



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Scottish Parliament Motions

Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) [S6M-11017] Calderwood Lodge Primary School 60-year Celebration – That the Parliament congratulates Calderwood Lodge Primary, the only Jewish school in Scotland, on reaching its 60th anniversary year; understands that the school was originally established by the Jewish community in a detached house, Calderwood Lodge, in the Newlands area of Glasgow, with an extension built as the school roll increased, and that it was initially run by the Glasgow Board of Jewish Education and subsequently taken over by Strathclyde Region, then Glasgow City Council, and finally East Renfrewshire Council; acknowledges that, in recognition of this milestone, the school is hosting a 60-year celebration event for current and past pupils, families and members of the wider community, with the day to include festivities and activities for children; understands that, in August 2017, Calderwood Lodge officially relocated from the school's previous site in Newlands to a new building in Newton Mearns to become one half of the first Jewish-Catholic joint campus to be established anywhere in the world, alongside St Clare's Primary; recognises that the joint campus was a £17 million development in East Renfrewshire, with the two primary schools sharing a central amphitheatre, sports pitches and an obstacle course that is located outdoors; notes that the Chief Rabbi, Sir Ephraim Mirvis, will be in attendance at the 60-year celebration event, and believes that Calderwood Lodge is an asset to East Renfrewshire and to Scottish education, that it is viewed with great pride by the Jewish community, and that the Jewish-Catholic joint primary school campus in Newton Mearns is a powerful example of two different faith groups working closely together whilst at the same time maintaining and adhering to their own religious identities.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11017>

Pam Gosal (Conservative) [S6M-11011] Celebrating Diwali 2023 – That the Parliament wishes a Happy Diwali to all those celebrating in the UK and around the world; notes that Diwali will be celebrated on 12 November 2023; further notes that the festival is celebrated by several different religions, including Hindus, Sikhs and Jains; understands that Diwali, commonly known as the festival of lights, symbolises the triumph of light over darkness;

further understands that Sikhs celebrate Bandi Chhor Divas, which is when Guru Har Gobind, the sixth Sikh Guru, was released from prison, along with 52 other princes in 1619, and considers that the communities celebrating Diwali have provided Scotland with a significant enrichment of both its culture and its economic prosperity.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11011>

Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia

Scotland's Islamophobia - Update 2023

https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Scotlands_Islamophobia_2023_Update.pdf

CST

Antisemitic Incidents– 31 October Update

In the 25 days inclusive between the Hamas terror attack on Israel (Saturday 7 October) and Tuesday 31 October, CST recorded at least 893 antisemitic incidents across the UK. ... For comparison, CST recorded 126 antisemitic incidents over the same 25 days in 2022. This means that we have seen an increase in anti-Jewish hate acts of 609% this year compared to the same period last year. ...

The 893 antisemitic incidents recorded over this twenty-five-day period fall into the following categories:

- 40 Assaults
- 60 Damage & Desecration to Jewish property
- 94 direct Threats
- 697 Abusive Behaviour, including verbal abuse, graffiti on non-Jewish property, hate mail and online abuse
- 2 instances of mass-produced antisemitic Literature ...

Examples of antisemitic incidents recorded by CST since Saturday 7 October include:

- Posters of Jewish hostages have been removed or defaced in London, Manchester and Leeds
- A sticker of a Palestinian flag was seen in London with “Jews are the scum of the earth” written on it
- “Yid army” was shouted at Jewish schoolgirls on a London bus
- A couple were spending the weekend in Wales. A car slowed down next to them and the passenger said, “What’s that? Oh I know, you’re a Jew!”
- “Dirty f*cking Jews” was shouted by a young girl in passing car
- A Jewish boy was at a bus stop, when a group of youths shouted, “Let’s see you run Jew Boy.” They then chased him
- At a London train station, a man approached a Jewish girl and said, “I hope you and all your people die in the war,” and, “Allah will do the right thing and end you.”
- A Jewish organisation that works in Holocaust education received a message via their website saying, “Nazi Israel, which has nuclear weapons, must all surrender and be arrested to stand trial. White-hat hackers blast these Nazis.”
- In Manchester, two men were walking towards a woman wearing a Star of David, shouting, “Gas gas!”
- An Uber driver in Leeds started ranting to a Jewish passenger about Israel and Jews, talking about how Jews hate Palestinians, are all settlers, and deserve everything they get ...

