



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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Prime Minister's letter to the Met Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley

... Remembrance weekend is a moment of national significance. It is a weekend where the nation comes together to pay tribute to the fallen and veterans, to honour their sacrifice for our freedoms, and to resolve that those sacrifices will never be in vain. ...

I am deeply concerned that a number of protests are currently planned to disrupt those acts of Remembrance next weekend.

To plan protests on Armistice Day is provocative and disrespectful, and there is a clear and present risk that the Cenotaph and other war memorials could be desecrated, something that would be an affront to the British public and the values we stand for.

While rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association are protected under the law, these are qualified rights and must be set against the protection of health or morals and the rights and freedoms of others. The right to remember, in peace and dignity, those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for those freedoms must be protected also.

In your evidence to the London Assembly yesterday, you said that protests "will not collide with or interfere with" Remembrance events. The Metropolitan Police have separately said that officers will "use all the powers available to us to ensure anyone intent on disrupting it will not succeed". This robust approach is welcome. The police have the powers necessary to act to ensure protests do not disrupt or disturb Remembrance activity next weekend ...

These decisions are rightly operationally independent from politicians, on the basis of a full operational assessment and engagement with protest organisers and the wider community. I have asked the Home Secretary to support you in doing everything necessary to protect the sanctity of Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. ...

To read the full transcript see

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/654524459c37090013146795/Sir_Mark_Rowley_Letter.pdf

Crown Prosecution Service

CPS authorises charges against two women following protest in London

Nick Price, Head of the CPS Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division, said: "Following a review of evidence provided by the Metropolitan Police, we have authorised charges against two women who took part in a demonstration in central London last month.

"Heba Alhayey, 29, and Pauline Ankunda, 26, have been charged with single counts of carrying or displaying an article, namely an image displaying a paraglider, to arouse reasonable suspicion that they are supporters of a proscribed organisation, namely Hamas, on Saturday, 14 October 2023. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-authorises-charges-against-two-women-following-protest-london>

Student Malakai Wheeler sentenced for sharing terror documents

At Winchester Crown Court, Malakai Wheeler was given an extended sentence of seven years - six years in custody with an extended licence of one year. He had previously been convicted of multiple terrorism offences.

Nick Price, Head of the CPS Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division, said: "Malakai Wheeler was a highly active member of an extreme right-wing online chat group, whose discussions were far from idle conversation.

"The content Wheeler shared was racist, antisemitic and included information on how to create weapons and explosives.

"His conviction and sentence should send a clear message to anyone engaging in such activity that the CPS and police will work together wherever there is evidence of a crime to bring offenders to justice."

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/student-malakai-wheeler-sentenced-sharing-terror-documents>

Charity Commission

Charity Commission advice on how to help civilians impacted by the Israel-Gaza conflict

The charity regulator advises supporting existing, registered charities experienced in responding to humanitarian crises. These organisations are best placed for getting international aid to civilians caught up in conflict zones and respond to the changing situation on the ground.

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), which brings together 15 UK aid charities to raise funds quickly and efficiently in times of crisis overseas, has [signposted which of its member charities have appeals](#) to help civilians affected by the conflict in Gaza and Israel.

Helen Stephenson, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission said: As the distressing events in Israel and Gaza continue to unfold, people will be asking how they can help the many civilians affected by the conflict. It is important that every donation reaches its intended cause. In issuing this advice, we are reminding everyone to give with confidence through registered charities including the appeals launched by DEC member charities.

Operating in a conflict zone is complex and hazardous, with registered charities and global NGOs working hard to support affected civilians across and within borders. These established, recognised organisations already have the networks on the ground for delivering aid and are the best organisations to support financially to ensure donations reach civilians in need. ...

The Commission also urges people to be wary of informal appeals shared on social media, online or directly, and to use the same steps to check how the money raised will reach those they want to support.

Anyone initiating informal fundraising appeals – those not linked to established registered charities – may not be aware of the ongoing responsibilities of managing the money raised. This includes ensuring it is accounted for properly and spent in line with donors' wishes. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-advice-on-how-to-help-civilians-impacted-by-the-israel-gaza-conflict>

CST

Antisemitic Incidents – 3 November Update

In the 28 days inclusive between the Hamas terror attack on Israel (Saturday 7 October) and Friday 3 November, CST recorded at least 1019 antisemitic incidents across the UK. This is the highest ever total reported to CST across a twenty-eight-day period. ...

For comparison, CST recorded 160 antisemitic incidents over the same 28 days in 2022. This means that we have seen an increase in anti-Jewish hate acts of 537% this year compared to the same period last year. ...

