



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Debate

Debate on the Address: Making Britain a Clean Energy Superpower

... col 307 **Barry Gardiner (Labour)**: ... I welcome unreservedly the Holocaust Memorial Bill and urge the Government to introduce it swiftly in the eight months before purdah sets in for the next general election. The significance of this Bill has only been heightened by the hideous terror attack on 7 October. Both sides of the House will give the Bill a speedy passage, so that we can build the memorial and learning centre. If there were ever a time that we needed such a learning centre against hatred, it is now. ...

col 323 **Bob Blackman (Conservative)**: ... Finally, the Holocaust Memorial Bill removes an obstacle that has been in the way of preparing the building. I declare my interest as chair of the all-party parliamentary group on holocaust memorial. We owe it to the survivors, the British people and future generations to ensure that the holocaust can never happen again. I would like to express my thoughts and prayers for the whole Jewish community as the war in Israel rages on, following the horrific attack by the Hamas terror group, causing the largest loss of life in a single day since the holocaust. The Bill is eagerly awaited; obstacles have been put in the way, and it is up to the Government to ensure that we progress it as quickly as possible. ...

col 336 **Kate Osborne (Labour)**: ... Unfortunately, neither the King's Speech nor yesterday's statement called for a ceasefire in Gaza. People in Gaza are without food, water, electricity, fuel and communications, and the death toll is now more than 10,000. I agree with Oxfam, the United Nations Secretary-General and many others that a ceasefire is the only real solution. A cease-fire is essential to ending the huge daily loss of innocent lives, to ensuring that aid gets into Gaza and to ensuring the safe return of the Israeli hostages. We must have a path to peace out of the conflict in Israel and Gaza. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-09/debates/051073DA-E3D2-428E-8E43-5B7713EB681E/MakingBritainACleanEnergySuperpower>

House of Lords Debate

King's Speech: Health and Social Care

... col 180 **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Markham):** ... I finish by addressing an issue of utmost importance, given the ongoing events in the Middle East. The aftermath of Hamas's attack on Israel on 7 October demonstrates a clear link between anti-Israel sentiment and anti-Semitism. In the 21 days following this attack, the Community Security Trust recorded more than 800 anti-Semitic incidents—the highest ever recorded in a 21-day period. We know that boycotts and sanctions are divisive and undermine community cohesion. Many target Israel, under the banner of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions—or BDS—movement. There is evidence that this movement has contributed to the horrific rise of anti-Semitism in the UK. Yet we have seen taxpayer-funded bodies attempt such boycotts. In 2014, Leicester City Council passed a BDS motion on boycotting goods from Israeli settlements; that same year, Gwynedd Council passed a BDS motion calling for a trade embargo with Israeli settlements; and, in 2021, Lancaster City Council passed a motion in support of the BDS movement.

Taxpayer-funded public bodies should never interfere in foreign policy. That is why this Government have carried over the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill into this parliamentary Session. It will deliver on our 2019 manifesto commitment to ban public bodies from imposing boycotts, divestments or sanction campaigns against foreign countries. It will prevent them pursuing divisive policies that undermine community cohesion and stoke anti-Semitism, ensure that the UK speaks with one voice internationally and guarantee that taxpayers only pay for foreign policy once. ...

col 183 **Baroness Twycross (Labour):** ... With denial and distortion of the Holocaust rising and anti-Semitism increasing over the past few weeks, we all have a responsibility to tackle misinformation and hate. Discussion of communities in this debate comes at a time when we see parents anxious about their children even wearing their Jewish school uniform, and British families have missing or dead family members in Israel and Gaza. From these Benches, Labour looks forward to supporting the Holocaust Memorial Bill ... The memorial and learning centre will be a truly fitting tribute to the 6 million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered during the Holocaust, and will also offer a place to learn about more recent genocides. It is indeed right that such a memorial will sit at the heart of our democracy, next to Parliament. ...

col 208 **Baroness Deech (Crossbench):** ... My Lords, the Holocaust Memorial Bill has been carried over from the previous Session. I speak with a heavy heart. Since the brutal mass slaughter undertaken by Hamas against innocent communities in Israel, there has been a worldwide outbreak of anti-Semitism, not least in this country. On our streets, people fear for their safety as bloodcurdling mobs call for jihad and the elimination of 7 million Jews in Israel and others around the world. We know that "from the river to the sea" means the complete elimination of Israel, because the presence of Jews in the Middle East has never been accepted by their neighbours, who killed, dispossessed and expelled Jews from nearly all Middle Eastern countries in the 1940s.

Among the worst offenders have been in our universities. At Nottingham Trent, Jewish freshers were attacked; at Bristol, the slogan is "Death to Zionists"; at Edinburgh people say "Heil Hitler" and at UCL "Intifada until victory". I remind the House that last year the president of the National Union of Students was sacked for anti-Semitism. The same is true of some of our schools. These young people have had compulsory Holocaust education, but the only result seems to be that if they want to upset Jews then they resort to swastikas and references to gas and crematoria. They know nothing of modern Jews or Israel because they have been taught only that Jews are victims and that it was all the fault of the Nazis.

The late and much missed Lord Jonathan Sacks said of anti-Semitism: "In the past they

hated us for our religion; then they hated us for our race; and now they hate our one and only state, our safe haven, Israel". The old anti-Semitic slurs of the past have transferred themselves seamlessly to attacks on Israel, anti-Semitism dressed up as anti-Zionism. In this country we have the National Holocaust Centre in Newark, the Holocaust Centre North in Huddersfield, the Holocaust Galleries at the Imperial War Museum, the Kindertransport Memorial at Liverpool Street and others in Hyde Park, Harwich and Swanage. We have Holocaust Memorial Day, Kristallnacht commemoration and outstanding Holocaust education centres at the Wiener Holocaust Library, the Sir Martin Gilbert Learning Centre, the British Library's "Voices of the Holocaust", the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Hull History Centre. Depending on how you count, there could be as many as 80 museums and collections.

col/ 209 What have they achieved? The history of the Holocaust is well documented and ongoing, for example in the Channel Islands, and the memories of the survivors are recorded. What is missing is the link to Jews today and their homeland and safe haven of Israel. Holocaust memorialisation tends to package up that genocide and consign Jew hatred to the past—nothing to do with us today and no mention of how the survivors went on to establish the state of Israel. In Britain, those memorials are designed to project Britain as a liberal democracy where nothing like that can happen and where all genocides are equally awful and in the past—Kosovo, Darfur, Rwanda and so on.

The proposed memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens will continue this, despite what we see in the streets right now. Its location is built on a false premise. It will fail to educate people about Israel and anti-Semitism today. I have watched politicians who are arch-enemies of Israel's existence queuing up to sign the remembrance day book here in Parliament. Hypocrisy is too mild a word. As the American Dara Horn said, everyone loves dead Jews—the living, not so much.

Not only that, but to spend £138 million on a memorial to the dead of various genocides when the one and only Jewish museum in London has closed for lack of funds is a disgrace. We could and should have a splendid Jewish museum in central London dealing with the entire history of Jews in this country over a thousand years, triumph and tragedy, and with the Holocaust in context, as Lord Sacks wanted. The learning centre planned for here is a shallow specimen, ironically to be created by digging down two storeys at huge cost in funds and to the environment.

Given the protests in London recently, it will be a focus for graffiti and worse in no time. That is not a reason not to build it, but, if it is built, parliamentarians must prepare themselves for barriers and armed guards there, as well as disturbances and defacement. The children in the playground there will bear the brunt of it. How tin-eared is it to place a playground and café on top of a memorial to children who had no childhood and who starved to death? Would it be appropriate to have a café and playground right by the Cenotaph?

It is well meaning, but naive and misguided to go ahead with this. It will not improve the situation for the persecuted Jews of today. It will enable the sponsors to say, "Look what we have done for you. No more complaints please; it is all sorted". It will provide a photo backdrop for politicians who like to say that they do not have a racist bone in their bodies—and give them carte blanche to join the Israel-haters.

