



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs
Israel

Relevant Legislation
Consultations
Back issues

Home Affairs

See also the “PM speech at Finchley United Synagogue: 9 October 2023” that is included in the Israel section below.

Home Office

Letter to Chief Constables in England and Wales following the Israel-Hamas conflict

You will be aware of, and no doubt share my disgust at, the barbaric terrorist attacks we’ve seen committed against Israel in recent days. Sadly, experience indicates that whenever Israel is attacked, Islamists and other racists, seek to use legitimate Israeli defensive measures as a pretext to stir up hatred against British Jews and increase fear within the Jewish community. In the past, this has included vandalism of Jewish businesses, desecration of memorials and religious sites, physical and verbal abuse of Jews on the streets, convoys driving through Jewish neighbourhoods hurling antisemitic abuse, and proliferation of antisemitism online. There is an obvious risk that this pattern will be repeated during the current conflict.

I am aware that a number of police forces, working in close coordination with the Community Security Trust (CST) and other Jewish communal bodies, have already taken operational measures to strengthen the security of Jewish communities, including through increased patrols in neighbourhoods with large Jewish populations.

I know that increased visibility of patrols, as well as a swift and zero tolerance approach to antisemitism, will provide our Jewish communities with reassurance that the police are taking this threat seriously and will be there to protect them if need be.

As you know, Hamas is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK in its entirety. It is therefore a criminal offence for a person in the UK to:

- belong to Hamas
- invite support for Hamas
- express support for Hamas whilst being reckless as to whether the expression will encourage support of it
- arrange a meeting in support of Hamas
- wear clothing or carry articles in public which arouse reasonable suspicion that an individual is a member or supporter of Hamas or

- publish an image of an article such as a flag or logo in the same circumstances

At a time when Hamas terrorists are massacring civilians and taking the most vulnerable (including the elderly, women, and children) hostage, we can all recognise the harrowing effect that displays of their logos and flags can have on communities. I therefore ask that your police forces are alert and ready to respond to any potential offences.

Of course, it is not just explicit pro-Hamas symbols and chants that are cause for concern. I would encourage police to consider whether chants such as “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free” should be understood as an expression of a violent desire to see Israel erased from the world, and whether its use in certain contexts may amount to a racially aggravated section 5 public order offence.

I would encourage police to give similar consideration to the presence of symbols such as swastikas at anti-Israel demonstrations. Context is crucial. Behaviours that are legitimate in some circumstances, for example the waving of a Palestinian flag, may not be legitimate such as when intended to glorify acts of terrorism. Nor is it acceptable to drive through Jewish neighbourhoods, or single out Jewish members of the public, to aggressively chant or wave pro-Palestinian symbols at. Where harassment is identified, I would encourage the police to take swift and appropriate enforcement action.

I encourage all Chief Officers to ensure that any protests which could exacerbate community tensions by way of offensive placards, chants, or behaviours that could be construed as incitement or harassment, have a strong police presence to ensure perpetrators are appropriately dealt with, and that communities feel protected. Decisions on arrests are rightly an operational matter for the police, in line with the duty to keep the peace, to protect communities, and to prevent the commission of offences. However, I would urge you to ensure your forces use all available powers to prevent disorder and distress to our communities, and that your officers will act if there are any incidents that stray into criminality.

I have also been absolutely clear that online offending is as serious as offline offending. You will be aware that we have robust legislation in place to deal with terrorist content online, as well as threatening and abusive behaviour or behaviour which is intended or likely to stir up hatred. I urge you to ensure that this continues to be taken into consideration in the upcoming days and that any reports of online offending are dealt with promptly.

I expect online referral units to respond swiftly to any content that breaks the law. In particular, I expect the CT Internet Referral Unit to monitor the situation and respond quickly to any online content that breaches the thresholds for terrorism legislation (TACT), working with tech companies to ensure its removal. I similarly expect the Online Hate Crime Hub to respond to any reports of online content that contravenes hate crime legislation to ensure the perpetrators can be brought to justice.