The 1019 antisemitic incidents recorded over this twenty-eight-day period fall into the following categories:

- 47 Assaults
- 67 Damage & Desecration to Jewish property
- 102 direct Threats
- 801 Abusive Behaviour, including verbal abuse, graffiti on non-Jewish property, hate mail and online abuse
- 2 instances of mass-produced antisemitic Literature ...

Seven hundred and two of the 1019 antisemitic incidents occurred offline and 317 were online. ... Sixty-six antisemitic incidents were related to universities across the UK. In the first six months of 2023, CST recorded just 17 incidents of this kind, and 56 in the whole of 2022. Meanwhile, 65 incidents were related to the school sector. Thirty of these affected students and teachers at non-Jewish schools; 24 involved Jewish schoolchildren abused on their way to or from school; eight targeted Jewish schools; and three involved offenders from non-Jewish schools abusing adult members of the public or Jewish locations. Between January and June 2023, 67 incidents in the school sector were reported to CST. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/11/03/antisemitic-incidents-3-november-update>

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See also “Prime Minister's letter to the Met Commissioner”, “CPS authorises charges against two women following protest in London”, Charity Commission advice, and CST update that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and “UN Human Rights Chief condemns rise in hatred” and “Third Committee Approves 10 Draft Resolutions, Including Texts on Glorification of Nazism and Other Heinous Practices ...” that are included in the Other Relevant Information section below.

Downing Street

PM call with Prime Minister Modi of India: 3 November 2023

... The leaders discussed the deeply distressing situation in the Middle East and condemned Hamas's attacks on Israel. They reiterated that Hamas did not represent the Palestinian people and reflected on the need to deescalate tensions in the wider region. The Prime Minister also underscored the importance of protecting innocent civilians in Gaza and ensuring aid was able to flow into the country. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-call-with-prime-minister-modi-of-india-3-november-2023>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK urges all parties to allow for humanitarian pauses in Gaza: Statement by Ambassador Tom Woodroffe at the OCHA Briefing on the Humanitarian Situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

... I want to share the UK's condolences to the families and friends of all UNWRA colleagues who have lost their lives, and to all Palestinians and Israelis who have lost loved ones.

In response to this acute humanitarian crisis, the UK has significantly stepped up our humanitarian efforts. ...

Firstly, we have been clear that all sides must comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. That means that every possible precaution must be taken to protect civilians wherever they are. It also means that all hostages must be released immediately, safely and without conditions.

Second, the UK continues to call for immediate, unimpeded, and safe humanitarian access to Gaza, so that lifesaving aid, including water, fuel, medicine, and food, can reach the civilians who desperately need it. Piped water supplies and allowing fuel to enter Gaza are essential to allow hospitals and other critical infrastructure to operate. And we urge all parties to allow for humanitarian pauses, which would ensure safe aid delivery and critical repairs to key infrastructure including water and electricity.

Whilst we welcome the re-opening of Rafah crossing, we are aware that this is not sufficient to meet the soaring needs. We urge the opening of other border crossings, such as Kerem Shalom, as well as increased access through existing commercial routes such as Port Said, to enable more humanitarian aid to reach civilians in need.

Finally, we have increased our funding to the humanitarian response to support our partners and the people of Gaza. We have committed a further \$37 million in humanitarian assistance since October 16, doubling the UK's commitment to the Occupied Palestinian Territories this year. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-urges-all-parties-to-allow-for-humanitarian-pauses-in-gaza-uk-statement-at-the-un>

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon After an intense 48 hours in Israel & the Occupied Palestinian Territories my core message was simple- ALL civilians must be protected. We must move towards a two-state solution, to provide sustainable peace, justice & security for both Israelis & Palestinians

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1720543709706469663>

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon In meetings with @MarkRegev & @RonenLeviMaoz, I expressed condolence to Israel for the horrific Hamas attack. I also stressed for continued

aid for Palestinians in Gaza, adherence with international law, safety of British Nationals and ways to prevent escalation in the West Bank

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1720456131120640511>

Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon Constructive meeting with Arab Member of Knesset @mnsorabbas to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and situation in Israel - an important voice of the Arab Community in Israel. Justice and security is a necessity for all. [plus photo]

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1721114437858300268>

United Nations

Statement by the Secretary-General – on the situation in the Middle East

I am horrified by the reported attack in Gaza on an ambulance convoy outside Al Shifa hospital. The images of bodies strewn on the street outside the hospital are harrowing.

I do not forget the terror attacks committed in Israel by Hamas and the killing, maiming and abductions, including of women and children. All hostages held in Gaza must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Now, for nearly one month, civilians in Gaza, including children and women, have been besieged, denied aid, killed, and bombed out of their homes.