I plead with those behind the Bill to educate themselves before pretending to educate others. Abandon the design for the current memorial, which is meaningless; it has been called a giant toast rack. It was designed by an architect who is now in disgrace for his sexual assaults and has been dropped by his clients. How could one stand in reverence before such a monument? Instead, we could have a figurative memorial that means something, like the one at Liverpool Station, or the Warsaw ghetto. We could have a new Jewish museum that includes the Holocaust and its impact on Britain. We could have all that without the expense and legislation before us, which will result in the spoiling of the only decent green space near us without any compensating features. I urge noble Lords

as strongly as I can to change course on this.

col 211 Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat): ... My Lords, in the time available to me, I would have liked to address my remarks to the effect that the new legislation will have on two of my main areas of interest: equalities and prisoner welfare. However, that would have made a very short speech indeed. The word “equality” does not feature once in the gracious Speech and one government equalities pledge, made more than five years ago, has still not found its way into proposed legislation. ...

col 212 Finally, I want to tackle race hate, which is of course an equality issue. This feels particularly timely given the impact the horrific Israel-Gaza conflict has had in the UK. The Home Secretary has only added fuel to the fire with her divisive rhetoric and declarations of “hate marches”, which have incensed our Muslim communities and many others, while British Jews continue to feel unsafe, as well they might. Since 7 October anti-Semitic incidents have increased by more than 600%, while Tell MAMA, an organisation that measures Islamic hate crimes, has recorded a similar sixfold increase. This month is Islamophobia Awareness Month, and perhaps the Government should realise that backing one side against another here in the UK is harmful, not least further damaging their prospects in the next general election with the votes they will lose from the Muslim community. All our communities deserve our protection and support, not only in times of conflict. At this time, when we remember all those who suffered and continue to suffer in war, please let us learn the lessons of the past. Never forget what war can do to humanity. ...

col 221 Baroness Verma (Conservative): ... When I was growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, it was hate because of the colour of your skin; today, sadly, most of the hate is because of the faith you belong to. It is so important to raise this because schools should be a place where children go to learn, to be happy, to have well-being and not—like as I experienced when I was a child—a place of dread. Every single day going to school was: were they going to be nice to me? Were they going to call me names? Were they going to beat me up or try to beat me up?

col 222 Sadly, earlier this year I saw a report on anti-Hindu hate in schools. Hate of any kind, for any faith, is unacceptable, but 1.6% of the population of this country is British Hindu. It is a community that does not make a noise or raise its voice against things because, by and large, it just gets on. But it was so sad when I came across parents who had moved their children several times because they had been called names, identified as non-believers, told they would burn in hell and had different types of meat chucked at them. I say this because we all have a duty of care, but local authorities were put in charge of reporting bullying or hate incidents. I worry because, when you give a local authority that authority, I do not know how much it can fairly find time to investigate. It is critical that every single child going to school feels that everyone is on their side.

After I read the report, I went out to speak to parents, and I found that this was not a small but a large problem. I have stood up and fought against discrimination all of my life, and I will fight for every faith and for every child to be able to go to school and have a safe haven, where the teachers will not stand by and allow this practice to carry on. But when I found that some parents had reported their children telling them that the teachers had not intervened to stop it, that raised some red flags. ...

I know how difficult it was to go to school and the knotted feeling I had in my stomach, thinking, “Will they be my friend today or not? Will the teacher be nice to me or not?” It is not acceptable that that is still happening all of these years later. ...

col 226 Lord Bird (Crossbench): ... What is happening in Gaza really frightens me. Everywhere I go and whoever I talk to ... I do not meet people who are siding with His Majesty’s Government and siding with Israel. Most of them are saying, “A ceasefire, please”. ... It may not make military sense to stop the bombing, but what worries me is the possible outburst of anti-Semitism—the most evil thing, that I as a child was taught to

embrace, because I came from an anti-Semitic Catholic family. I am seeing it. I want to head off that anti-Semitism and I think we may be walking into a trap. ... I worry about the long-term effect on Jewish people in this country, because people are turning away, and that really worries me. ...

col 237 Lord Truscott (Non-affiliated): ... I also agreed with the noble Baroness, Lady Deech, on her powerful speech about the Holocaust Bill. I support a Holocaust memorial and learning centre, but the current proposals reflect the fact that it is the wrong location and the wrong design, at an exorbitant cost of £139 million. ...

col 253 Baroness Merron (Labour): ... The Coronation was a visible illustration of the King's determination to mark his reign as one celebrating the strength of our multifaith nation. For me, it was the greatest honour to make history by being a part of the ceremony, representing the Jewish community, alongside the noble Lords, Lord Patel, Lord Kamall and Lord Singh, who represented other faiths.

In declaring my interests in the register that relate to the Jewish community and in turning to the gracious Speech, I say how warmly I appreciated the acknowledgement of anti-Semitism and the need to remember the horrors of the Holocaust. Recognition of the barbaric acts of terrorism against the people of Israel exactly one month before the gracious Speech, the facilitation of humanitarian support into Gaza and support for the cause of peace and stability in the Middle East all sent a clear and welcome message. ...

col 256 The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Viscount Younger of Leckie): ... I also take this opportunity to echo [Baroness Merron's] points, and the points made by other Peers, on anti-Semitism. It was an important point that she made, and we are all very aware of what is going on in that particular area. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-09/debates/C93A5057-CF4E-4206-946F-9FD012607185/King'SSpeech>

The King's Speech can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-07/debates/24D8E0F6-1D2C-45DE-A8C4-F5C7B2477C68/King'SSpeech>

House of Commons Oral Answers

Metropolitan Police: Operational Independence

col 241 Yvette Cooper (Labour): To ask the Home Secretary if she will make a statement on the operational independence of the Metropolitan police.

The Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp): About a month ago, Hamas perpetrated a sickening terrorist attack in Israel, murdering 1,400 innocent people, often in horrific circumstances. About 200 people remain held hostage by Hamas, a terrorist organisation ... We have also seen, in the United Kingdom, thousands of people demonstrating in recent weeks. Thanks to the tireless work of the police, those incidents have largely passed without significant incident. However, a number of arrests, now nearly 200, have been made, where people have committed disorder, racially aggravated crimes or assaults on police officers. It is right that police officers have acted robustly in those cases.

It is also right that the police are operationally independent of government. That is a fundamental principle of British policing ... The Metropolitan police asked protesters to postpone their planned protest this weekend, but the request was refused. The Prime Minister met the commissioner yesterday to seek reassurances that remembrance events will be protected. Of course, remembrance events play a special part in this nation's long and proud history, and it would be a grave insult

if they were to be disrupted in any way. It is for the Metropolitan police to decide whether to apply to the Home Secretary to ban any march. As of this morning, no such application has been received, but the Home Secretary will, of course, carefully consider one should it be made. I reiterate that the police retain the confidence of the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and myself in using all the powers available to them, under terrorism legislation and public order legislation, to prevent criminality and disorder, and hate speech.

col 242 Let me say to the House that I have been contacted this morning repeatedly by members of the Jewish community who are deeply apprehensive about what this weekend may bring, and I want to put on record that we expect the police to protect those members of communities in London, including the Jewish community, who are feeling vulnerable this weekend. There are comprehensive powers in place to do that. Hate has no place on London's streets and we expect the police to ensure that the laws are upheld. There are powers in place to deal with people spreading hate or deliberately raising tensions through harassment and abusive behaviour. The police can impose conditions on marches, as indeed they have done to prevent pro-Palestine protesters from approaching the Israeli embassy, to give one example. The police have also used section 60AA conditions to require people to remove face coverings, but the use of those powers is, of course, an operational matter for the Metropolitan Police Service.

This weekend should first and foremost be about remembering those who gave their lives in defence of this country. Any disruption to remembrance services would be completely unacceptable and an insult to their memory. I have confidence that the Metropolitan police and other police forces will ensure that this weekend passes off peacefully and without disruption.

Yvette Cooper: ... Remembrance events are really important to all of us. Those events need to be protected. That is the job of the police: to enforce and respect the law, while maintaining public safety, tackling hate crime and extremism and respecting rights in law to peaceful protest. ...

I have two questions: does this Government still believe in the operational independence of the police and how can they do so while this Home Secretary is in post? ...

col 243 **Chris Philp:** ... As we consider this topic, the House should keep in mind the fact that many of our fellow citizens are feeling deeply uneasy about what is going on in the middle east and the domestic repercussions. We have seen a spike in Islamophobic offences—there have been 21 arrests in the last four weeks for Islamophobic offences. We have seen a surge in antisemitic offences—there have been 98 arrests for antisemitic offences in the last four weeks.

I have been contacted this morning by members of the Jewish community who are deeply uneasy about what this weekend will bring. I do not think it is acceptable that our fellow citizens feel scared or uneasy walking about the streets of London. ...

... let us keep in mind that we are seeing a humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza, there are 200 people being held hostage, some 1,400 people were slaughtered by terrorists and members of our own community are feeling scared this weekend. ...

Michael Ellis (Conservative): Of course there is a principle of operational police independence, but I am concerned that the Metropolitan Police Commissioner keeps saying he has no powers to stop the march or arrest people in these marches. He certainly has powers under sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 and under sections 1, 12 and 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000. ...