There can be no place for antisemitism or glorification of terrorism on the streets of Britain. I therefore expect the police to use the full force of the law against displays of support for Hamas, other proscribed terrorist groups or attempts to harass and intimidate British Jews. Ensuring that there are heavy criminal consequences for any perpetrators is the best way to deter future offending and ensure the confidence and safety of our Jewish communities.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-chiefs-asked-to-protect-communities-from-provocations/letter-to-chief-constables-in-england-and-wales-following-the-israel-hamas-conflict-accessible>

Israel

See also the “Letter to Chief Constables in England and Wales following the Israel-Hamas conflict” that is included in the Home Affairs section above.

Downing Street

PM speech at Finchley United Synagogue: 9 October 2023

I wanted to come here tonight to stand with you.

To stand with you in this hour of grief as we mourn the victims of an utterly abhorrent act of terror.

To stand with you in this hour of prayer as we think of those held hostage and your friends and loved ones taking refuge in bomb shelters or risking their lives on the front line.

And, perhaps above all, I wanted to come here tonight to stand with you in solidarity in Israel’s hour of need.

As the Prime Minister of this country, I am unequivocal.

The people who support Hamas are fully responsible for this appalling attack.

They are not militants. They are not freedom fighters.

They are terrorists.

And their barbaric acts, are acts of evil.

There is no other word to describe what we have seen.

Teenagers at a festival of peace gunned down in cold blood.

Innocent men, women and children abducted, raped, slaughtered even a Holocaust survivor taken away as a captive.

And much of the sickening evidence posted online.

There are not two sides to these events.

There is no question of balance.

I stand with Israel.

We stand with Israel.

The United Kingdom stands with Israel against this terrorism today, tomorrow, and always.

And let me also say this to you, as the Jewish community here in Britain.

I know that at moments like this, when the Jewish people are under attack in their homeland Jewish people everywhere can feel less safe.

We’ve already seen vile words on our streets.

And attempts to stir up community tensions.

I say: not here. Not in Britain. Not in our country. Not in this century.

My first duty is to protect you.

We will not tolerate this hate; we will not tolerate this antisemitism.

And I promise you, I will stop at nothing to keep you safe.

And let me just conclude with this thought.

In the last few days, we have seen heinous acts, redolent of the worst of humanity.

And peace may feel further away than it has in a very long time.

But I know this too: The hope of Israel is built on the very best of humanity.

This extraordinary land, this democracy - the only one in the Middle East, where you can

vote, where you can be gay.

This technological superpower, which delivers breakthroughs in science and medicine that are a gift to the world this promised homeland of the Jewish people.

In the words of the Hatikvah, that hope is not lost.

Even in these darkest of days – perhaps especially in these darkest days, together we hold fast to that hope of two thousand years.

The days and weeks ahead will continue to be very difficult.

But when we say that we stand with Israel, we mean it.

Not just today, not just tomorrow but always.

And I will stand with you, the British Jewish community, not just today, not just tomorrow, but always.

Am Yisrael Chai [the people of Israel live]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-at-finchley-united-synagogue-9-october-2023>

Joint Statement from Quint Leaders on Israel: 9 October 2023

Today, the leaders of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America released the following joint statement following their call:

Today, we — President Macron of France, Chancellor Scholz of Germany, Prime Minister Meloni of Italy, Prime Minister Sunak of the United Kingdom, and President Biden of the United States — express our steadfast and united support to the State of Israel, and our unequivocal condemnation of Hamas and its appalling acts of terrorism.

We make clear that the terrorist actions of Hamas have no justification, no legitimacy, and must be universally condemned. There is never any justification for terrorism. In recent days, the world has watched in horror as Hamas terrorists massacred families in their homes, slaughtered over 200 young people enjoying a music festival, and kidnapped elderly women, children, and entire families, who are now being held as hostages.

Our countries will support Israel in its efforts to defend itself and its people against such atrocities. We further emphasise that this is not a moment for any party hostile to Israel to exploit these attacks to seek advantage.

All of us recognise the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and support equal measures of justice and freedom for Israelis and Palestinians alike. But make no mistake: Hamas does not represent those aspirations, and it offers nothing for the Palestinian people other than more terror and bloodshed.