This must stop.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is horrific. Not nearly enough food, water and medicine are coming in to meet people's needs. Fuel to power hospitals and water plants is running out. UNRWA shelters are at nearly four times their full capacity and are being hit in bombardments. Morgues are overflowing. Shops are empty. The sanitation situation is abysmal. We are seeing an increase in diseases and respiratory illnesses, especially among children. An entire population is traumatized. Nowhere is safe.

I renew my earlier appeals for a humanitarian ceasefire.

International humanitarian law must be respected. Civilians and civilian infrastructure, including humanitarian and medical workers and assets must be protected. Civilians must also not be used as human shields.

Essential supplies and services and unimpeded humanitarian access must be safely allowed into and across Gaza at a scale commensurate with this dramatic situation.

All those with influence must exert it to ensure respect for the rules of war, end the suffering and avoid a spillover of the conflict that could engulf the whole region.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2023-11-03/statement-the-secretary-general---the-situation-the-middle-east>

Continuing Debate on Report, General Assembly Speakers Say Diverse, Expanding Caseload Demonstrates International Court of Justice's Growing Significance

Member States ... reiterated their profound trust in the International Court of Justice's integrity, independence and expertise ...

Many Member States acknowledged and commended the International Court of Justice, also known as the World Court, for the key role it plays in ensuring the peaceful settlement of disputes and in clarifying the rules of international law. ...

Tofiq Musayev (Azerbaijan), speaking for the Non-Aligned Movement ... reiterated the call to Israel, the occupying Power, to fully respect the 2004 advisory opinion of the Court on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Further, all States should respect the provisions for the end of the Israeli occupation and the independence of the State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its

capital. ...

Nadien Isam Fraih Bisharat(Jordan), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, stressed the importance of the International Court of Justice in upholding peace ...

Speaking on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, she recalled the advisory of the Court on the separation wall in 2004 and the obligation on Israel, as the occupying Power, to respect international humanitarian law. She recalled the decision of the General Assembly requesting the Court to issue an advisory opinion regarding the impact of the continued violations by Israel on the Palestinian people, the expansion of settlements and the status of the holy sites in Jerusalem. The Arab League and Arab States have sent various written messages regarding the rights of Palestinians to self-determination and the need for Israel to respect the historical status quo in Jerusalem, the need to put an end to the occupation and the need to end settlements. ...

Sidi Mohamed Laghdaf (Mauritania), speaking for the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said that fundamental basics of international law were being undermined ... He rejected Israel's violations and wilful failure to uphold its responsibilities and obligations, as stated in numerous United Nations resolutions, which has led to a worsening situation. ...

He went on to say that Israel violates the Charter of the United Nations through its prolonged occupation, settlements and apartheid regime, and he called for legal consequences. He said Israel, the occupying Power, has enjoyed impunity for 75 years, and he condemned in the strongest terms Israel's crimes and Israeli aggression against the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the heinous massacres perpetrated against civilians in the Gaza Strip by the Israeli occupation forces. He also warned of the danger of continuing the policy of deliberate targeting of civilians and collective punishment accompanied by policies of starvation, water deprivation and a lack of electricity, which portends a real disaster for all health and humanitarian services, in contravention of international humanitarian law, amounting to international crimes. ...

Muhammad Abdul Muhith (Bangladesh) ... underscored that his country also strongly denounced all illegal acts by Israel in the Occupied Palestine Territory, including during its current military operations in Gaza. ...

Mohammed Ali Ahmed Al Shehhi (Oman) ... Turning to the legal consequences of Israel's ongoing violation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination ... stressed his country's position in support of the Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. "The Court must decide that the Government of Israel needs to immediately cease all activities, policies and laws that obstruct the right of Palestinians to self-determination by ending the occupation of the Palestinian territory," he emphasized. ...

Munir Akram (Pakistan) ... [noted] regarding the conflict in Gaza ... the continued failure of the Security Council to even call for a ceasefire to stop the slaughter there. Pakistan eagerly anticipates the Court's advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. ...

Youssef Hitti (Lebanon) spotlighted the Court's 2004 advisory on the building of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that said Israel as the occupying Power had an obligation to stop violating international law. Yet Israel continues to trample on international law. The General Assembly has now again turned to the Court on the legal consequences of Israel's policies and practices on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. His country supported this referral and has submitted its written observations to the Court. The scale of current atrocities in Gaza, the settlement activity expansion in the occupied West Bank, and the violence of settlers against Palestinians continues to go ahead with the complicity of the Israeli authorities. He pointed out that some claim to defend justice and uphold international law, but then trample on it when the issue of Palestine comes up. The situation is way beyond selectivity and double standards and the credibility of the system is undermined, he said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12556.doc.htm>

Report of the International Court of Justice 1 August 2022–31 July 2023 (A/78/4)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/78/4>