Chris Philp: ... The commissioner does have powers under—I think—section 13 of the Public Order Act 1986 to ban marches in certain circumstances. ... It applies when the police think that they are unable to deal with disorder that may break out. That is quite a high threshold. The Metropolitan police have so far not made a

request to the Home Secretary under that section, but, if they do so, it will be considered very carefully indeed.

col 244 ... the police have a wide range of powers that they have been exercising under anti-terrorism legislation. That legislation makes it an offence to glorify, promote and incite association with proscribed organisations, which of course includes Hamas. Section 18—I think—of the Public Order Act makes it an offence to use threats to incite racial hatred. There is a wide range of offences and they are being used. So far during these protests, 188 people have been arrested for hate crimes in relation to glorifying Hamas, inciting violence, and apparently praising the appalling terrorist atrocities that were committed ...

Chris Stephens (SNP): Let me make it clear that the evils of antisemitism and Islamophobia should be condemned wherever we find them.

More than 2.5 million Muslims fought for the British Empire in world war two to assert freedom, liberty and an end to fascism in Europe, using war to end all wars and promote peace through armistice. ...

Armistice Day has turned into Armistice Weekend, and a lot of discussion is focused on the Palestinian ceasefire march, when the police are more concerned about counter-protests from the far right, such as the English Defence League, and football hooligans, such as Football Lads Alliance. ...

Finally, the former Met assistant commissioner said this morning that this is “the end of operational independence in policing” after the Government sought to pressure and exert control to ban Saturday’s peace march, saying that they are on the verge of behaving unconstitutionally. ...

Chris Philp: ... I do not agree with the suggestion that operational independence is in any way compromised. ...

col 245 We understand, I am sure, that there is huge concern, not just in the Muslim community, but beyond, about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. That is why this Government are providing additional aid. That is why they are calling for a humanitarian pause to allow aid to get in. That is why our Prime Minister has worked closely with others, including President Sisi of Egypt, to make sure the Rafah border crossing is open to allow aid in and certain citizens out. It is why our Prime Minister has renewed his public commitment to a durable, two-state solution. Those voices for peace are heard as well.

Let me repeat what I said at the start: operational independence of policing is a sacrosanct principle and this Government will not interfere with it.

Theresa Villiers (Conservative): ... In all the many years that I have known the Jewish community ... I have never known such fear and anxiety as I have seen over the past few weeks. ...

Chris Philp: ... We of course expect the police to protect the Jewish community across London and across the whole country at a time when they feel deeply uneasy. In fact, describing the sentiment that the Jewish community are feeling as unease understates it; as I said earlier, I have received messages this morning from members of the Jewish community expressing fear about this weekend, and I will raise those fears with senior police officers later today to ensure that the Met are aware of them, and are policing that appropriately. There is no excuse for harassment. There is no excuse for inciting racial hatred. That has no place in a civilised country such as this one, and we will not let it happen. ...

Diana Johnson (Labour): ... given the comments from the Home Secretary, the principles of operational independence of policing dating back to 1285, and the policing protocol, which the Home Secretary agreed in June this year, can the Minister confirm that if there is to be any discussion of these long-standing policy principles of policing, Parliament is the place to do it, possibly including the use of a royal commission? We should certainly not have these matters debated on the front page of newspapers at a time that is very

challenging for communities in this nation.

col 246 Chris Philp: ... Scrutiny is healthy and appropriate; interference is a different thing entirely. ... The operational independence principle is not one that we plan to revisit, ...

Jon Trickett (Labour): We all know that many people will be on the march on Saturday. The organisers and participants have told me that they will be participating in ceremonies of remembrance and that their march has been organised in such a way that it will not impact on that. The truth is that the Government are attempting to draw the police into taking political sides in a very contentious matter in the country. There are millions of people who want a ceasefire. ...

col 247 Chris Philp: ... We all accept the right to protest ... There are limits to that right concerning public order, incitement to racial hatred and so on, and it is for the police to police those laws, but it is reasonable for politicians to hold them to account for doing that ...

... these protests have been going on for four weeks now. The Home Secretary was not commenting entirely before the events; she was also commenting after events that have been unfolding over the last four weeks, which have included 188 arrests and a number of communities, both Muslim and Jewish, but particularly the Jewish community, feeling very uneasy. It is reasonable for the Home Secretary to try to ensure that communities feel safe and protected ...

col 248 Ian Paisley (DUP): ... I have witnessed Irish nationalists and republicans ... running too quickly to the support of Hamas, to Colombian terrorists, to Hezbollah and a whole host of others. The Home Secretary is correct to call that out ...

col 249 Jeff Smith (Labour): Does the Minister agree with the Home Secretary that “senior police officers play favourites when it comes to protesters”?

Chris Philp: ... It is important that the police apply the law even-handedly ...

Rachel Hopkins (Labour): Words matter, so in the Home Secretary’s absence, can the Minister explain in what way protest marches in the UK relating to Israel and Gaza are “disturbingly reminiscent of Ulster”, and does he agree?

Chris Philp: ... What we need to do is ensure that London’s streets are safe, and that we do not have an atmosphere of fear or intimidation, and that is what we expect the police to deliver.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-09/debates/092F6A47-5FB4-465A-A05D-18A57A3C7189/MetropolitanPoliceOperationalIndependence>

Business of the House

Bob Blackman (Conservative): This weekend, the nation will fall silent to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the great war, the second world war and other conflicts. Next weekend at the Cenotaph, the Association of Jewish Ex-servicemen and Women will conduct its annual march. That will be a really important security operation for the Metropolitan police. Last year, my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Cheltenham (Alex Chalk) became the first ever Minister to lay a wreath at that service. Will my right hon. Friend allow a debate in Government time on the contribution made by Jewish ex-servicemen and women, and will she prevail on the Defence Secretary or a Defence Minister to attend the service and lay a wreath?

Penny Mordaunt: ... It is right that we mark the contribution of all ex-servicemen and women. He mentions the—I think 120,000—Jewish servicemen who fought in world wars with our British armed forces. These are incredibly important events, and 19 November coincides with Mitsvah Day, a day when the Jewish community around the country will be supporting local charities and communities—another

example of the service they give to their communities and this nation. I am very happy to ensure that there is ministerial attendance at that event. That tradition should continue. I cannot tell him which Minister, but I shall make sure that all relevant Departments remember the request.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-09/debates/13ED6994-06C4-4603-85FD-2830363794A0/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-9728F1F3-9050-4978-BE20-318C1CABBC5B>

House of Commons Home Affairs Committee

Hard-hitting measures to eradicate toxic police culture must come before wider change possible, Home Affairs Committee warns

... Without public trust and confidence in the police, attempts to prevent and detect crime will be unlikely to succeed no matter how impressive the strategic thinking behind them, the Home Affairs Committee has found. In a report into policing published today, it calls on police forces to implement specific measures to restore trust with communities and transform workforce culture. ...

Policing must do more to address the fact that some people are likely to be attracted to the role precisely because of the power it wields. Frequent and continued cases of servicing officers committing serious criminal offences and evidence of toxic workforce cultures has not yet triggered the scale or speed of reform needed, the Committee finds. It highlights that there urgent need for more effective mechanisms to root out and remove individuals who are fundamentally unfit to hold such a position of power. ...

Progress in recruiting a diverse and open workforce that reflects the communities it seeks to serve remains inadequate. The perception of disproportionality in the use of stop and search persists and continues to harm community relations. ...

Greater value should be placed on neighbourhood policing as a critical tool for connecting with local areas. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/83/home-affairs-committee/news/198334/hardhitting-measures-to-eradicate-toxic-police-culture-must-come-before-wider-change-possible-home-affairs-committee-warns/>

Report: Policing priorities

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/42000/documents/208864/default/>

Downing Street

Prime Minister's statement on Armistice Day protests: 11 November 2023

I condemn the violent, wholly unacceptable scenes we have seen today from the EDL and associated groups and Hamas sympathisers attending the National March for Palestine. The despicable actions of a minority of people undermine those who have chosen to express their views peacefully.

Remembrance weekend is a time for us to come together as a nation and remember those who fought and died for our freedoms. What we have seen today does not defend the honour of our Armed Forces, but utterly disrespects them.

That is true for EDL thugs attacking police officers and trespassing on the Cenotaph, and it is true for those singing antisemitic chants and brandishing pro-Hamas signs and clothing on today's protest. The fear and intimidation the Jewish Community have experienced over the weekend is deplorable.

All criminality must be met with the full and swift force of the law. That is what I told the

Met Police Commissioner on Wednesday, that is what they are accountable for and that is what I expect.

