



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Israel

House of Commons Library Briefing

2023 Israel-Hamas conflict: UK and international response

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9874/CBP-9874.pdf>

Downing Street

PM meeting with Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni: 2 November 2023

... The leaders also spoke about the need to ensure long-term stability in the Middle East, in light of the growing humanitarian crisis following the terror inflicted by Hamas in Israel. They agreed to support both Israeli and Palestinian civilians now and in the future through continued international collaboration in the region. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-prime-minister-giorgia-meloni-2-november-2023>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon I met Yair Lapid @yairlapid and empathised the importance of ending the conflict through a resolute & collaborative effort towards a two-state solution to secure security and justice for Israelis and Palestinians alike. [plus photo]

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1720197502719115348>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answer

Medical Evacuation from Gaza

Kaukab Stewart (SNP): Will the First Minister provide an update on the Scottish Government's latest engagement with the United Kingdom Government on any plans for the medical evacuation of injured civilians from Gaza in the light of his commitment to treat

injured civilians in Scottish hospitals in the event that there is a medical evacuation?

The First Minister (Humza Yousaf): I will make the point that I have made in the chamber before. The people of Palestine and Gaza are very proud people. They should not have to leave their land, but many of them have been forced to leave—in particular, those who have been moved from north Gaza to south Gaza.

Many people are lying injured and dying in hospitals, which are running out of fuel and medical supplies. When we can bring those injured people for treatment in Scotland and the UK, Scotland is certainly prepared for that. Our officials are in regular contact with their counterparts at the UK Department of Health and Social Care. No request has been made for the UK to receive medical evacuations from Gaza, but we hope that, if that request comes, the UK and Scotland will be ready to play their parts.

I reiterate the calls that I have been making for many weeks now: for an immediate ceasefire to allow the humanitarian corridor to open; to allow supplies, including fuel, to come into Gaza; and, of course, to stop the bombing and killing. We have seen horrendous scenes during the past week, let alone the past three and a half weeks—in particular, the sickening bombing of Jabalia refugee camp, which must be condemned in the strongest possible manner.

<https://archive2021.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=15516&i=132412#ScotParlOR>

Welsh Senedd Written Answer

Welsh Government: Israeli Flag

Andrew RT Davies (Conservative) [WQ89340] Will the Welsh Government join the UK Government in flying the Israeli flag on its buildings to show solidarity following the terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas?

The First Minister: The situation in the Middle East is complex and requires a far more nuanced response than can be expressed simply through flying flags.

We stand in solidarity with all innocent civilians in Israel and Gaza caught up in the appalling escalation of terror and violence. The Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip has been reaching out to community leaders to express our condolences and to hear from them about the impacts the current situation is having.

We continue to condemn the perpetrators of the attacks on Israeli citizens, and we repeat calls for international law to be respected and upheld. The lives of civilians and civilian facilities in both Gaza and Israel must be protected. Civilians should never be a target.

As I said in the chamber last week, condemnation alone is not enough. A two-state solution, the policy of the UK Government and the United Nations, is the only way to ensure lasting peace and security for all civilians, both Israeli and Palestinian.

<https://record.senedd.wales/WrittenQuestion/89340>

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

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/13520#C529518>

United Nations

As General Assembly Concludes Emergency Session, Delegates Underscore Urgent Need for Ceasefire, Humanitarian Aid, Immediate Release of Hamas-Held Hostages

As the General Assembly concluded its emergency session on the situation in the Middle

East, many Member States, condemning Israel's bombardments of Gaza, demanded a humanitarian ceasefire to deliver aid to Palestinians in need, while others continued to express regret that the 193-member body was unable to condemn Hamas' terrorist attacks on Israel and echoed calls for the release of hostages. ...

The representative of the League of Arab States said that some permanent Member States in the Security Council stubbornly persist in blocking any attempt to simply declare a ceasefire in Gaza. They continue to prevent the unimpeded and unconditional passage of humanitarian aid, and they seek to exile the civilian unarmed Palestinian people in a blatant violation of international law. The Palestinian people will not be the only ones to suffer from this quest to implement hateful and colonial interests. ...