The International Court of Justice overview of “Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory” (2004) and links to all relevant documents can be read at

<https://www.icj-cij.org/case/131>

The General Assembly request to the International Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion regarding the impact of the continued violations by Israel on the Palestinian people, the expansion of settlements and the status of the holy sites in Jerusalem can be read at

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20230120-pre-01-00-en.pdf>

More Funding Urgently Needed as UNRWA Struggles through ‘Shocking’ Gaza War, Fourth Committee Hears, amid Pleas for Immediate Humanitarian Ceasefire

... **Gréta Gunnarsdóttir, Director of the UNRWA Representative Office in New York**, introduced the report titled “Report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East” (document A/78/13). Speaking on behalf of the Commissioner-General, she said that the last three weeks have been horrific, with almost everyone in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region in mourning. The Israeli forces’ relentless bombardment of the Gaza Strip has been “shocking”. Since the war began, nearly 50 UNRWA buildings and assets have been impacted, with some being directly hit. “Entire families moved to our shelters with the hope that they would be safe, in a UN building, under the UN flag.” UNRWA staff in Gaza report that basic services are collapsing; fuel, medicine, food and water are running out; and the streets are starting to overflow with sewage. “Depriving a whole population of items essential for survival is collective punishment,” she said, adding that this is also a violation of international humanitarian law. Despite losing 72 colleagues in less than a month, at least 5,000 UNRWA staff in Gaza continue to show up every day to work, she said. They are operating 150 UNRWA shelters, keeping a third of its health centres open, running 80 mobile health teams, supporting the entry of humanitarian convoys and distributing the little remaining fuel to hospitals, bakeries and shelters. ...

Hunger, despair and feeling of abandonment are turning into anger against the international community, she said ... Warning against a possible breakdown in civil order, she said that such a situation would make UNRWA efforts — “the last lifeline for the Palestinian people in Gaza” — extremely difficult, if not impossible. ...

Going forward, there must be strict adherence to international humanitarian law, with civilians and civilian infrastructure protected in both the north and south of Gaza, she said. Hostages must also be released. “We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire,” she added, emphasizing as well the need for an unimpeded, substantial and continuous flow of humanitarian aid, including fuel, into the Gaza Strip. ...

The representative of Israel asked whether, since 7 October, the Agency has reflected about how incitement to terror and violence and the glorification of terrorists in UNRWA textbooks contributed to the massacre of 1,400 people by Hamas and the ensuing celebrations in the streets of Gaza. On the man-made cavity discovered in November in the yard of an UNRWA school in Gaza, which the Agency failed to state was a Hamas-

built terror tunnel, she asked whether the Agency should have clearly condemned and actively addressed Hamas's continued abuse of UN facilities for its terror activities. She also asked what has been done about the 242 hostages held in Gaza and why UNRWA cannot condemn Hamas for stealing and hoarding thousands of litres of fuel from the Agency's compound.

The representative of South Africa asked to get a sense of the distrust and belief that UNRWA is in cahoots with Hamas and helping to contribute to incitement. ...

The observer for the State of Palestine said that the 72 UNRWA staff killed were Palestinian nationals who had been serving their brethren amid Israel's criminal aggression. Many now are buried in mass graves, "denied dignity even in death". This abhorrent war against innocent civilians and humanitarian workers is being perpetrated in grave breach of international humanitarian law, the UN Charter and the UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities under which UNRWA facilities are to be protected. She asked what the Agency is doing to scale up protection in Gaza, in addition to securing funding and humanitarian supplies to maintain operations and providing assistance to millions in need.

Ms. Gunnarsdóttir said that, if the Agency's core budget is not fully funded, it will be unable to pay salaries and its operations will be affected. ... She added that the Agency has a system for vetting staff and textbooks and that, in its schools, it runs a well-respected programme of youth parliamentarians. Moreover, students are educated on human rights, conflict resolution and tolerance. The Agency is unaware of any looting of any of its facilities in Gaza, she said, adding that, without fuel, UNRWA will be incapable of providing services. ...

Anne Melangen Havn (Norway), Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, presented that body's latest report (document A/78/314). ... she said it is, above all, the responsibility of the General Assembly and the international community to ensure that its services are maintained at the level that allows the Agency to fulfil its mandate without impediments. ... she urged all Governments to increase over several years their voluntary contributions to UNRWA. ...