I will be meeting the Met Police Commissioner in the coming days.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-statement-on-armistice-day-protests-11-november-2023>

The Prime Minister's message for Diwali 2023

Happy Diwali to all those celebrating around the world and across the UK, and a very happy Bandi Chhor Divas to our friends in the Sikh community.

With the lighting of the Diyas, let this be a moment we can look to the future with hope. My guiding light as Prime Minister is the determination to change things for the better, and as a symbol of the triumph of light over darkness, I believe Diwali is a poignant representation of the endeavour for a brighter tomorrow.

As your first British Asian Prime Minister, and a devout Hindu, I also hope this can be a celebration of the fantastic ethnic and cultural diversity which makes the UK the place it is today.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-prime-ministers-message-for-diwali-2023>

Crown Prosecution Service

Strong public interest in prosecuting those who cause unrest at pro-Palestine protests: Stephen Parkinson, DPP

... The conflict in the Middle East has sparked not only large-scale demonstrations, but also surges in antisemitic and Islamophobic hate crime – alongside disturbing scenes of support for proscribed terror groups.

Over the last four weeks, the Crown Prosecution Service has worked side-by-side with the police, providing real-time advice as situations unfold, and taking forward cases for prosecution where the tests that we apply before authorising a prosecution are met. ...

In the context of the current extraordinary period of unrest, I think it is important that I say this, as the newly appointed Director of Public Prosecutions: while we will always consider the circumstances of each case, I have no doubt that there is a strong public interest in taking forward prosecutions arising from any unrest if the evidence is there. We will apply the law firmly, fairly, and swiftly so that transgressors are brought to justice quickly. All our communities need the assurance that the law will be enforced in this way, and I give that commitment.

We will not hesitate to consider every offence available in the pursuit of justice – the law gives the police and prosecutors many options including public order offences, racially or religiously aggravated offences and terror offences. We have authorised and taken forward a string of charges across all these types of offence in recent weeks, not just arising from demonstrations but also in neighbourhoods and on transport where our citizens have been abused or threatened.

These cases matter because they underline a fundamental value which will underpin my tenure at the CPS: that all communities must feel the law will protect them.

As feelings within communities run high and pain remains raw at the images broadcast daily from Israel and Gaza, maintaining confidence is not always easy. But that is why, with the police, we are in dialogue with respected partners, such as the Jewish Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA, which monitors Islamophobic hate, from the communities most affected by rising hate crime. We will listen to what we are told by the communities we serve: responsiveness and engagement with others remain vital.

But it is also important to recognise that effective and fair justice requires independent

institutions to apply the law without fear or favour. Throughout this challenging period, the police have undoubtedly carried out their role with independence, resilience and grit. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/strong-public-interest-prosecuting-those-who-cause-unrest-pro-palestine-protests-stephen>

Right-wing supremacist sentenced over plot to kill worshipping Muslims while disguised as armed police officer

A teenage right-wing supremacist has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment after he was convicted of planning to disguise himself as an armed police officer and kill Muslims worshipping at nearby mosques.

Joe Metcalfe, 17, researched how to carry out the attack in imitation of the mass shootings in Christchurch New Zealand in 2019 and Buffalo in 2022.

He was arrested on June 21 2022 and charged seven days later.

He was sentenced at Leeds Crown Court today to a prison term of 10 years with an extended licence period of six years after being found guilty after trial of preparing to commit an act of terrorism, having already pleaded guilty to encouraging others to commit terrorism, disseminating terrorist publications, and possessing a bladed article. He has already served 500 days in custody. ...

Nick Price, head of the CPS Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division, said: "Although he spent time watching and sharing violent, racist, homophobic and antisemitic videos, these were not idle fantasies. He made a detailed plan to murder Muslims at a nearby mosque while disguised as an armed police officer, record the killings and escape.

"He stole his father's car to carry out a reconnaissance mission, contacted a gun seller to try and secretly ship a weapon to the UK, and but for apprehension intended to carry out the attack.

"Despite his young age his beliefs and willingness to take violent action to propagate them are a threat to our society, and it is right that he has been sentenced today for those crimes." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/right-wing-supremacist-sentenced-over-plot-kill-worshipping-muslims-while-disguised-armed>

Scottish Government

Diwali message from the First Minister [video]

<https://twitter.com/ScotGovFM/status/1722918909387354545>

Scottish Government FoI Release

Communications relating to far right groups

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/communications-relating-to-far-right-groups-foi-release/>
and

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/foi-eir-release/2023/11/communications-relating-to-far-right-groups-foi-release/documents/attachment---202200332379/attachment---202200332379/govscot%3Adocument/Attachment%2B-%2B202200332379.pdf>

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Statement regarding recent protests

“We have been greatly saddened by the events in Israel and Gaza. We know how deeply this continues to impact individuals and communities across Great Britain.

“We understand that tensions are exceptionally high at present, with many groups of our fellow citizens feeling vulnerable and threatened. Violence and threatening behaviour, in particular towards people on the basis of the protected characteristics such as race and religion, are never acceptable.

“We urge protestors to exercise their right to lawful assembly responsibly and to avoid causing any anxiety to their fellow citizens whose rights and freedoms we also stand to defend.

“Policing such protests lawfully and safely involves an ongoing complex balancing of rights and duties, and we appreciate decisions are taken in rapidly changing circumstances.

“We have written to the Metropolitan Police to offer our support in navigating the delicate balance these rights entail as they respond to planned protests during the period of remembrance this weekend.”

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/statement-regarding-recent-protests>

Letter to Sir Mark Rowley, Chief Constable of the Metropolitan Police

... I know that you will also be mindful of the importance of ensuring that Jewish people in the Capital are able to feel safe and secure and not subject to hostile or threatening actions during this period of heightened anxiety for them.

I know that the Metropolitan Police will focus on its duty to enforce the law and discharge its obligations, mindful particularly of the importance of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly under Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

You will also know that these rights are not absolute, and may be restricted in certain circumstances; any such actions must be necessary, lawful and proportionate.

The law is clear that “no restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”

The Commission understands that tensions are exceptionally high at present, with many groups of our fellow citizens feeling vulnerable and threatened. Violence and threatening behaviour, in particular towards people on the basis of the protected characteristics, such as race and religion, are never acceptable. ...

The Commission also appreciates that policing such protests lawfully and safely involves an ongoing complex balancing of rights and duties, and decisions are taken in rapidly changing circumstances. ...

To read the letter in full see

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/letter-sir-mark-rowley-chief-constable-metropolitan-police>

CST

Antisemitic Incidents – 10 November Update

In the 35 days inclusive between the Hamas terror attack on Israel (Saturday 7 October) and Friday 10 November, CST recorded at least 1205 antisemitic incidents across the UK. This is the highest ever total reported to CST across a thirty-five-day period. ...

For comparison, CST recorded 191 antisemitic incidents over the same 35 days in 2022.

This means that we have seen an increase in anti-Jewish hate acts of 531% this year compared to the same period last year. ...

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

- Posters of Jewish hostages have been removed or defaced in London, Manchester, Hertfordshire and Leeds
- Lit fireworks were thrown towards Jewish girls in Manchester
- "F*ck Israel" was shouted at four Jewish men in London
- In Hertfordshire, teenagers on bikes shouted, "Free Palestine", and, "I want to kill you Jews" at a Jewish woman in her car
- "JEWS ARE SH*T" was written on the inside of a toilet door in a Manchester supermarket
- A post on X (formerly Twitter) read, "Is it time to question the propaganda we have been fed about the Holocaust. How much of what we've been told about Jews and Israel since WWII has been lies"
- Kids from another school passed a Jewish school in Manchester and started shouting, "Yids!" at the Jewish children leaving the premises
- At a Manchester university, "Kill Jews" was written on a Freedom for Palestine poster
- In Cheshire, a swastika with the word "Nazi" was daubed on a door
- In Leeds, a university student had a swastika and "f*ck you c*nts" written in the dirt on their vehicle ...

To read the full press release see

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/11/10/antisemitic-incidents-10-november-update>

TOP

Holocaust

See also the Commons “Debate on the Address”, and Lords debate on “The King’s Speech” that are included in the Home Affairs section above.