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/10/31/antisemitic-incidents-31-october-update>

Tell Mama

515 anti-Muslim cases reported to Tell MAMA between Oct 7-29

Tell MAMA logged 515 anti-Muslim cases between October 7 and October 29 – a seven-fold increase over the same period last year (where we received 73 cases).

Of the 515 cases, 247 cases happened offline – with 177 cases of abusive behaviour, 25 threats, 24 assaults, 13 cases of vandalism, 11 acts of discrimination, 12 cases of hate speech and 5 examples of anti-Muslim literature. ...

In the online world, Tell MAMA received 268 cases. ...

LinkedIn removed a dehumanising, anti-Muslim post that called Muslims an 'infestation' in a rant that also contained white supremacist language after Tell MAMA flagged it. ...

Broader anti-Muslim narratives on social media platforms like Twitter/X link Muslims to terrorism as far-right accounts push securitisation narratives about Muslim women in calls to ban articles of religious clothing.

We are concerned about the targeting of Muslim communities at major transport hubs, including rail networks who faced targeted abuse, harassment and threats in recent weeks, especially during evenings and weekends. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://tellmamauk.org/515-anti-muslim-cases-reported-to-tell-mama-between-oct-7-29/>

TOP

Israel

Downing Street

PM call with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel: 31 October 2023

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of rapidly increasing the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza and welcomed Israel's commitment to facilitate significantly more deliveries. He said the UK would support all efforts to ensure life-saving aid reaches those in need, including temporary humanitarian pauses.

The Prime Minister reiterated the UK's resolute backing for Israel's right to defend itself against terrorism, while emphasising the importance of taking all possible measures to minimise civilian casualties.

He said the UK is focused on securing the safe return of hostages and urgently ensuring British nationals and others can leave Gaza, via the Rafah crossing or other routes.

The leaders also discussed the situation in the West Bank and the long-term goal of a two-state solution. The Prime Minister noted the importance of all sides avoiding actions that would inflame tensions and keeping hope alive for a more secure and prosperous future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Netanyahu agreed to remain in close contact on the next steps.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-prime-minister-netanyahu-of-israel-31-october-2023>

PM call with President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority: 31 October 2023

The Prime Minister spoke to the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, earlier today.

The leaders discussed the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza, and the Prime Minister once again expressed his deep condolences for the tragic loss of civilian life.

The Prime Minister set out the intensive diplomatic and practical efforts the United Kingdom

is making to rapidly increase the delivery of life-saving aid to Gaza, following the announcement that the UK will double aid funding for Palestinian civilians. President Abbas thanked the Prime Minister for his active engagement in the region.

President Abbas also updated on the security situation in the West Bank. The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of making progress on the peace process to ensure that Palestinian civilians in both Gaza and the West Bank can live in security and prosperity.

He said the UK would continue to support diplomatic action to protect Palestinian civilians, prevent wider escalation and secure a peaceful and lasting resolution to the crisis.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-president-abbas-of-the-palestinian-authority-31-october-2023>

PM call with Prime Minister Rutte of the Netherlands: 29 October 2023

... The leaders shared their serious concern at the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza and stressed the importance of increasing the supplies of water, medicines and fuel reaching civilians. They discussed options to help expedite the supply of aid and efforts to support British and Dutch nationals in Gaza and to ensure the safe return of hostages.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Rutte reflected on their visits to Israel, where they had witnessed the deep grief and trauma caused by Hamas' attack.

The two leaders agreed on the vital importance of maintaining international humanitarian law and protecting civilians in Gaza. They also discussed the importance of avoiding further damaging and destabilising escalation in the region, and to reinvigorate the process towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict and a two-state solution. The leaders agreed to remain in close contact on the next steps.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-prime-minister-rutte-of-the-netherlands-29-october-2023>

Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office

Our efforts have focussed on the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, and the release of hostages: UK statement at the UN Security Council

... Let me start by recognising the courage, commitment and sacrifice of UN employees and humanitarian workers in Gaza, and in particular the 103 aid workers – including the 64 UNRWA staff – who have been killed in Gaza in the last 22 days.

We also offer our sincere condolences to all Palestinians and Israelis who have suffered or lost loved ones.

Since Hamas' terrorist attack against Israel on 7 October, the United Kingdom has underscored Israel's right to self-defence against terrorism. We continue to be clear that this must be done in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Our efforts, with our international partners, have focussed on the protection of civilians, securing and scaling up humanitarian access, and the release of hostages. Sadly, despite these efforts the situation in Gaza deteriorates daily. Hamas bears sole responsibility for starting this conflict.