Over the coming days, we will remain united and coordinated, together as allies, and as common friends of Israel, to ensure Israel is able to defend itself, and to ultimately set the conditions for a peaceful and integrated Middle East region.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-from-quint-leaders-on-israel-9-october-2023>

Rishi Sunak The people who support Hamas are fully responsible for this appalling attack. They are not militants. They are not freedom fighters. They are terrorists. [plus video]

<https://twitter.com/RishiSunak/status/1711499292001575139>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Tonight we've illuminated the FCDO building in London with Israeli colours. We stand with Israel. [British flag] [Israeli flag] [plus photo]

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1711472517762732104>

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Today @JamesCleverly met HH Abdullah bin Zayed in London to discuss the situation in Israel and Gaza and how we can support regional stability. [plus photo]

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1711456855820546441>

James Cleverly We will continue to support Israel as it defends itself against terrorism. [plus video]

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1711623564858634291>

Home Office

Home Office The Israeli flag flies high at the Home Office in London. We stand with the people of Israel [British flag] [Israeli flag] [plus video]

<https://twitter.com/ukhomeoffice/status/1711739797952233744>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) [S6M-10796] Condemnation of Hamas Attacks Against Israel – That the Parliament unequivocally condemns what it considers the barbaric attacks launched against the State of Israel from Gaza by the proscribed terrorist group, Hamas; recognises that, on 7 October 2023, members of Hamas reportedly made their way past the perimeter fence at Gaza and crossed into southern Israel on motorbikes, paragliders and by sea; understands that they murdered individuals and families at home and captured women, children and elderly and disabled people and forcibly removed innocent civilians from Israel and took them into Gaza; notes that videos and images on social media highlight the reported atrocities committed by Hamas with, it understands, footage and photographs showing the corpses of murdered civilians, some of whom had their bodies abused and paraded through the streets; understands that over 3,000 rockets were launched at towns and cities in democratic Israel as part of the attacks and, under the guise of intense rocket fire, the attackers had reportedly murdered more than 700 people in Israel by the evening of 8 October, and regrets the near inevitability that there will be further casualties; recognises that the attacks were launched by Hamas on the Shabbat and the Jewish festivals of Sukkot and Simchat Torah; believes that the murderous actions of Saturday represent the deadliest day of violence in Israel since the Yom Kippur War 50 years ago; considers that political leaders in all four nations of the UK and across the Western world must unreservedly denounce this activity as an act of terror against democratic Israel; believes that, in the same manner as all other nation states across the globe, there can be no question that Israel has the right to defend its country and people; considers that the attacks from Hamas are a futile attempt to undermine the efforts made towards securing peace across the region as Israel and a number of Arab countries take forward collaborative work to secure a future of shared prosperity; believes that the Abraham Accords, which are a declaration and series of agreements geared towards the normalisation of bilateral relations between Israel and Arab states, have already demonstrated that a peaceful future for the region can be achieved; welcomes what it sees as the historic opportunity presented by the Abraham Accords and calls for these efforts to be further strengthened; condemns unreservedly any activity, such as demonstrations, that takes place in Scotland and other parts of the UK in support of what it considers the barbaric actions of Hamas; reinforces what it sees as the importance of Scotland and the wider UK standing shoulder to shoulder with Jewish communities, and considers that a zero-tolerance approach must be adopted towards any incidents of antisemitism within the borders of this country.

Scottish Government

Israel-Gaza conflict: First Minister letter to UK Government

I am writing concerning the horrific terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas over the weekend, and the escalating conflict in Israel and Gaza.

The Scottish Government and I unequivocally condemn the abhorrent terrorist actions of Hamas. Israel – like any other country – has a right to protect itself and its citizens from terror.

Too many innocent people have already lost their lives as a consequence of these completely unjustifiable and illegitimate attacks by Hamas. However, innocent men, women and children cannot, and should not, pay the price for the actions of a terrorist group. Collective punishment of innocent civilians cannot be justified and will do nothing to set the conditions for peace in the region.

As the number of civilians displaced in Gaza increases and with supplies restricted, innocent people are being affected and conditions will worsen. The United Nations Secretary General has called for “relevant parties to allow United Nations access to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians trapped and helpless in the Gaza Strip” and the international community to mobilise to provide support. I support this view. As a close friend and ally of Israel, I therefore ask the UK Government to call on the Government of Israel to ensure innocent civilians are protected and to put in place an immediate ceasefire to allow the safe passage of civilians through the Rafah border. Furthermore, it should open a humanitarian corridor into Gaza to allow supplies, including food, fuel, water and medical supplies, for those civilians who are trapped, helpless and cannot leave.