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Patricia Gibson (SNP) [33] 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht and antisemitism – That this House commemorates the victims of Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass), a destructive campaign of violence against Jewish people, on its 85th anniversary; understands that, throughout the night of 9-10 November 1938, the Nazi Party targeted synagogues and Jewish prayer rooms across Germany, with over 1,400 burned or badly damaged, 7,500 Jewish businesses across Germany and Austria vandalised, and at least 91 people murdered, with a further 30,000 Jewish men being arrested and taken to concentration camps, where many more died; further understands that this was followed by hundreds of suicides in the Jewish community and mass emigration; recognises the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany’s relaunched campaign, *ItStartedWithWords*, highlighting that the Holocaust did not start with camps, ghettos and deportations, but with words of hate; understands this campaign’s importance in view of the growing prevalence of Holocaust denial and hate speech towards Jews; notes concerning reports that more than 1,000 anti-Semitic incidents have taken place across the UK since Hamas terrorist attacks on 7 October 2023, the highest 28-day total recorded since the Community Security Trust began tracking attacks in 1984, and a 537% increase over the same period in 2022; recognises the resilience of Holocaust survivors who continue to highlight the barbaric actions that took place during the Second World War,

particularly following the unacceptable rise in antisemitism recently; and continues to remember the 6 million Jewish people and others targeted due to ethnicity, religion, political beliefs and sexual orientation who were victims of Nazi persecution.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61513>

TOP

Israel

See also the Commons “Debate on the Address”, the Lords debate on “The King’s Speech”, Commons Oral Answers on “Metropolitan Police: Operational Independence”, the Prime Minister’s statement, CPS “Strong public interest in prosecuting those who cause unrest at pro-Palestine protests”, the EHRC statement and letter, and the CST Update that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and the EDM “85th anniversary of Kristallnacht and antisemitism” that is included in the Holocaust section above.

House of Lords Ministerial Statement and Q&A

Occupied Palestinian Territories: Humanitarian Situation

[Andrew Mitchell’s statement to the House of Commons](#) was read in the Lords.

col 158 Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour): ... Yesterday, I met the brother of one of the hostages. He showed me a photograph of his brother’s family, all of whom had been murdered. It is shocking that that horror was four weeks ago. I cannot believe how that man is able to stay so sensible and concerned about the future of his brother. But it is also hard to comprehend the scale of the devastation in Gaza: 1.5 million people displaced and more than 10,000 killed. We need to stress that every one of those lives matters—every one. We also have to appreciate that two-thirds of the dead are women and children. These civilian deaths are shocking and cannot be ignored. There is a desperate need in Gaza for food, water, medicine and fuel. ...

Could the Minister explain where we are in these negotiations to get fuel into Gaza? ... Can he explain where we are in terms of routes for access? ...

We have heard a lot of debate recently about ceasefires. With Hamas leaders doubling down on their determination to attack Israel, and Israel ruling out a ceasefire until hostages are released, the reality is that humanitarian pauses are, as Martin Griffiths wrote last week, the “only viable” prospect. Andrew Mitchell said that he was arguing for humanitarian pauses, but said we needed to be cautious “when vulnerable people were brought together whom we were unable to protect”. ...

It is essential that humanitarian aid gets through and that we protect not only the people we seek to help but those people who are working to help the people of Gaza. It is truly shocking that a higher number of UN aid workers have been killed in this conflict than in the history of the UN. ...

col 159 I share the concerns in the Statement about the settler violence in the West Bank. ... In fact, supplies of arms have gone to those settlers to attack Palestinian villages. Can he elaborate on the Government’s engagement with Israeli counterparts over the situation in the West Bank?

Echoing the comments of Lisa Nandy, the Minister Andrew Mitchell said that “support for Israel is not a blank cheque”. ...

The Statement acknowledged the importance of international law, so can the Minister state when the protection of hospitals, schools and refugee camps was raised with the Israeli Government? What response was given? ...

More children have died in Gaza in four weeks than in all of the world's conflicts in each of the last three years. It is a children's war, with a million caught up in the devastation, orphaned and displaced, sleeping outside as the weather grows colder, short of food and forced to drink dirty water. ... How will the Government ensure that the priority of children, which Andrew Mitchell mentioned, is recognised fully in all the humanitarian work we do? ...

Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat): ... On 19 October ... I called for us to support the UN Secretary-General's call for a cessation of hostilities so that life-saving aid, food and water are provided and restored to Gaza, and to allow for this to be enduring, to lead to a ceasefire and for intense diplomatic activity to be carried out to prevent a wider escalation. We know, and we are hard-headed enough to know, that this is incredibly difficult, because we do not accept Hamas's legitimacy to continue within Gaza and we also wish to see a situation where the rockets can stop and the hostages are released, but equally we need the killing of children to end. Since 19 October, a further 2,500 children have been killed—now totalling over 4,100. More than 2,500 women have been killed. ... according to the United Nations, since 7 October 147 Palestinians, including 44 children, have been killed in the West Bank by Israeli forces, and eight, including one child, by Israeli settlers. ...

col 160 What is the current estimate of the number of British nationals still in Gaza who have not left? Can the Government estimate how many British nationals in Lebanon have followed some of the diplomats and left the country after the guidance and advice from the Government?

The Statement also says that the Government have "repeatedly stressed that Israel must take every precaution to minimise civilian casualties in line with international humanitarian law". Why did the Government feel it necessary to remind the Israeli Government of this? The Statement says: "We continue to press Israel to ensure that its campaign is targeted against Hamas leaders, militants and military infrastructure".

I am equally concerned that the Government feel the need to stress this regarding the Israeli Government's tactics and actions. Will the Government publish their legal position on what they consider to be international humanitarian law regarding this conflict? We have seen atrocities by Hamas; they are clear and determined. Those responsible need be prosecuted and if necessary brought to the ICC, but we also need clarity on international law.

Finally, the Government say: "The urgency of a political track—extraordinarily difficult today—has never been more clear".

I agree, but it can only be done during a cessation and then an enduring ceasefire with monitoring and verifiable progress, which not only removes Hamas' military capacity but, as I saw in Mosul when I visited northern Iraq many times, creates the hope for civilians in Gaza that there will be a future without Hamas ...

col 161 We know that Hamas leaders need to be prosecuted for abusing schools and other learning facilities, particularly those operated by the UN. Will the Government make this a priority to ensure that the learning areas and children of Gaza are the absolute focus of a humanitarian presence? ...

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): ... As we know, the situation is desperate for those in Gaza, but we also reflect that it is one month on from the horrendous and abhorrent attacks that took place in Israel, which shook a country built on many pillars, including security, and impacted many communities directly. It is a poignant note to remember.

We see the scale of human suffering in Gaza every day on our screens ...

... ultimately, whatever is asked for—the pauses, the cessation of hostilities—no conflict ends until there is a ceasefire. We need to ensure that we build in the conditionalities, safeties and securities that are required to allow that humanitarian

access to happen. ...

col 162 There are limitations at the Rafah crossing, so we are working with the Israeli authorities on the Kerem Shalom crossing in particular, and with other key partners. ...

The shock and challenge being met by Israel was also very much at their hearts when I went to the West Bank. I commend the Palestinian Authority for condemning Hamas' abhorrent actions. As I said, we must frame our discussions from a UK perspective—that we regard Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Hamas is not the future for the Gaza Strip. It is not the future for the Palestinian people. It is not a partner for peace. We need to stress that at each and every step. In doing so, we are supporting the Palestinian Authority on key issues, including the release of funds to ensure its sustainability. ...

We want to bring their suffering to an end. They are not the ones who committed these abhorrent attacks. ... as a friend, partner and ally to Israel, we are of course communicating quite directly, but we are also ensuring that on issues such as IHL, they also recognise their responsibility. They are a state and must take that responsibility; they recognise that fully ... There are many in Israel who recognise that a sustainable peace in the region, the cessation of hostilities and ultimately, the realisation of stability, security, peace and justice for all can only be reached through the pathway to the two-state solution that we all continue to strive for. ...

col 163 We have seen that more than 155 people have died through settler violence, including 45 children. ... That is why my right honourable friend the Development Minister also reiterated that there is no blank cheque. ...

On what happens next, we are working with key partners in the region. Allocations are already being made. ... We are now at £57 million and looking at additional funding. We also need to ensure that the funding that is getting through is delivered in a secure and sustainable manner to those who need it and is in no way being taken for other purposes. ...

Ultimately, we will achieve peace and security only when it is peace and security for all people. ...

Lord Ricketts (Crossbench): ... The Minister will be aware that Mr Netanyahu has spoken about Israel retaining overall security responsibility for Gaza when the fighting stops. Does he understand that also to mean that Israel will therefore be responsible for humanitarian efforts and for restoring basic services to Gaza, such as health, education and welfare, and for reconstruction? These are massive tasks. If not Israel, who will administer Gaza in the interests of the people of Gaza when the fighting is over?

col 164 **Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... You can have the noble intent of a ceasefire. Ultimately, in any conflict that is where we should be aiming. ...

On who governs Gaza, that is an active discussion in which we are involved. It has been very clear, as has Antony Blinken, that this is not Gaza first. A complete settlement for the Palestinian people needs to happen. It means that reoccupation is not an option. ... That is why we are working on boosting and supporting the Palestinian Authority to ensure that there is Palestinian Authority oversight supported by all key partners, including many Arab states. ...