Feda Abdelhady, observer for the State of Palestine, said that the situation in the Gaza Strip, which is under inhumane siege and brutal assault by Israel, the occupying Power, is becoming more dire. A human catastrophe is unfolding and Palestine refugees are at the centre of this colossal devastation. The 72 Palestinian staff members of UNRWA who have died in these past four weeks are among the more than 9,300 Palestinians killed in indiscriminate Israeli attacks. Israel does not refer to the Palestine refugees as human beings, but rather as a "demographic threat" that should be contained or perhaps eliminated. Israel's systematic targeting of civilian areas, including refugee camps, across Gaza, has left nowhere safe for any living being, violating all norms of international law, she said, adding: "There must be accountability."

More than 60 per cent of the casualties are women and children, with at least 2,326 women and 3,760 children killed, she continued. Almost 50 per cent of civilian structures in Gaza have been destroyed, including UNRWA facilities sheltering more than 690,000 of the 1.4 million internally displaced Palestinians. "This is a blatant crime against humanity," she said, calling for an immediate ceasefire. ...

Mary Clune, representative of the European Union ... emphasized the importance of always protecting all civilians in line with international humanitarian law. She condemned all loss of civilian lives and called for the protection of medical facilities, schools and United Nations premises, as well as other infrastructure necessary for humanitarian assistance delivery. ...

Abdulaziz M. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia), speaking on behalf of the League of Arab States, reiterated the need to uphold the inherent and inalienable right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland in line with United Nations resolutions. The destructive war against civilians is one in the string of criminal attacks that the Israeli

occupation has been perpetrating for decades. Emphasizing that Palestinians continue to be forcibly displaced in the West Bank, he said that efforts should continue to end the escalation and stop the war in Gaza. Calling for a ceasefire, he added that all obstacles should be removed so that UNRWA can fulfil its mandate and deliver humanitarian assistance. ... The Agency should provide services until a fair and lasting solution is found in accordance with relevant resolutions, leading to an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. ...

Ahmed Hamood Faisal Al Busaidi (Oman), speaking on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council, expressed the organization's deep sorrow about the suffering of the Palestinian people. Condemning the targeting of civilians and the shelling of civilian facilities, he called for a permanent ceasefire. ... There should be no attempt to forcibly displace Palestinians as this will aggravate the refugee crisis. ...

Christina Markus Lassen (Denmark), also speaking for Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden ... said that recent events have confirmed the need for a strong and effective UNRWA. ... Beyond the current crisis, the Agency has the unique mandate to provide direct services to the millions of Palestine refugees living not only in Gaza and the West Bank, but also in volatile contexts in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, she continued. ... she said that the Agency's work will remain crucial until a just solution is found. ...

Yassine Salah (Tunisia) ... said that the barbaric attack against the Gaza Strip "rings an alarm bell". The international community must act fast to protect civilians, particularly women and children, and call on the Occupier to comply with international humanitarian law. ... Tunisia demands an immediate ceasefire, unhindered medical and humanitarian assistance to the Gaza strip, and rejects and condemns any attempt to forcibly evict Palestinians, he said.

Mr. Abushaibah (Kuwait) said ... The current dangerous setback threatens a new humanitarian catastrophe that could lead to an exponential increase in Palestinian refugees. He reiterated the importance of upholding the Palestinians' inalienable right to return to their homes in line with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the Arab Peace Initiative. The defenceless Palestinians are facing a genocide at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces in the Gaza Strip, he said, calling on the international community to shoulder its responsibility, abandon double standards regarding the question of Palestine, compel the Israeli occupation to comply with international law and support the work of UNRWA in fulfilling its mandate. Safe corridors for emergency relief assistance must be opened, he added.

Munir Akram (Pakistan) ... [said] Despite the General Assembly's overwhelming call for a sustained humanitarian ceasefire, Israel is continuing its brutal air strikes and ground invasion. "Let us not disguise what we are witnessing," he said, adding that war crimes and crimes against humanity are being committed with complete impunity, while those who prevented a ceasefire enabled the continued slaughter of innocents. ...

Ahmed Mohamed Ezzat Ahmed Elshandawily (Egypt) ... [said] The number of fatalities among personnel engaged in vital humanitarian work is perhaps the best indicator of the monstrous scale of the Israeli aggression against the Palestinians, which has claimed 9,000 civilians. Further, the funding crisis jeopardizes UNRWA's ability to even pay its staff who are working under daily Israeli bombardment. ... He went on to condemn all attempts to forcibly transfer the Palestinian civilian population, saying that such calls, made under the false guise of protection, are attempts to undermine the Palestinian cause.

Jassim Abdulaziz J. A. Al-Thani (Qatar) ... condemned the bombardment of the Jabalia refugee camp and reiterated calls to stop attacks and the policy of collective punishment. ... he insisted that the international community and donors provide adequate financing to help the Agency achieve its mandate. ...