President, I would like to highlight three priorities.

First, we call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law, including the principles of proportionality, distinction and necessity. This requires all parties to take every possible step to avoid the harming of civilians and the immediate and unconditional release of hostages.

Second, we must urgently co-operate to scale up aid into Gaza, and to ensure sufficient access points are open. For this to happen successfully there needs to be a safer environment, which necessitates humanitarian pauses. We support UN-led efforts in this regard.

Since the latest escalation in Gaza, the UK has committed over \$36 million in additional aid to the Occupied Palestinian Territories. An RAF flight arrived in Egypt on 25 October carrying 21 tonnes of UK aid for Gaza. But the access environment needs to improve immediately so that these and other lifesaving resources can reach the people who desperately need them.

Third, we cannot allow this conflict to spread. We call on all countries in the region to help avoid escalation and warn non-state actors not to exploit the current situation.

President, the Palestinian Authority has a key role as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We call on Israel and other states to support the PA. We call on Israeli authorities to tackle the rising number of settler attacks and killings in the occupied West Bank, recalling that it is their responsibility to protect Palestinian civilians there.

The UK retains the long-term goal of a Two State Solution with Israel and Palestine coexisting peacefully.

To reach that goal, we have a responsibility to ensure a plan for Gaza that offers the population hope, security, stability, prosperity, and effective governance so that their political wishes can be fulfilled. In this regard, some fundamental principles apply.

There should be no mass displacement of Gazans to neighbouring countries. The Palestinian Authority should play a central role. And nothing should be done that cuts across progress towards a Two State Solution, with Gaza as an integral part of a Palestinian state. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/our-efforts-have-focussed-on-the-protection-of-civilians-humanitarian-access-and-the-release-of-hostages-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

UK Minister for the Middle East visits Israel and the West Bank

Minister for the Middle East, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, is travelling to Israel and the West Bank as a part of the UK's diplomatic efforts to get aid into Gaza, secure the release of hostages, recognise Israel's security concerns and prevent regional escalation.

The UK continues close work with partners and allies in the region to ensure vital lifesaving aid, including food, water, fuel and medical supplies, reaches Gaza as fast as possible. Lord Ahmad will stress this point in his engagements with Israeli leaders, including advocating for an immediate humanitarian pause to allow aid to enter and for steps towards allowing British nationals to leave Gaza as soon as possible.

Lord Ahmad will also be discussing with leaders from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories efforts to prevent regional escalation and move closer towards achieving a two-state solution, as part of a political resolution which provides justice and security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Lord Ahmad said: ... We need a collective effort to get aid into Gaza as quickly as possible – including food, water, fuel and medical supplies. The UK has contributed another £30 million in aid to this end and I'll be discussing what more action must be taken.

I will raise with Israeli and Palestinian leaders the urgent need to avoid regional escalation following Hamas's terrorist attack and push for a two-state solution as part of a political resolution to this conflict, which provides justice and security for Israelis and Palestinians. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-minister-for-the-middle-east-visits-israel-and-the-west-bank>

James Cleverly How can there be peace when Hamas are committed to the eradication of Israel? This is an official from Hamas committing to repeat the atrocities from 07/10 again and again. [plus video]

<https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1719718109739688143>

Department for Business and Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/653fbb2715099000d4bf6f0/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-11-01.pdf>

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/653fa91246532b001467f50d/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-11-01.pdf>

Scottish Government

Israel-Gaza conflict: letter to UK Government about Gaza refugee scheme

... The Scottish Government unequivocally condemns the abhorrent terrorist attacks of Hamas on Israel. There can be no defence of the killing of innocent civilians. Israel, like every other country in the world, has a right to protect itself from terror. The Scottish Government joins with the international community in calling for hostages taken by Hamas to be released immediately and unconditionally.

I share my deepest condolences with all people who have lost loved ones as a result of this devastating conflict. The images and personal stories of those affected are harrowing and it is time for the international community to take decisive action.

Despite the horrific conditions we are seeing in Gaza, we know that many Palestinians will choose to stay and they must be supported with humanitarian aid to do so. However, there will also be some who want to leave. You will be aware the Scottish Government has called upon the international community to commit to a refugee resettlement programme.

In the past, people across Scotland and the UK have opened up their hearts and homes to welcome those from Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and many other countries. We are ready to do so again.

On the back of the First Minister's statement to the Scottish Parliament, this letter is to formally request that the UK Government use the already established UK Resettlement Scheme, which works with UNHCR, to allow a route to safety for the most vulnerable such as children and families, those with severe health needs, and those with links to residents in Scotland.