Syria's speaker said the United States has insisted on giving Israel the "green light" to continue its brutal aggression on Gaza. "This is part of the Israeli occupation's systemic policy of ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and killing their dream in establishing an independent state with Jerusalem as the capital," he added. Israel's thirst for Palestinian bloodshed "is yet to be quenched", he continued. ...

The delegate of the United Arab Emirates expressed deep concern that 9,000 Palestinians have been killed so far, and over 1.4 million have been displaced. "Almost 70 per cent of those killed in the Palestinian territories over the past few days have been women and children," he stressed. The United Arab Emirates rejected the attacks that Hamas launched against Israeli civilians on 7 October and called for the release of all hostages, while it also rejects Israel's policy of collective punishment. "Today, there isn't a single place or a single person in Gaza who is safe," he continued, also adding: "We will not allow a new Palestinian Nakba." ...

Sudan's delegate said the behaviour of the Israeli occupying authorities in the Gaza Strip, including the siege and closure of border points and attempts to displace civilians while shelling them incessantly, is a clear violation of international law. ... he called for a lifting of the siege of Gaza and free flow of humanitarian aid to avoid another Nakba.

Sweden's delegate said ... Israel has a right to defend itself in line with international law. She urged Hamas to release all hostages. "The use of human shields is unacceptable," she said, also expressing concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza.

The representative of Iceland condemned in the strongest possible terms the brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks by Hamas against Israel. There can be no justification for terrorism, he stressed. All hostages should be released immediately and unconditionally. While Israel has an inherent right to defend itself, it must do so within the bounds of international law. The decades-long cycle of violence in Israel and Palestine will not stop while Hamas continues to use its position in Gaza to wage terror on innocent civilians and spread radicalism. And it will not stop while Israel's unlawful settlements continue in the West Bank and Gaza remains under blockade. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12555.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/a-78-553-auv.docx>

Gaza is 'running out of time' UN experts warn, demanding a ceasefire to prevent genocide

Time is running out to prevent genocide and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, UN experts

warned ... expressing deep frustration with Israel's refusal to halt plans to decimate the besieged Gaza strip.

"We remain convinced that the Palestinian people are at grave risk of genocide," the experts said. "The time for action is now. Israel's allies also bear responsibility and must act now to prevent its disastrous course of action," they said.

The experts expressed "deepening horror" about Israeli airstrikes against the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza since Tuesday (31 October) night, which have reportedly killed and injured hundreds of Palestinians, calling it a brazen breach of international law. ...

"... Attacking a camp sheltering civilians including women and children is a complete breach of the rules of proportionality and distinction between combatants and civilians," the experts said. ...

"All signs are that we have reached a breaking point," the experts warned, pointing to images of people desperately grabbing flour and other essentials from a UN warehouse on Sunday (29 October), alarming news of children being forced to drink sea water in the absence of clean water, distressing reports of patients including children undergoing surgery without anaesthetics, and persons with disabilities and older persons displaced and living in tents because houses have been turned to rubble.

"The situation in Gaza has reached a catastrophic tipping point," they said warning of the dire need for food, water, medicine, fuel and essential supplies and the risk of looming health hazards.

The absence of fuel and disruption of water infrastructure due to constant shelling over three weeks had destroyed access to safe drinking water for the population in Gaza, the experts said.

"Water is essential to human life and today, 2 million Gazans are struggling to find drinking water," they said. ...

They also called for the immediate release of all civilians being held captive since Hamas militants attacked Israeli communities on 7 October.

"All parties must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. We demand a humanitarian ceasefire to ensure that aid reaches those who need it the most. A ceasefire also means channels of communication can be opened to ensure the release of hostages," the experts said.

They expressed grave concern about the safety of UN and humanitarian workers and hospitals and schools that are providing refuge and life-saving medical services to the people of Gaza. They also raised the alarm at the safety of journalists, media workers and their family members while noting that internet and communications have been shutdown, disrupting essential communications and reporting on the situation in Gaza. ...

"The Palestinian people in Gaza, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, youth, and older persons, have endured decades of hardship and deprivation," the UN experts said. "We call on Israel and its allies to agree to an immediate ceasefire. We are running out of time." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-running-out-time-un-experts-warn-demanding-ceasefire-prevent-genocide-0>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

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

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

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

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

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