



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answer

Meat and Slaughterhouses

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [31773] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish statistics his Department holds on the (a) number of animals that are not stunned in slaughter, (b) number of animals that do not receive an effective stun and (c) amount of non-stun meat that is exported to the UK for the latest period for which that data is available.

Steve Double: Earlier this year, and alongside the Welsh Government, we commissioned the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to carry out a survey of slaughter methods in England and Wales. We will be publishing the survey results soon. The previous survey can be accessed at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778588/slaughter-method-survey-2018.pdf

The FSA publishes data on enforcement against animal welfare non-compliance in slaughterhouses in England and Wales. This includes the number of inaccurate or ineffective stuns recorded as serious or critical, and can be accessed at:

<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/92ee0c84-d680-400c-a560-94a3a1a100a6/animal-welfare-enforcement-non-compliance>

The Department does not hold data on the amount of meat from animals slaughtered without stunning that is exported to the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-07-06/31773>

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UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

End-of-Mission Statement of the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices

... the Special Committee met with high-level Palestinian government officials, UN organisations and representatives of civil society organisations from the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Furthermore, the Special Committee visited UNRWA headquarters, Marka refugee camp and interacted with the Palestine refugees. ...

The Committee regrets that Israel did not respond to its request for consultations with Israeli authorities or for access to Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel's persistent refusal to engage with the UN mechanisms mirrors a lack of accountability for Israeli conduct in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was drawn to the Special Committee's attention throughout the mission. The protracted occupation, and an entrenched culture of impunity, severely undermine the prospect of Palestinians and Israelis enjoying human rights on an equal basis and living side by side in peace and dignity.

The Special Committee's visit took place in the context of increasing settler violence and Israeli security force violence against Palestinians, arbitrary arrests and detention, and restrictions on the freedom of expression and movement, as well as a deepening culture of impunity. ...

The Special Committee was extensively briefed on the widespread practice of administrative detention of Palestinians. More than 800,000 Palestinians have been subjected to this practice since 1967. Approximately 640 Palestinians, including four children, are currently held under indefinite administrative detention without charge or trial.

... The Special Committee was also informed that torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons remain widespread. Some interrogation techniques, which may amount to torture, are allowed by Israel on the basis of "necessity", which is incompatible with the absolute prohibition of torture under international law. ...

In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, discriminatory planning and zoning laws and military orders are applied to justify aggressive expropriation of land for the purposes of expanding illegal Israeli settlements and military training areas. ...

Illegal Israeli settlements have also continued to expand, resulting in demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures and displacement of the Palestinian residents ...

Although UNRWA faces a dire financial situation and an almost USD 120 million programme budget shortfall, the agency continues to deliver above and beyond all expectations and is sustained by a dedicated and committed cadre of staff, many of whom benefited from UNRWA's relief, social, health and education services as children. ...

Israeli policies and practices also infringe upon the human rights of Palestinians to health, safe drinking water, sanitation, and a healthy environment in a discriminatory manner. The Special Committee was informed that life expectancy of Palestinians is eight years lower than Israelis. For Gazans, barriers restricting access to secondary and tertiary healthcare are extreme. Irrespective of medical need, Gazan men aged 18-40 are much less likely to receive a permit to leave Gaza than any other demographic, reflective of Israel's prioritisation of security policy over the Palestinian right to health. ... The Committee was also provided with photographic evidence of Israeli commercial, agricultural, industrial and chemical waste disposal on Palestinian agricultural land, with grave implications for the right to a healthy environment ...

Discrimination against Palestinians also manifests in the absence of accountability mechanisms. ... impunity remains pervasive in the occupied Palestinian territory, as acts of killings, torture, ill-treatment or violence committed against Palestinians by Israeli

security forces are rarely investigated or result in prosecution of the perpetrators. A Palestinian victim who wishes to file a complaint and pursue legal action faces a number of insurmountable obstacles, such as prohibitively expensive court fees and access to legal representation. Israel has the capability but lacks the political and organisational will to hold individual members of its security forces to account, even in instances of highly publicised cases, including the possible extra-judicial killings of children. ...

In the Gaza Strip, 15 years of the land, sea and air blockade and closures have ... continued to stifle the local economy, constricting the livelihoods of the Gazan population. ... Livelihoods available to the Gazan population, such as fishery and agriculture, expose Gazans to grave risks of violence and attacks by Israeli security forces. ... The Special Committee was briefed on several tragic cases of Palestinian infants and children dying of treatable causes whilst waiting for exit permits to seek life-saving specialized treatment in East Jerusalem. ...

The Israeli government has also expanded its control of the occupied Syrian Golan in the context of the ongoing crisis in Syria and the COVID-19 pandemic. ... Israel has continued to restrict the movement of the 80 percent of Syrians in the occupied Golan without Israeli identity documents, preventing their movement within Syria, family reunification, and access to work, education and medical services in Damascus or abroad. Syrians in the occupied Golan are also denied building permits by Israel and have limited access to natural resources (including land and water).

Throughout its visit, the Special Committee was briefed on the continued shrinking of civic space in the occupied Palestinian territory as a function of Israeli security policies. On 22 October 2021, Israel's Ministry of Defense designated six leading Palestinian civil society organisations as "terrorist organisations," allegations that remain unsubstantiated by the information available to the Special Committee. ... In one of the most explicit examples of suppression of freedom of speech in the occupied Palestinian territory in recent memory, on 11 May 2022, a prominent Palestinian-American journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, was shot dead as she covered an Israeli Defense Force raid in Jenin. Independent investigations carried out by a number of bodies and organisations strongly indicate that Ms. Abu Akleh was most likely to have been killed by well-aimed shots fired by Israeli forces. ...

The Special Committee received mounting evidence of Israel's discriminatory and inhumane laws, policies, and practices that violate Palestinians' human dignity in every sense, the essence of human rights to which all Palestinians are entitled. By design, Israel's 55-year occupation of Palestine has been used as a vehicle to serve and protect the interest of a Jewish State and its Jewish people, while subjugating Palestinians. The Special Committee is cognisant that many stakeholders consider that this practice amounts to apartheid. ... The Special Committee urges Member States to take principled steps towards ensuring that Israel's occupation ends and Palestinians' right of self-determination is realised. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/07/end-mission-statement-un-special-committee-investigate-israeli-practices>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Bill of Rights Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3227>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186>

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

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

Online Safety Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217>

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163>

** Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

Notice of amendments

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/47476/documents/2166>

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 5 days**

Public Participation at the Scottish Parliament (closing date 22 July 2022)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cppp/participation-2022/>

Standards for ethnicity data (closing date 30 August 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/standards-for-ethnicity-data>

Equality Evidence Strategy 2023-25 (closing date 23 September 2022)

<https://tinyurl.com/mpunv6cw>

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