Applying the UK Resettlement Scheme will ensure that all needs are fully understood in advance, with arrangements, including accommodation, in place for people to begin their new lives immediately. ...

To ensure that we can work with the UNHCR to provide the medical treatment that people require as soon as they arrive, the Scottish Government also urges the UK Government to support the medical evacuation of injured civilians in Gaza, and if required Israeli civilians too, by activating the MEDEVAC programme. ...

The Scottish Refugee Council, a partner in the New Scots Refugee Integration strategy, have joined our call for the UK Government to activate its existing resettlement scheme, to assist those who need medical treatment, and to open a family reunion scheme to allow people already resident in the UK to bring their loved ones to safety. They also call for the UK Government to rapidly resolve any protection applications of people from Palestine, and Israel, who are already in the UK's asylum system, as well as those who are stateless. ...

To read the full letter see

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/israel-gaza-conflict-letter-to-uk-government-about-gaza-refugee-scheme/>

The First Minister's statement referred to above can be read at

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15494&i=132204&c=2524164#ScotParlOR>

Humza Yousaf I am sorry to those innocent men, women and children in Jabalia Refugee Camp that the world could not protect you. This blatant disregard for human life must be condemned unequivocally. Do not let any more children die. We need an immediate ceasefire, nothing less. #Jabalia [plus photo]

<https://twitter.com/HumzaYousaf/status/1719471560749191373>

United Nations

Alarmed by Intensification of Conflict between Israel, Hamas, Other Armed Groups, Secretary-General Calls for Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire, Unimpeded Access

... I am deeply alarmed by the intensification of the conflict between Israel and Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Gaza. This includes the expansion of ground operations by the Israel Defense Forces accompanied by intense air strikes, and the continued rocket fire towards Israel from Gaza.

Civilians have borne the brunt of the current fighting from the outset. Protection of civilians on both sides is paramount and must be respected at all times.

I repeat my utter condemnation of the acts of terror perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October. There is never any justification for the killing, injuring and abduction of civilians. I appeal for the immediate and unconditional release of those civilians held hostage by Hamas.

I condemn the killing of civilians in Gaza and I am dismayed by reports that two thirds of those who have been killed are women and children.

I mourn and honour the United Nations colleagues who have tragically been killed in the bombardment of Gaza over the past three weeks. My heart goes out to the families of our colleagues who lost their lives in service.

International humanitarian law establishes clear rules that cannot be ignored. It is not an a la carte menu and cannot be applied selectively.

All parties must abide by it, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

With too many Israeli and Palestinian lives already lost, this escalation only increases the immense suffering of civilians.

The level of humanitarian assistance that has been allowed into Gaza up to this point is completely inadequate and not commensurate with the needs of people in Gaza, compounding the humanitarian tragedy.

I reiterate my call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and for unimpeded humanitarian access to be granted consistently, safely and to scale in order to meet the urgent needs created by the catastrophe unfolding in Gaza.

I remain deeply concerned about the risk of a dangerous escalation beyond Gaza and urge all leaders to exercise utmost restraint to avoid a wider conflagration.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm22016.doc.htm>

Civilians in Gaza Must Not Be Collectively Punished for Atrocities Committed by Hamas, Speakers Tell Security Council, Urging Ceasefire

... Philippe Lazzarini, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works

Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), said the last three weeks have been horrific, with almost everyone in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region in mourning. The relentless bombardments by the Israel Defense Forces of the Gaza Strip are “shocking”, he said, adding: “The level of destruction is unprecedented, the human tragedy unfolding under our watch is unbearable.” One million people were pushed from north to south in three weeks; however, the south has also been bombarded, killing many people, he said, reiterating that “no place is safe in Gaza”. Civilians remaining in the north are now receiving evacuation notices from the Israeli forces, urging them south to receive scarce humanitarian assistance, although many, including pregnant women, people with disabilities, the sick and the wounded, are unable to move. “What happened and continues to happen is forced displacement,” he stressed ...

Hunger and despair are turning into anger against the international community, and in Gaza, the international community is better known as UNRWA, he went on. ... Churches, mosques, hospitals and UNRWA facilities, including those sheltering displaced people, had not been spared, with too many people killed and injured whilst seeking safety in places protected by international humanitarian law. “The current siege imposed on Gaza is collective punishment,” he said, adding that, after two weeks of full siege, basic services are crumbling; medicine, food, water and fuel are running out; and the streets are starting to overflow with sewage.

