa. Madam President, we urge the Government of Israel to permanently end its settlement expansion and settlement activity, which heightens tension and threatens the viability of a future Palestinian state.

The UK condemns the attempted stabbing attack on an IDF soldier in the West Bank on 17 January. ...

Stability in Gaza remains a focus for the UK. We condemn the firing of missiles from Gaza towards Israel at the start of January and we urge all sides to work to sustain the calm.

Madam President, we urge both parties to avoid unilateral actions harmful to peace, which risk undermining the engagement between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian

leadership I referred to at the beginning of my statement. We call on both parties to work together to create the foundations for future progress towards a two-state solution.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/unilateral-actions-risk-undermining-engagement-between-israeli-government-and-palestinian-leadership>

James Cleverly: Following the forcible eviction of the Salhia family, and the demolition of their home in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem, I urge the Government of Israel to stop these practices, which cause unnecessary suffering and can fuel tensions on the ground.

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1483866915613388810>

United Nations

Without Prospect of End to Occupation, Middle East Region Faces Irreversible, Dangerous Collapse, Special Coordinator Tells Security Council

... **Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process**, expressed regret that the deterioration of the economic, security and political situation across the Occupied Palestinian Territory had continued since his last briefing. “Urgent steps are required to prevent the situation from worsening,” he said, noting that the Palestinian Authority’s fiscal situation remains dire, threatening its institutional stability and its ability to provide services to its people. Violence, including settler violence, also continues unabated, leading to numerous Palestinian and Israeli casualties and increasing the risk of a broader escalation. Meanwhile, settlement activity, demolitions and evictions continue, feeding hopelessness and further diminishing prospects for a negotiated solution.

Warning against piecemeal approaches and half measures, which will only allow the conflict to fester, he said unilateral steps and conflict drivers must stop. ... Above all, efforts by the parties and the international community to stabilize and improve conditions on the ground should be linked to a political framework. “Without a realistic prospect of an end to the occupation and the realization of a two-State solution ... it is only a matter of time before we face an irreversible, dangerous collapse and widespread instability,” he said.

Outlining daily violence that continued throughout the reporting period ... In all, Palestinians perpetrated 89 attacks against Israeli settlers and other civilians, resulting in 15 Israeli civilians injured and damage to property.

Settler-related violence also remained a serious concern, he said, noting that 156 Palestinians were injured by Israeli forces from 23 to 25 December in confrontations that erupted in and around the town of Burqa. ... Noting that all settlements are illegal under international law and constitute an obstacle to peace, he called on the Government of Israel to cease the advancement of all settlement activity immediately, adding that continued evictions of Palestinians and home demolitions — including from the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem — pose the risk of escalating violence.

On political developments, he recalled that, on 28 December, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas met with Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz for the second time in four months. Following the meeting, Israel announced several measures, including updating the registration of some 9,500 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, an advance of 100 million Israeli Shekels against clearance revenues Israel collects on the Palestinian Authority’s behalf, as well as additional entry permits for Palestinian officials and businesspeople. ...

He noted that, on 27 December, Qatar announced that it had signed an agreement with the Palestinian Authority and the Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation to advance

construction of a natural gas pipeline from Israel to Gaza. ...

Nada Majdalani, Palestinian Director of EcoPeace Middle East, described the helplessness of parents as children continue to be impacted by this week's flash floods in the Gaza Strip. ...

Outlining successes ... she described the training of young leaders, outreach to some 40,000 students and the development of a renowned virtual reality platform on water diplomacy. ...

"The water crisis in Palestine is due to the political conflict, poor infrastructure, internal management issues, and now climate change," she continued. Noting that many communities subsist on as little as 30 litres of water per person per day, she said families are often forced to purchase water from trucks at prices 10 to 20 times higher than that of municipal water, leaving very little money for food and other basic needs. ...

Gidon Bromberg, co-founder and Israel Director, EcoPeace Middle East, said Israel's leadership in the water sector, the dire impact of the climate crisis on Palestinian freshwater availability and the new coalition Government in Israel, all combine to create a unique context in which decisions could be taken towards conflict resolution, cooperation and trust building in the water and climate sectors. ...

Noting that the status quo threatens water security and public health, he said conflict-related sanitation crisis in the West Bank and Gaza threatens the gains that have been made. In the West Bank, over 60 million cubic metres of Palestinian sourced raw and poorly treated sewage is released annually into the environment, while sewage from Gaza released into the Mediterranean leads to the intermittent closure of Israel's southernmost desalination plants, directly impacting its water supply. The combination of conflict, internal management issues and the climate crisis, is significantly contributing to Palestinian water insecurity, loss of livelihood and animosity towards Israel.

