



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answer

Business of the House

Alex Cunningham (Labour): On Friday morning, Stockton Conservatives cheered the election of their candidate Shakeel Hussain, despite his published statement that Israelis were Zionist murderers. The same Mr Hussain joined the Conservatives a few weeks ago, after being rejected by the Labour party for his antisemitic views, and he appears to have conned them. Why is Mr Hussain still a Tory party member and what is the Government advice to Tory leader Tony Riordan who, when offered sight of the evidence well before the election, declined to look because he did not have his spectacles with him?

Penny Mordaunt: The hon. Gentleman will know that this is not a matter for the Leader of the House, but it would be a matter for the party chairman. I would suggest that he raises any concerns he has about the conduct of any individual with the party chairman. He will know that we have a proper process to look at all these matters. I do not think that he has done that. He may wish to do so. That is the best advice I can offer him as Leader of the House of Commons.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-05-11/debates/8DF1A611-C834-4158-8436-FF6286368286/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-57688017-4E77-4032-BCB2-A4D081313BF6>

TOP

Israel

Also see Alex Cunningham's question in "Business of the House", which is included in the Home Affairs section above.

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [1155] 75th anniversary of the Nakba – That this

House notes that Monday 15 May 2023 marks 75 years since 750,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled from Palestine in what is now known as the Nakba; notes that there are now over five and a half million Palestinian refugees worldwide and supports these refugees' rights in line with international law; affirms the need for the Government to continue to fund UNRWA' which carries out important work with and for Palestinian refugees; further recalls the 800,000 Jews who fled or were expelled from Arab states from 1948 onwards; further notes the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza by the Israeli authorities; calls on the Government to immediately recognise an independent Palestinian state which will help breathe new life into the peace process; and urges the Government to continue to pursue a two-state solution and a lasting peace in the region.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/60885>

United Nations

Severe funding shortfalls could leave 200,000 Palestinians hungry

Grave funding shortages could cut assistance to more than 200,000 Palestinians, the UN food agency warned on Thursday.

Unless donors meet the gap, 60 per cent of the people the agency assists in the Occupied Palestinian Territories will no longer be receiving food assistance in June, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced, adding that by August, the agency will be forced to completely suspend operations in the West Bank and Gaza. ...

"We have no option but to stretch the limited resources we have to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable families are met. They will go hungry without food assistance." ...

Vulnerable families in Gaza and the West Bank have been "pushed to the limits" by the combined effects of growing insecurity, a deteriorating economy, and the rising cost of living that is driving food insecurity up, WFP said.

Due to the steep rise in food prices and the constant instability, even the most basic needs have become unattainable leaving 1.84 million Palestinians – 35 per cent of the population – food insecure. ...

The UN Human Right Office spokesperson Jeremy Laurence raised the alarm on Thursday following the recent escalation of hostilities in Gaza this week, with Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) airstrikes killing at least 12 civilians, including women and children.

Since 9 May, a total of 25 Palestinians, including six children and four women, have been killed and dozens injured in Gaza, according to data verified by the UN. At least three senior members of the militant Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) were among those killed.

"Buildings that the IDF struck reportedly included residential apartments," he said, further raising concerns about whether the attacks complied with the principles of distinction and proportionality and whether Israel took sufficient precautions to avoid the loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, and damage to civilian objects.

According to news reports, Palestinian militants in Gaza on Wednesday fired more than 460 rockets into Israel, in response to Tuesday's airstrikes, prompting the UN Secretary-General to [issue a call for maximum restraint](#), by all sides, and an end to civilian deaths. ...

The UN chief's Special Coordinator, Tor Wennesland ... said the ongoing hostilities are also obviously having a negative impact on an already difficult humanitarian situation in Gaza, with Israeli crossings with Gaza now closed for the third consecutive day. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136572>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Comment by UN Human Right Office spokesperson Jeremy Laurence on Gaza escalation

The UN Human Rights Office is alarmed by the escalation of hostilities in Gaza this week. Strikes on Gaza by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have killed at least 12 civilians, including women and children. Palestinian armed groups have fired rockets into Israel.

Since 9 May, a total of 25 Palestinians, including six children and four women, have been killed and dozens injured in Gaza, according to data verified by the UN. At least three senior members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad were among those killed.

Buildings that the IDF struck reportedly included residential apartments, raising serious concerns whether these attacks complied with the principles of distinction and proportionality. We are concerned about whether the IDF took sufficient precautions to avoid, and in any event to minimize, loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.

The launching of indiscriminate rockets from Gaza into Israel, which puts at risk both Israeli and Palestinian civilians, violates international humanitarian law.