In the latest blow, this weekend’s communications blackout has aggravated the panic and distress of the people in Gaza, he continued, adding that, as a result, they could not communicate with their loved ones inside Gaza to know who is dead and who is alive, did not know if they would receive bread from UNRWA and felt abandoned by the world. This accelerated the breakdown in civil order, with thousands of desperate people heading to the UNRWA warehouse and distribution centres that received supplies from Egypt last week. A further breakdown in order will make it difficult, “if not impossible”, for the largest UN agency in Gaza to continue operating, he said, adding: “I say this knowing that UNRWA is the last remaining lifeline for the Palestinian people in Gaza.” ...

The handful of convoys being allowed through Rafah is “nothing” compared to the unprecedented needs of 2 million Gazans, half of whom are children. “Today, Gazans feel that they are not treated as other civilians,” he said, adding: “Most of them feel trapped in a war they have nothing to do with. They feel the world is equating all of them to Hamas.” “This is dangerous,” he stressed: “An entire population is being dehumanized.” The atrocities of Hamas do not absolve the State of Israel from its obligations under international humanitarian law. ... Also sounding the alarm about another crisis unfolding in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem ... he said ... since 7 October, at least 115 Palestinians have been killed, including 33 children. Warning of a potential spillover of the conflict, he emphasized the need for adherence to international law, stressing: “This is not an option, it is an obligation.” ...

Catherine Russell, Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), said she believed that “the true cost of this latest escalation will be measured in children’s lives — those lost to the violence and those forever changed by it”, as rampant grave violations are being committed against them. ...

... 34 attacks have been reported against health-care facilities, including 21 hospitals. Twelve of Gaza’s 35 hospitals, which are also being used as shelters for displaced people, can no longer function. At least 221 schools and more than 177,000 housing units have been damaged or destroyed. What little clean water remains in Gaza is quickly running out, leaving more than 2 million people in dire need, she said. ... She said “children in both Israel and the State of Palestine are experiencing terrible trauma — the consequences of which could last a lifetime”. ...

Lisa Doughten, Director of the Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilization Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ... reported that, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, more than 8,000 people have been killed, with

66 per cent said to be women and children. Tens of thousands more have been injured. “People are becoming increasingly desperate, as they search for food, water and shelter amid the relentless bombing campaign that is wiping out whole families and entire neighbourhoods.” People have resorted to breaking into UN warehouses in search of food and water, she added, highlighting that dehydration is an increasing concern, as is the possibility of the spread of disease due to unsafe water and the breakdown in sewage treatment services. ...

Describing a health-care system in tatters, she said patients lay on the floors and in corridors, while surgeons are operating without anesthesia. Out of an estimated 50,000 pregnant women, 5,500 are due to deliver within the next 30 days. Life hangs by a thread for the 1,000 patients dependent on dialysis and the 130 premature babies in incubators, as hospital back-up generators run on fumes. ...

Underlining the need for more than one entry point into Gaza, she pointed out that Kerem Shalom, between Israel and Gaza, is the only crossing equipped to rapidly process a sufficiently large number of trucks. ...

Mauro Vieira, Minister for Foreign Affairs for Brazil, and Security Council President for October ... Emphasizing the need to “always bear in mind the human faces on both sides of the conflict” tragically reignited by the terrorist actions of Hamas against Israel on 7 October ... called for all hostages to be immediately released and access to them by the Red Cross immediately granted. However, the current situation is “deeply appalling and indefensible by any humane standard and under international humanitarian law”, he said, with an “alarming human catastrophe unfolding over our eyes”. Thousands of civilians, including an overwhelming and intolerable number of children, have been punished for crimes they have not committed. ...

Meanwhile, the Council holds meetings without being able to take a fundamental decision: to end the human suffering on the ground, “repeatedly and shamelessly” failing, he said. Although it has met since 7 October to consider four draft resolutions, it has remained at an impasse due to internal disagreements, involving some permanent members. “The eyes of the world are staring at us and will not move away from our distressing inability to act,” casting doubt on its very *raison d’être*, he emphasized, adding: “Someone has even written that, in addition to civilians, this body lies beneath the rubbles in Gaza.” ...

Lana Zaki Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) noted that 121 countries unambiguously called for a humanitarian truce in Gaza on 27 October, standing up for the self-evident truth that Palestinian life is deserving of the equal protection of the law. She highlighted that the number of Palestinian children killed in just three weeks exceeds the total number of children killed in conflicts in each of the last four years worldwide. “That should stain our moral conscience if nothing else does.” ...