Finally, I call on the international community to be proactive and work towards an immediate ceasefire and a long-lasting peace that sees Israelis and Palestinians treated as equals.

I am grateful for the ongoing engagement of Lord Ahmad, who has briefed me on the situation concerning UK nationals in Israel and Gaza. The Scottish Government stands ready to assist any efforts to support those who find themselves caught up in this tragic situation.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/israel-gaza-first-minister-letter-to-uk-government/>

United Nations

‘It’s Time to End This Vicious Circle’ of Bloodshed, Hatred with Negotiated Peace Fulfilling Aspirations of Palestinians, Israelis, Secretary-General Stresses

... I have just concluded an extraordinary meeting of senior UN leaders to discuss the unprecedented developments in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Let me begin by repeating my utter condemnation of the abhorrent attacks by Hamas and others against Israeli towns and villages in the Gaza periphery, which have left over 800 Israelis dead and more than 2,500 injured. Sadly, these numbers are expected to rise as the attacks are ongoing and many remain unaccounted for.

In addition, over 100, possibly more, Israelis — civilians and military — have been reported captured by armed groups, including women, children and the elderly. Some are being held hostage inside Israel and many others have been taken inside the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad have launched thousands of indiscriminate rockets that have reached central Israel, including Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. I recognize the legitimate grievances of the Palestinian people. But, nothing can justify these acts of terror and the killing, maiming and abduction of civilians. I reiterate my call to immediately cease these attacks and release all hostages.

In the face of these unprecedented attacks, Israeli air strikes have pounded Gaza. I am deeply alarmed by reports of over 500 Palestinians — including women and children — killed in Gaza and over 3,000 injured. Unfortunately, these numbers are rising by the minute as Israeli operations continue. While I recognize Israel's legitimate security concerns, I also remind Israel that military operations must be conducted in strict accordance with international humanitarian law.

Civilians must be respected and protected at all times. Civilian infrastructure must never be a target. We already have reports of Israeli missiles striking health facilities inside Gaza, as well as multi-storied residential towers and a mosque. Two UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] schools sheltering displaced families in Gaza were also hit. Some 137,000 people are currently sheltering in UNRWA facilities, with the number increasing as heavy shelling and airstrikes continue.

I am deeply distressed by today's announcement that Israel will initiate a complete siege of the Gaza Strip, nothing allowed in — no electricity, food or fuel. The humanitarian situation in Gaza was extremely dire before these hostilities; now it will only deteriorate exponentially.

Medical equipment, food, fuel and other humanitarian supplies are desperately needed, along with access for humanitarian personnel. Relief and entry of essential supplies into Gaza must be facilitated and the UN will continue efforts to provide aid to respond to these needs.

I urge all sides and the relevant parties to allow United Nations access to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance to Palestinian civilians trapped and helpless in the Gaza Strip. I appeal to the international community to mobilize immediate humanitarian support for this effort.

The UN Special Coordinator and I are engaging with leaders in the region to express our concern, our outrage and to advance efforts to avoid any spillover to the wider Middle East. Even in these worst of times — and perhaps especially in the most trying moments — it is vital to look to the long-term horizon and avoid irreversible action that would embolden extremists and doom any prospects for lasting peace.

This most recent violence does not come in a vacuum. The reality is that it grows out of a long-standing conflict, with a 56-year long occupation and no political end in sight. It's time to end this vicious circle of bloodshed, hatred and polarization. Israel must see its legitimate needs for security materialized and Palestinians must see a clear perspective for the establishment of their own State realized.

Only a negotiated peace that fulfils the legitimate national aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis, together with their security alike — the long-held vision of a two-State solution, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements — can bring long-term stability to the people of this land and the wider Middle East region. ...

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21984.doc.htm>

Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

...Our humanitarian colleagues report that over 120,000 people have been internally displaced in Gaza, due to concerns over their protection and the destruction of homes. You heard the Secretary-General on what we are seeing already in Gaza. Six health-care workers have also been killed and four others were injured, with seven health-care facilities and nine ambulances damaged. In Gaza, damage to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities has undermined services to more than 400,000 people. The Gaza Power Plant

is now the only source of electricity and could run out of fuel within days.