We urge all parties to take measures to de-escalate, and conduct prompt and transparent investigation into all killings, especially of civilians.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/05/comment-un-human-right-office-spokesperson-jeremy-laurence-gaza-escalation>

UN experts demand justice for Al Jazeera journalist on one year anniversary of her killing

On the one-year anniversary of Shireen Abu Akleh's killing, UN experts raised the alarm today that justice for the journalist's death has been denied.

"After a year, Israeli authorities have failed to hold the perpetrators of Abu Akleh's killing accountable, while independent investigations have pointed at the culpability of Israeli forces. Justice remains, again, hostage of politics," the experts said. ...

Several independent investigations carried out by various bodies and organisations, including the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, concluded that Abu Akleh was most likely killed by seemingly well-targeted shots fired by Israeli forces, despite her wearing clear identification as a journalist. Internal investigations carried out by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) found "a high possibility" that Abu Akleh was "accidentally hit" by IDF gunfire. However, to date, Israeli authorities have not opened a criminal investigation into her death or held anyone accountable.

"So far, every one of the requirements under international law for the investigation of potentially unlawful deaths, namely: promptness, effectiveness and thoroughness, independence and impartiality and transparency, appears to have been violated in this case," the experts said.

"International law demands, at minimum: an effective, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent investigation into Abu Akleh's death. These steps must be carried out in accordance with applicable international standards, including the [Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death \(2016\)](#). Failing to carry out a prompt and effective investigation, followed by prosecution and judicial process, may in itself constitute a violation of the right to life," they said. ...

"The deliberate killing of a journalist in such situations amounts to extrajudicial execution, an egregious violation of the right to life, and wilful killing under the fourth Geneva Convention. It is thus paramount that journalists are provided with effective protective measures".

The experts also decried the record-high number of killings of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem in recent months in the context of raids by Israeli forces, often targeting refugee camps. In 2022, out of 9000 Israeli operations, 702 targeted

refugee camps in the occupied West Bank. In 2023, already more than 100 Palestinians have been killed in the context of such operations, including in Jenin, Nablus and Jericho. Since 2001, at least 18 Palestinian journalists have been reportedly killed by the IDF in the occupied Palestinian territory and no one has been held accountable for those deaths.

“Evidence indicates that the Israeli forces repeatedly deploy lethal force against Palestinians in violation of international law, which prohibits intentional lethal use of firearms except when strictly unavoidable to protect life,” the experts said.

“The killing of Shireen Abu Akleh is symbolic, embodying grave human rights violations that Palestinians have faced under the Israeli occupation for over 55 years,” the experts said. “Their rights to self-determination, life, freedom of expression have been consistently violated. The Palestinian people live under the yoke of pervasive impunity and lack of reparations for violations committed,” they said.

The experts urged the international community to take concrete action in the face of these violations. “The United Nations Charter is betrayed every day in the occupied Palestinian territory,” they said.

The experts [raised](#) the matter with the Israeli Government and duly [called](#) for a prompt, transparent, thorough and independent investigation into Abu Akleh’s death, for which they also offered their specialised forensic assistance and technical advice. The Israeli Government has not responded to the communication to date.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/05/un-experts-demand-justice-al-jazeera-journalist-one-year-anniversary-her>

TOP

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>

Royal Assent

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-05-11/debates/29FB92EC-933E-44BE-84DD-97F4300BA00F/RoyalAssent>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325>

**** Online Safety Bill**

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

Committee Stage, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-05-11/debates/CBE8C549-CF55-482D-BA76-3CAFDB5E6E6F/OnlineSafetyBill>

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill

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

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill

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

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438>

Schools Bill

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

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/terrorism-protection-of-premises-draft-bill-overarching-documents>

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill

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

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454>

Scottish Parliament

**** Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill**

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/charities-regulation-and-administration-scotland-bill>

Stage 1 Debate

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15297&i=130499>
[#ScotParlOR](#)

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

**** closes in 3 days**

Prospective Scheme of Delegation for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland
(closing date 15 May 2023)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-prospective-scheme-delegation-charity-commission-northern-ireland>

**** The UK's international counter-terrorism policy** (closing date 12 June 2023)
<https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3120/>

Supporting earlier resolution of private family law arrangements (closing date 15 June 2023)
<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/private-family-law-consultation/>

Review of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 (closing date 18 June 2023)
<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-review-race-relations-ni-order-1997>

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/charities-tax-compliance/consultation-charities-tax-compliance>

JPR 2023 Antisemitism in the UK Survey (closing date not stated)
<https://www.jpr.org.uk/panel/UKantisemitism2023> (UK except Scotland)
and
<https://bit.ly/3Vg7DDH> (Scotland)

TOP

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