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (United States), stating that “a civilian is a civilian is a civilian”, emphasized that all journalists, humanitarian workers and civilians must be protected. Three weeks after Hamas killed 1,400 innocent civilians in Israel and took 200 others hostage, the humanitarian crisis grows by the day. She called for the unconditional release of hostages, for humanitarian needs to be addressed, for Israel’s right to defend itself from terrorism to be affirmed and for all actors to be reminded to respect international law. Hamas must not use Palestinians as human shields, and Israel must take all possible precautions to avoid harming civilians. She condemned the uptick in violence against Palestinians in the West Bank since last week, and urged Israel to prevent such attacks, in concert with the Palestinian Authority. She also echoed concerns about recent telecommunications shutdowns in Gaza, which imperil the lives of civilians, UN staff and humanitarian personnel. ...

Nicolas De Rivière (France) warned that the terrorist attacks by Hamas and other groups against Israel on 7 October have triggered an unprecedented crisis. Calling for a humanitarian truce which could lead to a ceasefire, he affirmed that civilians who wish to

leave Gaza must be able to do so. He stated that Israel has the right to defend itself and the duty to do so in compliance with international humanitarian law ... [he noted] that Hamas in no way represents the Palestinians, having “nothing but contempt for their suffering”, and demanding that the hostages be released immediately and unconditionally. He further condemned the violence perpetrated by settlers against the Palestinian population, which is increasing in the West Bank. ...

Vassily A. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) said that, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory — the West Bank and Gaza — a humanitarian catastrophe of biblical proportions is unfolding. He said Israel’s leadership, ignoring the General Assembly resolution, began a ground military operation in the Gaza Strip in a plan to clear the enclave. He noted comments by Israel’s Foreign Ministry that Israel rejects outright the UN’s despicable call for a ceasefire, and he was shocked by statements by Knesset representatives that the children in Gaza brought this upon themselves. ...

Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom), offering condolences to all Palestinians and Israelis who have suffered, said that, since Hamas’ terrorist attack against Israel, her country has underscored Israel’s right to self-defence against terrorism. “We continue to be clear that this must be done in accordance with international humanitarian law,” she stressed, adding that the situation in Gaza deteriorates daily and Hamas bears sole responsibility for starting this conflict. ... [\[click here to read this speech in greater detail\]](#)

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, said that Gaza is now hell on Earth, with the 2.3 million there enduring suffering that no human beings should endure. Saving humanity from hell today means for the UN to save Palestinians in Gaza. “They are besieged and bombed, with nowhere safe to go,” he said, adding that half of the homes in Gaza have been destroyed or damaged. More than 1.4 million Palestinians have been forcibly displaced from their homes, he said, stating that now virtually all Gazans are homeless, displaced, moving from one family home to another, from a hospital to a church, from a mosque to an UNRWA school, sleeping in their cars, sleeping in the streets and still being killed wherever they go. “A leaked document prepared by the Israeli intelligence ministry confirms that, in fact, relocating Palestinians from Gaza to tent cities in Sinai is not a threat we imagined, but a reality Israel is trying to impose,” he said, underscoring that over 8,000 Palestinians have been killed in October, including over 3,000 in the south of Gaza, where Israel has pushed hundreds of thousands of people. ... “Every five minutes, a Palestinian child is killed. Our children who are, like yours, children of God, children of light. How many more days will you wait to say enough, to recognize this is a war against our children?” ...

Gilad Erdan (Israel) said: “Hamas are modern-day Nazis, from their appalling inhumane violence to identical genocidal ideologies.” The leadership role in Hamas is held by the Ayatollah regime whose death squads include Hamas, Palestinian Islamic jihad, Hizbullah, the Houthis and other savage jihadists. The Ayatollah regime sows death and destruction, he said, noting that the residents of Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen and Syria are enduring bloodshed and terror at the hands of Iran’s jihadist Nazi forces. ... “The Islamic Nazi regime of Iran is responsible for aiding terrorists around the globe,” he stressed. Yet, like during the rise of Nazism, today the world is deafeningly silent.

Over 250,000 innocent Israeli civilians have been displaced since the war began and millions are living everyday under threat of constant indiscriminate rocket at the hands of Hamas, Hizbullah and other jihadists. His delegation will wear yellow stars until the Council condemns Hamas’ atrocities and demands the immediate release of Israeli hostages, he said. Stressing that “our enemies have become emboldened” and “anti-Semites have been empowered”, he asked: “Why are the humanitarian needs of Gazans the sole issue you are all focused on?” Hamas is preventing Gazans from leaving an active war zone by heading south and holding roughly half a million litres of fuel. Meanwhile, Israel has approved dozens of daily trucks of humanitarian supplies. ...