Ibrahim Zuhuree (Maldives) condemning in strongest terms the deadliest attack on Palestinian people, joined the call for a humanitarian truce and access to humanitarian organizations contained in the General Assembly resolution titled "Protection of civilians

and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations” (document A/ES-10/L.25). The 72 UNRWA staff killed in recent attacks on Gaza were not just “statistics ... the events of 7 October were the culmination of a systematic and calculated repression of the Palestinian people by Israel over seven decades. Israeli illegal settlement practices have forced Palestinians into an “open-air prison”, he said, adding that it is “morally imperative” for the Security Council to enforce its own resolutions to maintain peace and security.

Ahmad Samir Fahim Habashneh (Jordan) ... called on the international community to immediately work towards ending to the human catastrophe and violent Israeli aggression in the Gaza Strip. It must “leave its silence” and clearly condemn the occupying force, which every day is violating international law and values with no accountability. The international community and the United Nations must move firmly and quickly to stop the war and protect the Palestinian people and to halt the Israeli attempt to displace the people of Gaza. ...

Mohamad Shahir Sabarudin (Malaysia) said that Israel has turned Gaza into a killing field. In its massacre of civilians, it has not spared hospitals, schools, mosques and churches. These inhumane and barbaric attacks constitute a serious breach of international humanitarian and human rights law. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gaspd795.doc.htm>

Report of the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East 1 January–31 December 2022 (A/78/13)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/78/13>

Report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/78/314)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/78/314>

Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations (A/ES-10/L.25)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/ES-10/L.25>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel/OPT update: Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

While much attention has been on the attacks inside Israel and the escalation of hostilities in Gaza since 7 October, the situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is alarming and urgent, amid the increasing and multi-layered human rights violations of Palestinians occurring there.

Since 7 October up to 2 November, 132 Palestinians, including 41 children, have been killed in the West Bank – 124 by Israeli forces and eight by settlers. Two Israeli soldiers have been killed.

Israeli forces have increasingly used military tactics and weapons in law enforcement operations, including an operation overnight involving airstrikes on Jenin refugee camp. ... Settler violence, which was already at record levels, has also escalated dramatically, averaging seven attacks a day. In more than a third of these attacks, firearms were used. We have documented that, in many of these incidents, settlers were accompanied by members of the Israeli forces, or the settlers were wearing uniforms and carrying army rifles. Along with the near total impunity for settler violence, we are concerned that armed settlers have been acting with the acquiescence and collaboration of Israeli forces and authorities. ...

Since 7 October, nearly 1,000 Palestinians from at least 15 herding communities have been forced from their homes. In these circumstances, settler violence may amount to the forcible transfer of a population - a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. ...

In repeated incidents, armed settlers have given Palestinian communities ultimatums to leave their homes or be killed. In one chilling example of the intimidation communities are facing, pamphlets were reportedly left by settlers on Palestinian vehicles with threatening messages telling them to leave now or face "elimination".

Despite hundreds of settlers being involved in this daily violence, since 7 October Israeli forces have reportedly arrested only two settlers for assaulting Palestinians and killing one Palestinian farmer.

Since 7 October, Israeli forces have arrested almost 2,000 Palestinians. We have received credible and consistent reports indicating a further increase in the ill-treatment of detainees, which in many cases could amount to torture. Two Palestinians arrested since 7 October have died in custody. Those detained are reportedly not granted due process and judicial guarantees, as required by international law.

Many communities are essentially in lockdown, with roads and checkpoints closed and their freedom of movement restricted. Some of the most vulnerable Palestinian communities have been left completely isolated, without access to essential goods and services.

The intensification of the fighting in northern Gaza has continued to add to the shocking number of casualties, which, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health, has reached over 9,000 killed, among them 3,700 children, and around 23,000 injured in less than four weeks. ...

We have serious concerns that the principles of distinction and proportionality are not being respected by both sides.

We strongly urge Palestinian armed groups to immediately stop launching inherently indiscriminate rockets into Israel. They must also immediately and unconditionally release all the hostages they hold, in serious breach of international humanitarian law. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2023/11/israelopt-update>

UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, and UNRWA

Joint statement by UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and UNRWA on Women and newborns bearing the brunt of the conflict in Gaza

Women, children and newborns in Gaza are disproportionately bearing the burden of the escalation of hostilities in the occupied Palestinian territory, both as casualties and in reduced access to health services ...

As of 3 November, according to Ministry of Health data, 2326 women and 3760 children have been killed in the Gaza strip, representing 67% of all casualties, while thousands more have been injured. This means that 420 children are killed or injured every day, some of them only a few months old. ...

There are an estimated 50 000 pregnant women in Gaza, with more than 180 giving birth every day. Fifteen per cent of them are likely to experience pregnancy or birth-related complications and need additional medical care.