Lord Pickles (Conservative): ... Last week in Washington, I saw the full, unexpurgated photographs of the murder of children. I do not think I will ever lose from my mind the sight of those burned corpses. We should not forget that Hamas has consistently oppressed the people of Gaza. Prior to the 7 October assaults, it destroyed water pipelines and electricity. That is one reason why children are drinking dirty water now. It is stockpiling 760,000 litres of fuel. That is one reason why hospitals are running short of power. Earlier this week, it attempted to smuggle a non-medical oxygen compressor during the aid convoy. What are we doing to ensure that the aid we are supplying, which is so desperately needed, is going into the hands not of the corrupt terrorists but of the people of Gaza?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Just a point of reflection: when I was in Israel, I too saw the shock and some of the images, the videos of ordinary Israelis who were attacked during the terror attack. Equally, I was in the West Bank: we see the tragic nature of what conflict brings when we see children being buried under rubble. ... We need now to use this extremely dark cloud over the Middle East to ensure that we get focus and pull out all the stops to ensure that there can be lasting and sustainable peace. ...

... aid going through Rafah is being co-ordinated by the Egyptians and the Israeli authorities to ensure that there is no smuggling ... We are seeing how we can create conditions for fuel to be delivered efficiently and effectively. ... The Israelis' checks and balances ensure that it is delivered through the agencies we are working with on the ground to the people who need it most.

col 165 **Baroness Blackstone (Labour):** ... Does the Minister agree with UN Under-Secretary Martin Griffiths that a war crime is being committed by the Israeli Government in Gaza? Does he also accept that far more pressure needs to be exerted on the Government of Israel, who for more than a week have resisted the call by the US and many others for humanitarian pauses? ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... The impact on children is primary in our minds. Ensuring that we mitigate that is at the forefront of our discussions with our Israeli partners. ...

We are working directly with the likes of Martin Griffiths and others within the UN because of the time needed, for example, to establish a field hospital or to access a particular level of support for an existing facility. A cessation is required to allow time for that to be delivered. This is a matter not of minutes but of effective, well-managed and secured pauses so that delivery of aid can be sustained. ...

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, the Statement quite properly recognises the need for Israel to be proportionate in its response, but the law provides no definition of "proportionate". ... The methods must be proportionate, but so too must be the outcomes of these methods. ... are the Government satisfied that Israel is fulfilling its obligation?

col 166 **Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** I agree with the noble Lord about the issue of us reminding Israel of its responsibilities under IHL. ... It is not just a label; there are conditions and quite specific elements. This includes the forceful movement of people, for example. ... The issue of how Israel is currently operating is also important. It is important to remind Israel of its obligations. ...

I do not deny for a moment that the human cost of this conflict is immense. It is shocking to look at what happened on 7 October and to see the subsequent loss of life in Gaza currently. We have also seen what is happening in the West Bank. ... The loss of life—every life, irrespective of who it is, whether Israeli, Arab, Christian, Muslim or Jewish, mother or child—matters. ...

The Lord Bishop of Gloucester: ... international humanitarian law exists to protect humanity at times of conflict and to shield us from acts of barbarism. In very different ways, as we have heard, both sides continue to flout that law ... I want to return to the situation in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Does the Minister agree that the rising settler violence and movement restrictions are a matter of real concern, in terms not only of individuals killed but of families displaced and the undermining of UNRWA's ability to deliver much-needed humanitarian support there? ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... It is important that we keep the strength of what community and faith bring. I have visited Jerusalem on many occasions, and it was very sad for me that the silence of Jerusalem was deafening.

col 167 It is important that we once again look at how communities are working together. Faith leaders, particularly in the Holy Land, have a key role in ensuring that we return to that vision of sustainable peace. Let us not forget that in Israel

21% of the population is Arab; it is Christian and Muslim. We have very fine examples of how communities are working together. ...

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green): ... this morning I received a message from a Medical Aid for Palestinians worker in Gaza, who for safety reasons I will not name. She said, “This work is not about humanitarian aid any more. It is about where to get wood for fire in order to cook. It is about water queues, bread queues and how long the walk is in search of water or bread. Our work and advocacy are centred on dignity for Palestinians, and there is no dignity”. ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... I also agree with the noble Baroness that we need to take stock of the human tragedy unfolding in Gaza. It is for us all not just to contemplate but to act upon. That is why the nature of the cessation required needs to ensure that support can get in, but it must also be done in a safe and secure manner. If we look at the example of the field facilities we are discussing with partners, including field hospitals within Gaza, they must satisfy the issues of security for Israel and for those working there. ...

Baroness Deech (Crossbench): My Lords, I call on the Minister to make his first port of call the international Red Cross, whose job it is to take care of hostages. If it gets out the hostages and Hamas comes out from hiding behind civilians, the temperature will cool. It is also the job of the surrounding Middle East countries—among the richest countries in the world—to come to the aid of the Palestinians, not least through Egypt opening the border. But first, the hostages.

col 168 **Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... We want those who need to leave Gaza to leave, the hostages to be released and the aid to go in. ... the near neighbours to Israel need to play a role as partners in peace. ...

Lord Grocott (Labour): My Lords, sooner or later there will be a ceasefire. The only question is: how many people will get killed between now and when the ceasefire takes place? We all know the pattern after that. It will not end the conflict: there will be a period of quiet and then another flare-up, which we hope will not be as bad as this one. There is no prospect of any peace in this part of the world until the Palestinians have what the Israelis have long had: a state of their own. ...

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: ... I will share with noble Lords that this is probably one of the most challenging and toughest not only briefs but occasions when I am standing before your Lordships’ House, speaking about what is currently happening and the shocking events in Israel on 7 October. Subsequently, we have seen what is being endured by innocent Palestinian civilians in Gaza—this has to stop. ... There will not be a short-term solution; this will require long-term focus. ... We need to ensure that terrorist organisations such as Hamas are not in governance positions, which is why we support the Palestinian Authority. Ultimately ... sustainable peace can be achieved only when there are two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side—not just independent but ultimately, we hope, learning that coexistence is the way forward.

Lord Cormack (Conservative): ... We all have to bear in mind that Hamas has ultimate responsibility for every drop of blood shed over the last month, but we also have to remember that Israel is a mature democracy, and it is very important that a mature democracy exercises its power in such a way that the innocent are not massacred.

col 169 **Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** ... putting humanity at the centre of our approach—in diplomacy, in the support, and in the private and public conversations and statements we are making—is the essence and heart of finding a solution. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-09/debates/EA4BAFB9-1292-4C0E-A466-04EEBEC22330/OccupiedPalestinianTerritoriesHumanitarianSituation>

House of Commons Library Briefing

2023 Israel-Hamas conflict: UK and international response

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

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We must see humanitarian pauses that allow enough time for aid into Gaza: UK statement at the UN Security Council

... Colleagues, we are in no doubt: there is a humanitarian crisis in Gaza. And as Dr Tedros set out, that humanitarian crisis is deteriorating day by day. Of course, we welcome the opening of the Rafah border, and we thank partners for their work in allowing foreign nationals to leave. But it is essential and urgent that more aid flows in the other direction into Gaza.

Access both through Rafah and other crossing points needs to improve so that aid can reach the people who so desperately need it. For this to happen, we must see humanitarian pauses that allow enough time for aid to be delivered to those who need it and for hostages to be released. Fuel must be allowed to enter Gaza so that hospitals and water desalination plants can operate and for aid to be delivered. The pauses in northern Gaza are a first step but any pauses in hostilities should allow sufficient time and security both for civilians to move and for humanitarian aid to be delivered.

Since the 7th of October, the UK has been firm in its support for Israel's right to self-defence following Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel. In this context, international humanitarian law is not a nice to have. International humanitarian law is what keeps humanitarian workers and medical staff safe to assist those in need and protects civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, wherever possible. So we urge all parties to the conflict to take all possible steps to minimise harm to civilians, health and humanitarian workers and to protect its sites. And we express our condolences for each life lost.