Also, as of today, the World Food Programme (WFP) has begun distributing food for up to 100,000 internally displaced Gazans who are seeking refuge in UNRWA shelters with fresh bread and canned food. ...

For its part, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) says they are sheltering about 137,000 people in 83 of its schools in all areas of the Gaza Strip.

An UNRWA school sheltering displaced families in the Gaza Strip was directly hit over the weekend. The school was severely damaged and was housing about 225 people, though no casualties were recorded among the displaced, but the school sustained significant structural damage. ...

Question: ... Could you give us some specifics on what the UN and the Secretary-General are doing to prevent a spillover of the current conflict between Israel and Hamas into the broader region? ...

Spokesman: ... the Secretary-General has spoken to President [Chaim] Herzog. He expects to speak to Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu; also, he expects to speak to President [Mahmoud] Abbas today. He'll be speaking shortly with President [Abdelfattah al] Sisi. He already spoke to the King of Jordan, and we're also expecting him to speak to the Prime Minister of Lebanon. For his part, Mr. [Tor] Wennesland has been in touch with his counterparts from the US, from the European Union, from Egypt, Qatar, and Lebanon, and others. ...

Question: ... With all of the aerial bombardments going on at the moment, are they able to deliver any kind of assistance? You're talking about trying to get 800,000 people given assistance —how are you going to be able to do that? ...

Spokesman: ... WFP is already starting to roll out food distribution. UNRWA is doing whatever it can to feeding people that are sheltering in their schools. ...

Correspondent: ... I thought the Israelis announced a total siege so that no one can get in and out.

Spokesman: Yeah. That's what I said. ...

Correspondent: But when you say the UNRWA is starting to or will start

Spokesman: It's stuff that's pre-positioned. ...

Question: ... when hearing the Secretary-General today, I think for a lot of Palestinians, they would say that they have the feeling that there is a double standard — the way also the UN is dealing with the Palestinian issue compared to, for example, Ukraine. ... when it comes to kill Palestinian civilians, he's talking about being alarmed. But when it comes to kill Israeli civilians, he is condemning that. ...

Spokesman: I think the Secretary-General and all of us are heartbroken at the loss of any civilian life. ...

Correspondent: ... But you are not using the same words to describe the loss of civilian life and that's a fact.

Spokesman: No. No. I'm not arguing. I'm not arguing. ...

Question: ... UNRWA school and UN facilities are always very well-known for the Israelis. So is this also the case in this? I mean, that there are civilians there.

Spokesman: ... There is a deconfliction process that exists. This is, sadly, not the first time that ... the people of Gaza are seeing this, and it's not the first time that UNRWA has had to deal with it. ... We're not in a position to know whether it was targeted or if it was a mistake. ...

Question: ... the Secretary-General mentioned the Hamas attack is an act of terror. So this is a terrorist attack. Is that correct?

Spokesman: Well, those are the words he used. Yes.

Question: ... So the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Netanyahu, said it's a war now. Does the UN think this is now a war?

Spokesman: I think what we are extremely concerned about is a level of tension that we've

not seen before, a level of violence that we have not seen before and a risk of spillover that we have not seen before in the recent past. ...

Question: ... I've never heard anything about the condemnation of the Israelis' act on the Palestinians. You only condemned the Palestinians' attack on Israel. Do you think the UN bears responsibility for today's attack because of this double standard and competence?

Spokesman: No. No. ...

Question: ... you mentioned there's a deconfliction mechanism to try to avoid Israeli strikes on the UN facilities in Gaza. Is there any kind of mechanism to ensure — because we've seen it documented, well documented in the past, that Hamas and other terror groups are not occupying those facilities at any given time? ...

Spokesman: Well, we have made it perfectly clear that UN premises should obviously not be targeted but should not be used as offensive cover, so to speak. ...

Question: Especially during these conflicts, proportionality is often talked about. I know the Secretary-General was upset that the Israeli actions in Jenin a few months ago during counter-terrorism operations there against Hamas militants. Eight hundred dead, beheadings, rapes, kidnappings of children. What does the Secretary-General deem as a proportionate response to this?

Spokesman: It's not for him to set a proportionate response. ...

Question: I'm trying to read the Secretary-General's statement carefully. I don't see that he called for a ceasefire. ...