These women are unable to access the emergency obstetric services they need to give birth safely and care for their newborns. ...

Maternal deaths are expected to increase given the lack of access to adequate care. The psychological toll of the hostilities also has direct – and sometimes deadly – consequences on reproductive health, including a rise in stress-induced miscarriages, stillbirths and premature births.

Prior to the escalation, malnutrition was already high among pregnant women, with impacts

on childhood survival and development. As access to food and water worsens, mothers are struggling to feed and care for their families, increasing risks of malnutrition, disease and death.

The lives of newborns also hang by a thread. If hospitals run out of fuel, the lives of an estimated 130 premature babies who rely on neonatal and intensive care services will be threatened, as incubators and other medical equipment will no longer function. ...

All parties to the conflict must abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure including health care. All civilians, including the hostages currently held in Gaza, have the right to health care. All hostages must be released without delay or conditions. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/joint-statement-unicef-who-unfpa-and-unrwa-women-and-newborns-bearing-brunt-conflict>

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Other Relevant Information

United Nations

Third Committee Approves 10 Draft Resolutions, Including Texts on Glorification of Nazism and Other Heinous Practices, Homelessness, Equal Access to Justice

... The Committee ... took up the draft resolution titled “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” (document A/C.3/78/L.7) ...

Introducing the draft, **the representative of the Russian Federation** recalled that, in 1949, the United Nations was created in the aftermath of the victory over Nazism to ensure that the history will not repeat itself. The General Assembly has been adopting this resolution since 2005; however, for the past 20 years, the matters contained therein have not been addressed properly and have worsened. Today, the world is witnessing, inter alia, the rise in Islamophobia, Christianophobia and antisemitism. Some countries have started waging a war on memorials that were established to glorify those who fought Nazism. In the streets of some European centres, there are neo-Nazi marches, he cautioned. In this context, he said that “the approval of this document is not only our duty to those who created the UN, it is our duty to future generations”.

The Committee then took up draft amendment A/C.3/78/L.58, which inserts a new operative paragraph, which “Notes with alarm that the Russian Federation has sought to justify its territorial aggression against Ukraine on the purported basis of eliminating neo-Nazism, and underlines that the pretextual use of neo-Nazism to justify territorial aggression seriously undermines genuine attempts to combat neo-Nazism”.

Introducing amendment, “L.58”, **the representative of Albania** said that, while this resolution purports to combat the glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism, in reality, it manipulates the historical truth. The Russian Federation has deployed disinformation to justify its aggression against Ukraine. To counter this, this amendment was introduced, using verbatim language from the Special Rapporteur’s report. ...

The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, underscored the Union’s commitment to the global fight against violent extremism, racism and anti-Muslim hatred. This year’s resolution is presented as “a technical rollover”, which it is not, he asserted, rejecting Moscow’s removal of operative paragraph 4, which notes with alarm that it has sought to justify its territorial aggression against Ukraine on the purported basis of eliminating neo-Nazism. This seriously undermines genuine attempts to combat

Nazism, he stressed ...

The representative of Australia, reiterating her Government's commitment to the global fight against racism, expressed support for the amendment. The Russian Federation has sought to justify its aggression against Ukraine under the pretext of eliminating neo-Nazism ...

The representative of Ukraine, strongly condemning all forms of Nazism and neo-Nazism, said the draft resolution has nothing in common with a genuine fight against these scourges. Instead, it serves Moscow to justify its brutal war against her country and its heinous crimes against humanity. ...

The draft amendment was adopted ...

The Committee then turned to a vote on the draft "L.7" as amended.

... **the representative of Spain** said the battle against modern forms of extremist ideologies constitutes the Union's firm priority. Firmly opposing all forms of antisemitism, he condemned the political misuse of anti-Nazi rhetoric and de-Nazification ...

The representative of Indonesia acknowledged the alarming escalation in incidents fuelled by hatred, Islamophobia and Christianophobia. ... However, she expressed deep regret about the adoption of an amendment, which she cited as "a disheartening double-standard". "It is impossible to overlook the glaring disparity of how we address instances of aggression and human rights abuses worldwide," she stressed, adding that Israel's actions have resulted in a human tragedy and "bear the hallmark of apartheid". The persistent attacks on Palestinians and the sustainability of their livelihoods, with little humanitarian access, have profoundly altered Gaza. The stark double standard where "aggression is selectively condemned based on the perpetrator rather than the act must be addressed", as it undermines the credibility of collective efforts to promote peace and human rights, she asserted.

The representative of Israel said the darkest chapter of the history of Jewish people — the Holocaust — serves as proof of how low human beings can sink morally when they follow such ideologies. The 7 October massacre was yet another reminder, she said, sounding alarm over the current rise of antisemitism worldwide, with numbers skyrocketing as high as 500 per cent. University students are being physically attacked based on their religion, as the world is once again witnessing the Jews being threatened. Her delegation will vote in favour; however, she opposed politicization of the draft. ...