Finally, Mr President, we have been clear that Israel must do more to prevent escalation in the West Bank. We welcome statements, including that made by Prime Minister Netanyahu, condemning settler violence. But we must see tangible action to bring perpetrators to justice. We also condemn attacks against Israel emanating from armed groups in the region. The UK Foreign Secretary was in Riyadh yesterday where he discussed preventing regional escalation with the foreign ministers and representatives of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and the Palestinian Authority. The Foreign Secretary also reaffirmed the UK's unwavering commitment to a two-state solution. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-must-see-humanitarian-pauses-that-allow-enough-time-for-aid-into-gaza-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon Deeply distressed by the loss of life in Gaza's hospitals. Hospitals must be allowed to operate safely and treat the vulnerable. We continue to impress upon Israel the need to comply with international humanitarian law.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1723745104727364052>

Scottish Parliament Motions

Kaukab Stewart (SNP) [S6M-11224] **Immediate Ceasefire in Gaza and Israel** – That the Parliament notes the calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Israel; further notes

the condemnation of the loss of life in the most recent conflict, with around 1,400 people reportedly killed in a brutal terrorist attack in Israel on 7 October 2023 and more than 10,000 people reportedly killed in Gaza in the conflict since; deplores all violence in the region; notes the belief that fighting must stop in order to allow diplomatic discussions to take place that will safeguard innocent civilians; further notes the calls on the UK Government, including from communities in the Glasgow Kelvin constituency, to do its part in working with other UN nations to demand an end to deadly military action in Gaza and to bring to justice those responsible for the terror attacks suffered by Israel; believes strongly that there is no justification for inflicting terror or killing innocent civilians, and condemns violence in all its forms.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11224>

Ross Greer (Green) [S6M-11209] Ceasefire in Gaza – That the Parliament supports the United Nations Secretary General's calls for a ceasefire in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-11209>

United Nations

Launching Humanitarian Appeal, Secretary-General Urges Conference ‘Help Civilians in Gaza See at Last’ that World Sees Their Plight, Cares Enough to Act

... Of course, nothing justifies the abhorrent acts of terror by Hamas in Israel on 7 October, which I utterly condemn. Israelis and others were brutally killed or abducted and I call once again for the unconditional return of all hostages.

Now civilians in Gaza — including children and women — face a never—ending humanitarian nightmare. Their neighbourhoods wiped out. Their loved ones killed. Bombs raining down, while being denied life's very basics — food, water, medicine, electricity.

Some life—saving aid is beginning to trickle into Gaza. But, let's face it, it's a drop in the ocean. The needs are enormous. We must step up to assist and protect civilians in Gaza. That means an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It means ensuring full respect of international humanitarian law. It means protecting hospitals, UN facilities, shelters, and schools.

It means unfettered, safe, and sustained access to bring in and distribute supplies at much greater scale, volume, and frequency — including fuel.

And it means investing in the \$1.2 billion humanitarian appeal that the United Nations has just launched to help the people of Gaza. I urge your support.

Now is the time for concrete action. Together, we can help ease this terrible human suffering. We can help civilians in Gaza see at last, and at the very least, a glimmer of hope — a sign of solidarity — and a signal that the world sees their plight and cares enough to act. Thank you.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm22026.doc.htm>

World Health Organization Chief, Briefing Security Council on War in Gaza, Joins Calls for Immediate Ceasefire, Unfettered Humanitarian Access

... **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)**, said he fully understands the anger, grief and fear of the Israeli people following the barbaric attacks by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 October, as well as that of the people of Gaza who have already suffered 16 years of blockade and are now enduring the destruction of their families and homes. “The situation on the ground is impossible to describe.” Hospital corridors crammed with the injured, the sick and the

dying, morgues are overflowing and surgical procedures are being conducted without anaesthesia. Thousands of displaced people are sheltering at hospitals or crammed inside overcrowded schools, desperate for food and water. Seventy per cent of the more than 10,800 people have now been killed in Gaza are women and children, he said, adding: "On average, a child is killed every 10 minutes in Gaza."

He noted that 1.5 million people are displaced and looking for shelter anywhere, but "nowhere and no one is safe". Overcrowding is increasing the risk diarrheal and respiratory diseases and skin infections. WHO is on the ground in Gaza alongside its partners to support health workers doing their best in unimaginable conditions. ...

Since 7 October, WHO has verified more than 250 attacks on health-care facilities in Gaza and the West Bank, in addition to 25 attacks on health-care facilities in Israel, he said. Last week, WHO documented five attacks on five hospitals in one day. ...

He called for unfettered access to deliver humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza, for Hamas to release hostages and for Israel to restore electricity, water and fuel supplies. He also called for a ceasefire and for both sides to abide by international humanitarian law.

Marwan Jilani, Director General, Palestine Red Crescent Society, said that the health sector in Gaza is under attack. Hospitals are being deliberately targeted in a desperate attempt to force the civilian population out. The last 24 hours saw the targeting of at least four hospitals in Gaza: Al-Shifa hospital, where more than 60,000 people were sheltering; Al-Awda hospital, where ambulances were bombarded and the emergency paramedics miraculously escaped certain death; the Indonesian hospital and the Al-Quds hospital. ... "Displaced people at the hospital are getting shot at, as we speak." ...

The Palestine Red Crescent Society is responsible for receiving and distributing humanitarian aid through the Rafah Crossing, but what has come in so far represents less than what used to enter Gaza in two days, he said. Not a single drop of fuel has entered — and without fuel or aid, particularly in the north of the Gaza Strip, and many people will starve or die of thirst and diseases. ...

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, said that hospitals in the Gaza Strip have become Israel's primary target. "They are besieged and their vicinity bombed." His generation, which 75 years ago experienced the Nakba, often said that if the world knew and witnessed the Palestinians' pain, it would never have allowed that event to happen, but "we were so wrong". It does not matter that the latest massacres in Gaza are being reported live or that they are being justified by pundits and spin doctors with all kinds of excuses. Israel is not hiding its intentions, including for a mighty vengeance that amounts to collective punishment of an entire people. Israel calls for the release of 200 hostages, while itself taking 2 million hostages. It proclaims its right to self-defence while occupying, colonizing and denying every right to the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and self-protection. Israel rejects any insinuation that it does not uphold the laws of war, but commits crimes against humanity on camera, he said.

"Where should Palestinians go? To the sea? Or out of the Gaza Strip?" he wondered. Israel feigns surprise over why Palestinians are staying, but it is because his nation has experienced in the flesh the great exodus, he added. "It is our national trauma." ... The only options Israel has ever given the Palestinians is to submit, leave or die — in international legal terms: apartheid, ethnic cleansing or genocide, he continued. ...

Gilad Menashe Erdan (Israel) recalled that Kristallnacht, "the first hyper-violent exposure of Nazi Jew hatred," occurred 85 years ago today. Now, 34 days after 7 October — another event forever seared into the collective trauma of the Jewish people — the Council has still not condemned the planned massacre of Israeli civilians by Hamas. "Should this Council in its current form have existed in 1938, I doubt that the response would be much different." Israel has exposed to the world that Hamas has its headquarters in and under Al-Shifa Hospital, he said, adding that his country has provided footage of terrorists existing adjacent tunnels as well as videos of "Hamas ISIS" using ambulances to transport

weapons and terrorists. Stressing that over 16 years, Hamas has turned every inch of Gaza into a “terror trap”, using medical workers and patients as human shields. Israel is providing safe passage for Gazans to leave an active war zone, but Hamas is preventing them from leaving. Emphasizing that the Government of Israel has gone above and beyond to mitigate civilian casualties, and that it has formed a task force to establish field hospitals in southern Gaza, he said: “For Israel, life is sacred. Yet, for Hamas, death is sacred.”

“Israel is fighting a war that it did not start or want,” he continued. ... “While Hamas must be held fully accountable, there is another body, sadly, that is complicit — the UN.” For years, the Organization has refused to establish a verification mechanism to provide a truthful picture of reality, while the Council has been spoon-fed lies. “Every piece of information that this Council receives comes from Hamas, not national UN employees in Gaza,” with terror operatives providing unverifiable and libellous information to UN bodies. ... “Israel is fighting the war for its very future and existence,” he stated.

Lana Zaki Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates), emphasizing the experiences of young people impacted by Israeli air strikes, said that all of the 2,650-plus people currently trapped under rubble in Gaza are human beings, with more than half of them children. ... Those held hostage in Gaza by Hamas are suffering under the same bombardments and psychological trauma, she said, urging their immediate release. Israel must end its siege of Gaza and reinstate essential services and items indispensable to human survival, including fuel, electricity and water. ...

Robert A. Wood (United States), emphasizing that all medical facilities must be respected and protected in line with international law, said that the United States is working tirelessly to enable a mechanism to deliver fuel to hospitals and to meet urgent needs in southern Gaza. However, Hamas is hoarding and siphoning fuel in northern Gaza and is callously and deliberately endangering Palestinians by using civilians as human shields and putting command posts beneath hospitals, schools and mosques. Israel’s operations must be consistent with international humanitarian law, he said, adding that the principles of proportionality and precaution apply. “Acknowledging one party’s suffering does not retract from another’s.” ...