Mahmoud Daifallah Hmoud (Jordan), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said ... the

Arab Group calls on the international community to apply pressure on Israel to stop stalling the entry of adequate assistance ... noting that only 85 trucks were permitted past Rafah crossing since the start of the conflict, compared to 500 trucks that previously plied across it every day. ... Voicing concern that the new phase of the war in Gaza was escalating the numbers of Palestinians killed, with many more beneath the rubble, he warned that the Council's "deafening" silence had emboldened [Israel] to carry out such actions with impunity. "Isn't it time for the human conscience to wake up to the carnage in Gaza? Isn't it time for the Council to shoulder its responsibility and heed Gazans' cries for help, as their houses and places of worship tumble on their heads and they have no safe shelter from Israel's bombardment?" ...

... he stated that, while many occupying countries have committed atrocities, he had "never ever heard an occupying State claim to be the victim as Israel is doing now". ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15473.doc.htm>

United Nations Refugee Chief, Briefing Security Council, Appeals for Ceasefire to Halt 'Spiral of Death' as Humanitarian Crisis Grips Gaza

... **Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**, said that the 114 million refugees and displaced people globally is a tangible but sometimes neglected symptom of the world's current extreme disorder. Forced displacement is a consequence of the failure to uphold peace and security, with brutal conflict its main driver. Disregard for international law is becoming the norm, as seen in the Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians and the killing of Palestinian civilians in the ongoing Israeli military operation. More than 2 million Gazans, half of them children, are going through hell on Earth. "A humanitarian ceasefire, coupled of course with substantive delivery of humanitarian aid inside Gaza, can at least stop this spiral of death," he told the Council, "and I hope that you will overcome your divisions and exercise your authority in demanding one. The world is waiting for you to do so." ...

Over the years ... a solution was always described as elusive, when in fact it has been deliberately neglected, cast aside as no longer necessary and even ridiculed. Dealing with violence, followed by ceasefires, was deemed more expedient than focusing on a real peace. "I hope that now, amid the horrors of war, we can at least see how grave a miscalculation that has been," he said, emphasizing that there can be no peace without a just solution to the conflict, including an end to the Israeli occupation.

"The conflict in Gaza is the latest — and perhaps largest — piece of a most dangerous jigsaw of war that is rapidly closing in around us," he said. ... In Lebanon one in four people is a Palestinian or Syrian refugee. ...

While humanitarians are being asked to pick up the pieces, to help more people in more places and to try to hold more things together, but little political capital is being spent on making peace ...

Francesca Maria Gatt (Malta) said that, in the context of the crisis in Gaza, the Council has a collective responsibility to uphold international humanitarian law and ensure the delivery of vital aid. Civilians must be safeguarded, forcible displacement prevented and basic needs met. She echoed calls by the Secretary-General and hundreds of humanitarian organizations for a ceasefire to enable the delivery of aid to all those in need. ...

Adrian Dominik Hauri (Switzerland) said that humanitarian aid must go hand in hand with conflict resolution and prevention efforts. "We call on all parties to guarantee rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access in accordance with international humanitarian law." ...

Yamanaka Osamu (Japan) ... Condemning Hamas's brutal terror attack on Israel ...

called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. “At the same time, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is catastrophic,” he said, emphasizing the need to scale up assistance to meet the urgent needs of the Palestinian people for food, water, fuel and medicine. “It is important for us to redouble our diplomatic efforts so that the situation calms down and does not spill over across the region.” ...

Nicolas De Rivi re (France) spoke of a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, where aid is only trickling in, adding that the effects are already being felt in Lebanon, which already hosts hundreds of thousands of refugees. ...

Robert A. Wood (United States) said that all civilians must be protected in all conflicts, including the one between Israel and Hamas. ...

Ghasaq Yousif Abdalla Shaheen (United Arab Emirates) said that States must ensure that all internally displaced people and refugees have access to basic services. This requires strengthening coordination with relevant humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies, as well as enhancing cooperation with host Governments. She said almost 2 million people in the Gaza Strip have been subjected to continuous Israeli bombing for three weeks. As a consequence, two thirds of Gaza's population are living in difficult conditions. ...