The Committee then adopted draft resolution "L.7" ...

By its terms, the Assembly would express alarm at the spread in many parts of the world of various extremist political parties, ideologies and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups. Further, it would note with concern that, even where neo-Nazis or extremists do not formally participate in Government, the presence therein of extreme right-wing ideologues can have the effect of injecting into governance the same ideologies that make neo-Nazism and extremism so dangerous.

Further by the text, the Assembly would firmly condemn incidents that glorify and promote Nazism, such as acts involving pro-Nazi graffiti and paintings, including on monuments dedicated to victims of the Second World War. It would express alarm over the use by extremist groups of the Internet and social media to recruit new members and to disseminate their hate-filled messages, while recognizing that the Internet can also be used to counteract these groups and their activities. The Assembly would condemn any denial of the Holocaust, as well as any manifestation of religious intolerance or violence against persons or communities on the basis of ethnic origin or religious belief. ...

The representative of Cuba ... pointed out that violent acts against ethnic and religious minorities as an expression of Nazism and neo-Nazism are rising in countries such as the United States, and that such terms are also being used for Israel's apartheid and ongoing genocide. ...

The representative of Belarus, meanwhile, voiced "shock and horror" about the unfolding

of episodes at present which evoke black and white photographs from the 1940s, of gatherings of veterans of the Waffen-SS, torchlit processions, and standing ovations to Nazis, as a result of policies to exonerate and justify Nazis. “Eyewitness statements remind us that Nazism is not just hatred to other people, it is cold-hearted, unadulterated evil,” he emphasized. ...

The representative of Switzerland condemned all forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia, including Nazism and neo-Nazism, as they engender fear and lead to violence. The current increase in violence in the Middle East has repercussions around the world, she said, noting that her country takes a strong stance against discrimination based on religion, including antisemitism, Christianophobia or Islamophobia. To that end, she called for an end to hate speech likely to incite violence. ...

The representative of Egypt said her country is committed to combatting racism. ... The same countries who consistently condemn what they describe as “Russian aggression against Ukraine” have shown double standards in “failing to equally condemn the Israeli genocide and aggression against the civilian population of Gaza by also justifying this aggression”. ...

The representative of Syria noted that Western countries reaffirmed their position against Nazism and neo-Nazism, but voted against “L.7”. ... Voting against it raises questions about the credibility of those countries, he noted, adding that their credibility is already questionable due to their blind support for the war of genocide committed by the occupation power in the State of Palestine. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gashc4397.doc.htm>

Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/C.3/78/L.7)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.3/78/L.7>

Proposed Amendment: Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/C.3/78/L.58)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.3/78/L.58>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Human Rights Chief condemns rise in hatred

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk today strongly deplored the sharp rise in hatred globally - including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia - since 7 October, while at the same time expressing concerns about undue restrictions on protests over the conflict in Israel and Gaza, and related free expression. ...

“The impact of this crisis has been dramatic - at the regional and global level,” Türk said. “It has sent shockwaves across every region, dehumanising both Palestinians and Jews. We have witnessed a sharp spike in hate speech, violence and discrimination, deepening social fractures and polarisation, alongside the denial of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

“I have heard from both Jews and Muslims that they don’t feel safe, and it saddens me.” From the Americas and the Asia-Pacific to Europe and Africa, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic harassment, attacks and hate speech have multiplied, including in the context of protests relating to the conflict. Homes and religious buildings have been defaced with threatening symbols along with other images and messages meant to frighten and provoke hate. Inflammatory, toxic and hateful rhetoric has also been used by political leaders.

“At the same time, evil words have been accompanied by vile deeds – acts no doubt encouraged by the dehumanizing and vicious language found not only in our streets but political leaders. ...

In this environment, it is also important to ensure the rights to peaceful assembly and free expression are protected, the High Commissioner said. Since 7 October, hundreds of thousands of people have exercised their rights in protests across the globe relating to the conflict that have not countenanced incitement to hatred or violence. Marches and rallies have been held to support both Israel and Palestine. Some countries have imposed wide-ranging restrictions, often referring to risks to national security, including risks related to incitement to hatred and glorification of terrorism. ...

“States must ensure a safe and enabling space for participation and debate. They cannot unduly restrict participation and debate or critical commentary about the conflict, or expressions of solidarity with either Israelis or Palestinians.” ...

“Any restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly must be based on law, where specifically necessary for and proportionate to the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/un-human-rights-chief-condemns-rise-hatred>

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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>

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>

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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