Coalition partners in Israel have reached out to the Palestinian Authority with a desire to increase cooperation in the environment and water sectors, he continued. ...

Riad Al-Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, said that today before dawn, Israel's forces raided the Salhiye family house in Sheikh Jarrah, violently uprooting them and arresting several family members and supporters. "The Salhiye family, forcibly displaced in 1948, is displaced once again," he said, stressing that Israel can rely on the fact while there will be condemnations, there will be no consequences. ...

In contrast, he said 2021 was among the deadliest years for Palestinians in over a decade, particularly in Gaza. The early days of 2022 offer a similarly bleak picture, marked by the killing of Sheikh Suleiman Al-Hazaleen, the 80-year-old icon of peaceful resistance. ...

And while the new United States Administration has reversed several of the unlawful policies of its predecessor, it has yet to ensure that Israel renounces its colonial practices and abandons its rejection of the two-State solution. The Middle East Quartet also has a responsibility in this regard ... "This is a time for action," he said. "Not apartheid."

Gilad Menashe Erdan (Israel) recalled that, a year ago, he voiced his hope that the Council's discussions on the Middle East would become more balanced and reflect the real threats to peace and stability in the region. However, today he is unfortunately forced to express that wish as the threat posed by the Iranian regime continues. "The same old falsehoods and the same old hypocrisy" are meanwhile expressed in the Council Chamber. Indeed, even as the Palestinian Minister points his finger at Israel, he fails to acknowledge that more than 100 terror attacks were carried out by Palestinians against Israeli civilians in just the last month.

Holding up a large rock, he said almost nothing is mentioned in the Council about attacks committed daily by Palestinians with rocks, which are used directly against human bodies or thrown into car windshields. Palestinian authorities never condemn such attacks, he said, asking: "Where is the voice of the Palestinian Authority against violence?" Instead, Palestine's leaders honour and glorify terrorists, sending the clear message that terror

pays. In contrast, the Government of Israel condemns violence, launches credible investigations and holds the perpetrators of attacks accountable. ...

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (United States) called for a recommitment to a political solution to the conflict, and reiterated support for a two-State solution. She expressed concern about continuing tensions in the West Bank, Gaza and in and around Jerusalem, and emphasized the need for parties to refrain from taking unilateral steps that impede progress, such as evictions carried out in Sheikh Jarrah, as well as compensation provided for individuals in prison for acts of terrorism. ... The recent meeting between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz resulted in several tangible steps; such progress must be built on. ...

Dmitry A. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation), noting that the situation described by the Special Coordinator is being further exacerbated by unilateral actions, expressed concern over the eviction of a Palestinian family from Sheikh Jerrah on 18 January. Calling on the parties to exercise restraint and come back in line with previous agreements, he underlined the important role played by UNRWA and pledged to continue to provide annual voluntary contributions to the Agency. ... While voicing Moscow's support of a two-State solution, he added that progress is impossible without Palestinian reunification, and voiced support for regional diplomatic efforts to that end. He also expressed concern over plans newly unveiled by Israel for new settlements in the Golan Heights, which flies in the face of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. ...

Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland) said ... More than 40 per cent of Israel's population is under the age of 25 and more than 70 per cent of the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is under the age of 30. "We have a collective duty to help ensure that these young people are given the prospect of a renewed political horizon," she said. Reiterating her country's long-standing position on the illegality of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, she said that this week's decision regarding the construction of 1,465 units as part of the "Lower Aqueduct" plan, as well as planned construction in the sensitive areas of E1, Atarot, and Givat Hamatos, threaten the contiguity of a future Palestinian State and must not proceed. ...

James Kariuki (United Kingdom) [\[see above to read this speech in more detail\]](#) ... urged the acceleration of efforts by both parties to improve the financial situation and the economic and humanitarian conditions in the West Bank and Gaza. Turning to the ongoing events in Sheikh Jarrah ... "We again urge the Government of Israel to cease such policies," he stressed, pointing out that evictions are against international humanitarian law in all but the most exceptional circumstances. ... He went on to condemn the attempted stabbing of an Israel Defense Forces soldier in the West Bank, also on 17 January, and condemned the firing of missiles from Gaza towards Israel at the start of January ...

Majid Takht Ravanchi (Iran) denounced the killing of innocent people, the requisitioning of Palestinian properties, and the seizure and demolition of their homes by Israel, noting that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented 341 Palestinians killed and 17,893 injured in 2021. Citing the 11-day war in May 2021, in which Israel killed 256 Palestinians, he said "these measures constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity for which the perpetrators must be brought to justice". He condemned the recent meeting by Israel's Cabinet in the Occupied Syrian Golan and its statement on the building of new settlements there, as an unlawful action which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, which Iran considers null and void. The Council's inaction has only emboldened Israel to continue its crimes. ...