Spokesman: Well, we want to see an end to this cycle of violence.

Question: No. Because in his statement, he called on the Hamas and Jihad to stop their attacks and release the hostages immediately. Does he also call on Israel...?

Spokesman: We would like to see an end to this cycle of violence. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/db231009.doc.htm>

European Commission

Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the attacks against Israel

The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms the multiple and indiscriminate attacks across Israel by Hamas and deeply deplores the loss of lives. The EU calls for an immediate cessation of these senseless attacks and violence, which will only further increase tensions on the ground and seriously undermine Palestinian people's aspirations for peace. The EU stands in solidarity with Israel, which has the right to defend itself in line with international law, in the face of such violent and indiscriminate attacks. The EU recalls the importance of working towards a lasting and sustainable peace through reinvigorated efforts in the Middle East Peace Process.

<https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/items/803033/en>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Human Rights Chief urges States to defuse “powder keg” situation in Israel and OPT, as incalculable suffering, massive death tolls take hold

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on Tuesday issued an urgent plea to all States with influence to take steps to defuse the “powder keg” situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He stressed that international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be respected in all circumstances.

“We are faced with an explosive powder keg situation. We know how this plays out, time

and time again – the loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives and incalculable suffering inflicted on both communities,” said Türk.

“All parties must respect international humanitarian law. They must immediately cease attacks targeting civilians and attacks expected to cause disproportionate death and injury of civilians or damage to civilian objects.”

The High Commissioner said he was “deeply shocked and appalled by allegations of summary executions of civilians, and, in some instances, horrifying mass killings by members of Palestinian armed groups.”

“It is horrific and deeply distressing to see images of those captured by Palestinian armed groups being ill-treated, as well as reports of killings and the desecration of their bodies,” he said. “Civilians must never be used as bargaining chips.”

“I call on Palestinian armed groups to immediately and unconditionally release all civilians who were captured and are still being held. The taking of hostages is prohibited by international law,” the High Commissioner said.

Türk stressed that it is vitally important that everyone deprived of their liberty in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel is treated humanely. People’s dignity and lives must be respected.

Information gathered by the UN Human Rights Office indicates that Israeli air operations have also hit large residential towers in Gaza City and other residential buildings across Gaza, schools and premises of the UN relief and works agency, UNRWA, resulting in civilian casualties.

“International humanitarian law is clear: the obligation to take constant care to spare the civilian population and civilian objects remains applicable throughout the attacks,” Türk said. The principles of distinction and the prohibition of indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks are paramount.

On 9 October, the Israeli authorities ordered a “full siege” of Gaza, shutting off electricity, water, food and fuel supplies. This risks seriously compounding the already dire human rights and humanitarian situation in Gaza, including the capacity of medical facilities to operate, especially in light of increasing numbers of injured.

“The imposition of sieges that endanger the lives of civilians by depriving them of goods essential for their survival is prohibited under international humanitarian law,” the High Commissioner said. Any restrictions on the movement of people and goods to implement a siege must be justified by military necessity or may otherwise amount to collective punishment.

The Human Rights Chief expressed deep concern at how hate speech and incitement to violence have surged since Saturday, fuelling anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the region and globally.

“We know from bitter experience that vengeance is not the answer, and ultimately innocent civilians pay the price,” Türk said.

“The world cannot afford more polarisation. We need to find solutions guided by the full respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/10/un-human-rights-chief-urges-states-defuse-powder-keg-situation-israel-and>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475>

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill

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

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>

Nakba Commemoration Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461>

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

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

TOP

Consultations

** new or updated today

The future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales (closing date 26 October 2023)

<https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/ons/futureofpopulationandmigrationstatistics/>

Management of burial grounds, application for burial, exhumation, private burial and restoration of lairs: regulation in Scotland (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/regulation-burial-scotland/>

Statutory inspection of burial authorities, cremation authorities and funeral directors (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/statutory-inspection-burial-authorities/>

Funeral director licensing scheme for Scotland (closing date 17 November 2023)

<https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/licensing-funeral-directors-scotland/>

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) [Northern Ireland] (closing date 24 November 2023)

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/relationships-and-sexuality-education-rse-consultation>

[TOP](#)

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