Geng Shuang (China) ... [said] those countries which bear the main responsibilities for the refugee problem should step up their help to refugees and refugee-hosting countries. He called for Israel to heed calls for a ceasefire and stop the forcible transfer of Palestinian refugees, adding that humanitarian corridors and sustained support for UNRWA are also needed. ...

Mr. Grandi ... emphasized that UNHCR does not have a mandate to operate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which is UNRWA's responsibility. In that context, he called for strong support to be lent to that “very poorly funded” agency, about which he knows all too well, having led it himself. He emphasized the need to allow more supplies across Gaza's borders as soon as possible before the humanitarian crisis becomes unsustainable, and for which a humanitarian ... is a priority. He reiterated his concern about the impact of the crisis in the region and beyond, including the risk that it will overlap with other situations, such as in Lebanon, which hosts 1 million Syrians, as well as Palestinian refugees. He called for an end to the war and for a political solution to be found. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15477.doc.htm>

As Regional Violence Spills Over to Syria, Special Envoy, Briefing Security Council, Urges De-escalation, Refocus on Country's Political Process

... **Geir O. Pedersen, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria** ... Pointing to the alarming developments in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region, he emphasized: “Spillover into Syria is not just a risk; it has already begun.” Air strikes, attributed to Israel, have hit Aleppo and Damascus airports several times temporarily halting the UN's Humanitarian Air Service which operates from those airports and services Syria's humanitarian programmes.

Detailing hostilities between Israel and Syria, and the United States' reports of attacks by groups that it claims are backed by Iran, he said “fuel is being added to a tinderbox that was already beginning to ignite”. ...

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (United States), regarding the conflict between Israel and Hamas, said that terrorist groups, some backed by Syria and Iran, are threatening to expand the conflict beyond Gaza by using Syrian territory to attack Israel. She said that the Government of Syria allows Hizbullah and Iran to use its airports. She called on the Government of Syria to “stop using the victim card”, stop the flow of fighters in its territory

and cease escalatory action in the Golan Heights. Her country will respond to attacks on its own personnel and facilities in Syria, and exercise its right to self-defence, she added. ...

Vassily A. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) said that the situation in Syria is extremely tense, also because of the unprecedented spike in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. “Over this month, the Israeli armed forces have struck sites in Syria, there were targets such as important civilian facilities, such as the Damascus airport,” he said. Referring to air strikes by the United States, he said that Washington, D.C.’s illegitimate action is a gross violation of Syria’s sovereignty. ...

Harold Adlai Agyeman (Ghana) ... noted ... “Another issue of major concern ... is the recent mutual shelling between militants in Syria and the Israel Defense Forces over the Golan Heights. Given the current dynamics in the Middle East, these attacks — if left unchecked — raise the prospect of a dangerous escalation with grave consequences for global peace and security. ...

Shino Mitsuko (Japan) warned of the risk of regional spillover of the situation in Israel and Palestine, citing reports of exchanges of cross-border fire in the Golan Heights and strikes on the Damascus and Aleppo international airports — the “largest escalation of hostilities in Syria in four years” according to the UN Commission of Inquiry. “The latest violence only worsens the already dire humanitarian situation in Syria,” she stressed. ...

Nathalie Broadhurst Estival (France) said that the situation in Gaza risks a regional conflagration but the spillover that would plunge the region into a war with incalculable consequences for all people is not inevitable. “The opening of a new front against Israel in Syria would further destabilize the country and the Syrian population would once again be the primary victims,” she stressed ...

Alhakam Dandy (Syria), pointing to Israel’s continued aggression in the region, reported that in only 10 days there have been four attacks against two civilian airports in Syria, which has halted the operations of two airports and have hindered UN humanitarian operations. He called on the Council to end its silence and uphold its responsibility and condemn those attacks and hold perpetrators accountable. The protection and guaranteed impunity provided to Israel by the United States and some other States make them partners in the responsibility for serious violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, he stressed. ...

Amir Saeid Irvani (Iran) ... went on to condemn Israel’s “continuous acts of terrorism” in Syria, which deliberately target civilians and vital infrastructure “while concurrently carrying out war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip”. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15470.doc.htm>

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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>

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this bill will make no further progress.

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

International Freedom of Religion or Belief Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3499>

**** Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

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

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this bill will make no further progress.

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>

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this bill will make no further progress.

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)

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

**** Schools Bill**

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

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this bill will make no further progress.

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>

The 2022-2023 session of Parliament has prorogued and this bill will make no further progress.

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>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

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>

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