Olof Skoog, Head of Delegation of the European Union ... reiterated the importance of consolidating the ceasefire in Gaza, and recalled the Union's unequivocal position that rocket fire, launching of incendiary devices and other attacks by Hamas are unacceptable. Welcoming the easing of some restrictions on Gaza, he noted that measures taken so far have shown to be insufficient to allow rapid stabilization. Calling

for a halt on all settlement activities and voicing support for upholding the status quo regarding the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, he welcomed the start of the cycle of local Palestinian elections and stressed the need for strong and accountable Palestinian institutions. ...

Arrmanatha C. Nasir, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, called on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and cease the demolition and seizure of Palestinian property throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. On Gaza, he said the Strip remains an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and must be part of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State. Turning to Israel's decision of 22 October designating six human rights and humanitarian Palestinian civil society organizations as "terrorist entities", he said some of these organizations are long-standing, reliable partners of the Committee in advocating for the protection and promotion of the human rights of the Palestinian people. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14769.doc.htm>

UNRWA

UNRWA West Bank Condemns Demolition of Salhiyya Family Home in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem

The West Bank field office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) condemns the demolition of the home and eviction of the Salhiyya family in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem. Israeli forces violently raided the house of the Palestine refugee family at 3 am on 19 January, while members of the Salhiyya family, including an older woman and a young child, were sleeping. In a matter of hours, the Salhiyya's house and possessions were destroyed, erasing all traces of their nearly 40 years of history in the neighborhood. Having already lost their place of residence as a result of the 1948 conflict, the Salhiyya family is now again displaced, seeking refuge one more time.

In the course of the operations aimed at evicting the family, the Israeli forces injured several family members. In addition, the Israeli forces arrested, among others, Mahmoud Salhiyya, the head of the family, who had threatened self-immolation two days ago, when Israeli forces demolished his commercial activity and source of livelihood next to the house. Visiting the scene this morning, UNRWA West Bank observed the total destruction of the house: school bags, clothes and family photos still partially visible under the rubble..

Sadly, the case of the Salhiyya family's is not unique. Tens of Palestine refugee families in different parts of Sheikh Jarrah alone (over 200 persons, many of whom are children) currently face an imminent threat of eviction by Israeli authorities. ...

UNRWA calls upon the Israeli authorities to immediately halt all evictions and demolitions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Under international humanitarian law, the forcible transfer of protected persons, as well as the destruction of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons by Israel, as the occupying power, is strictly forbidden, except where such measures would be rendered absolutely necessary by imperative military reasons, or for the security of the population under occupation. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-west-bank-condemns-demolition-salhiyya-family-home-sheikh-jarrah>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Prime Minister appoints Deputy Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief

The Prime Minister has appointed David Burrowes as his Deputy Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief

in his role, David will support the Prime Minister's Special Envoy, Fiona Bruce, in bringing together faith representatives, faith organisations and civil society stakeholders from around the world to promote religious tolerance overseas

David will also work alongside the Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, to drive forward the implementation of the Bishop of Truro's recommendations on Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) support for persecuted Christians around the world. ...

The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fiona Bruce MP, said: Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right but millions of people around the world are still denied it. That's why the UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all. ...

David Burrowes said: ... Through my work, I will ensure that the UK Government will continue to work hand in hand with key international partners to champion freedom of religion or belief across the world.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-appoints-deputy-special-envoy-for-freedom-of-religion-or-belief>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2867>

Assisted Dying Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2875>

Charities Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2877>

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2878>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

Israel Arms Trade (Prohibition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3025>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3017>

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2900>

Nationality and Borders Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

Online Safety Bill (Draft)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2942>

Northern Ireland Assembly

Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/legislation/2017-2022-mandate/primary-legislation---bills-2017---2022-mandate/organ-and-tissue-donation-deemed-consent-bill/>

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

Outdoor marriages and civil partnerships (closing date 24 January 2022)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/outdoor-marriages-civil-partnerships/>

Marriage Law (Northern Ireland) (closing date 18 February 2022)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/consultations/public-consultation-marriage-law>

Human Rights Act Reform: A Modern Bill of Rights (closing date 8 March 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/human-rights-act-reform-a-modern-bill-of-rights>

CPS: Public interest guidance for suicide pact and 'mercy killing' type cases

(closing date 9 April 2022)

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/consultation-public-interest-guidance-suicide-pact-and-mercy-killing-type-cases-0>

TOP

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