Pascale Christine Baeriswyl (Switzerland), expressing deep concern over the impact of the conflict, called for the protection of hospitals, clinics, the people who are being treated there and for medical personnel. More so, she noted that the ICRC humanitarian convoy carrying emergency aid supplies towards Al-Quds hospital, that came under fire last Tuesday, illustrates the environment in which humanitarian organizations must operate in Gaza. ... Unequivocally condemning the acts of terror carried out by Hamas against civilian populations in Israel, she called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. While recognizing Israel’s right to ensure its defence, she emphasized that, in view of the increase in settler violence, the country is obliged to protect the civilian population.

Nathalie Broadhurst Estival (France) said that Israel has a right to defend itself while preserving the lives of civilians. Noting that the civilian population in Gaza is being exposed to dire sanitary conditions and a heightened risk of an epidemic, she called for a humanitarian truce that “should result in a ceasefire that we must work towards”. ...

Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom) stressed that humanitarian access, both through Rafah and other crossing points, needs to improve ... Further, such aid requires humanitarian pauses and fuel must be allowed to enter Gaza ... Noting that since 7 October, the United Kingdom has been firm in its support for Israel’s right to self-defence following Hamas’ terrorist attack, she urged all parties to the conflict to take every possible step to minimize harm to civilians, health and humanitarian workers. ... [\[click here to read this speech in greater detail\]](#)

Vassily A. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) ... pointed to the “forgotten volatile situation” in the West Bank, consigned to oblivion in the shadow of the tragic events in Gaza, and

highlighted the escalation of violence triggered by Israel's security forces operations. Underscoring the importance of a ceasefire, he added: "Only this, and not certain short-term pauses, is the only real measure that would help avoid new casualties." ...

Dr. Tedros said that nowhere and no one is safe in Gaza. "Imagine that you are trapped in that situation... That is why we are asking for a ceasefire, for unfettered humanitarian access, and also for the Council to do everything it can to release hostages." ... he emphasized then that the situation in Gaza was unsustainable and dangerous, and called for implementation of the two-State solution. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15487.doc.htm>

Fourth Committee Approves Six Draft Resolutions, All by Recorded Vote, Addressing Middle East Situation and Palestinian Question

... Among the six draft resolutions, the text titled "Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories" (document A/C.4/78/L.13), was approved by a recorded vote of 85 in favour to 13 against, with 72 abstentions.

By its terms, the Assembly would reiterate its demand that Israel cooperate with the Special Committee in implementing its mandate. It would express grave concern about the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory resulting from unlawful Israeli practices and measures and call for the immediate cessation of all illegal Israeli settlement activities. It would also call for the lifting of the blockade of the Gaza Strip as well as the complete cessation of the excessive and indiscriminate use of force and military operations against the civilian population, among other measures. ...

The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine said that the present moment did not allow for engagement on changes to reflect the current situation. In Gaza, children are under rubble and the death toll has crossed 10,000, but the Security Council remains paralysed, he said, adding that it is not enough for the international community to reaffirm the principles set out in past UN resolutions. Rather, it must implement them.

Israel's delegate, who called upon Member States to vote against the resolutions, said that today's resolutions made no mention of war crimes committed by Hamas, the 1,400 murdered, or the exploitation of aid by Hamas for its terror activities. Further, the texts do not mention the failure of the Palestinian Authority to condemn terror or the destructive role of Iran.

The draft resolution titled "Assistance to Palestine refugees" (document A/C.4/78/L.11) — approved by a recorded vote of 161 in favour to 1 against (Israel), with 11 abstentions — would affirm the necessity for the continuation of the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the importance of its unimpeded operation, pending the just resolution of the question of the Palestine refugees. It would also call upon all donors to continue to strengthen their efforts to meet UNRWA's anticipated needs.

The draft resolution titled "Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East" (document A/C.4/78/L.10) — approved by a recorded vote of 160 in favour to 4 against (Canada, Israel, Federated States of Micronesia, United States), with 7 abstentions ... would have the Assembly express its deep concern about the extremely critical financial situation of UNRWA and attempts to discredit the Agency despite its proven operational capacity and consistent implementation of its mandate. It would also call upon Israel to ensure the safety of the personnel of the Agency and the protection of its institutions.

Also approved today was a draft resolution titled "Palestine refugees' properties and their

revenues” (document A/C.4/78/L.12), by a recorded vote of 156 in favour to 6 against (Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, United States), with 8 abstentions ... Its terms would have the Assembly request the Secretary-General take all appropriate steps to protect Arab properties, assets and property rights in Israel. Further, it urges the Palestinian and Israeli sides to deal with the important issue of Palestine refugees’ properties and their revenues within the framework of final-status peace negotiations.

By the terms of “The occupied Syrian Golan” (document A/C.4/78/L.14) — approved by a recorded vote of 146 in favour to 2 against (Israel, United States), with 23 abstentions — the Assembly would call upon Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and to desist from establishing settlements. Further, the Assembly would call upon Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and identity cards on Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and from its repressive measures against the population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

By a recorded vote of 145 in favour to 7 against (Canada, Hungary, Israel, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, United States) with 18 abstentions, the Committee approved the draft resolution titled “Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan” (document A/C.4/78/L.15). By its terms, the Assembly would condemn settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan and any activities involving the confiscation of land, the disruption of the livelihood of protected persons, the forced transfer of civilians and the annexation of land, whether de facto or through national legislation. ...

The representative of Israel ... said that, once again, the “automatic anti-Israeli majority here at the UN will ensure that all six draft resolutions will be passed this morning, regardless of their content or the actual situation on the ground”. He called on all decent, democratic, fair and peace-loving Member States to vote against these draft resolutions, not only because of the lies and one-sided narratives within them, but also because of what is not mentioned in the texts. There is no mention, he said, of war crimes committed by Hamas, the 1,400 murdered and more than 4,700 wounded in Israel on 7 October; the more than 9,500 rockets fired from Gaza since 7 October aimed at Israeli civilians, or the exploitation of aid by Hamas for its terror activities.

Neither do the draft resolutions mention the terrorist infrastructure built in proximity to civilian facilities, the moral failure of the Palestinian Authority to unequivocally condemn terror, or the destructive role of Iran that has bankrolled, armed and trained Hamas and unleashed its proxies in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen to further terror against Israel and other countries in the region, he said. In addition, there is no mention that the texts are promoted by “systematic violators of any law and human right known to man,” including the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Syria, Iran, Cuba and Venezuela. ...

The representative of the United Kingdom acknowledged that the language in the draft resolutions does not reflect the current context in Israel and Gaza. The United Kingdom’s vote on these texts will not undermine its enduring solidarity with Israel in the wake of the heinous terrorist attacks of 7 October, he said, reiterating support for that country’s right to self-defence. Israel must act in line with international human rights and humanitarian law and take every feasible precaution to avoid harming civilians, he said, adding that Hamas does not speak or act in the interest of the Palestinian people.

The representative of the United States said that one-sided resolutions, either in the Security Council or the Fourth Committee, will not help to advance peace, but rather they will perpetuate long-standing lines of division. ...

The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union, made a general statement, saying that there is no justification for terror and the use of civilians as human shields by Hamas. Reaffirming Israel’s right to defend itself, she called on Hamas

to immediately release all hostages, many of whom are European Union citizens. Expressing concern for the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, and calling for safe and unhindered humanitarian access, she emphasized the need to avoid regional escalation. ...

The representative of the United States said that when the current crisis ends, the situation “must not go back to the pre-October 7 status quo” in Gaza and the West Bank — one in which Hamas terrorizes Israelis and violent extremist settlers terrorize Palestinians in the West Bank. He underlined the need for a “positive vision for what comes next,” centred around a negotiated two-State solution that includes both Gaza and the West Bank in a viable Palestinian State. ...

The representative of Syria ... said that Member States, through their widespread support for these texts, rejected the forcible occupation of others’ territories and violations of peoples’ rights. They sent a strong signal to Israel to end its occupation of both the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Underscoring the right to regain the entire Golan, under occupation since 1967, he said that all measures undertaken by Israel to change its natural or demographic character, or to impose Israeli laws and management, have no legal impact. “The Golan was, and remains, Arab and Syrian,” he added. ...

The representative of Iran said that the adoption of today’s draft resolutions by an overwhelming majority demonstrated strong support for both realizing Palestinians’ inalienable rights, and holding the occupying regime accountable for its crimes. ...

The representative of Switzerland, noting that the resolutions do not address the situation on the ground since 7 October in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, condemned the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas, recognized Israel’s right to ensure its defence and called for protection of civilians. The principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution must be respected, he said, adding that humanitarian pauses or truces are necessary to guarantee humanitarian access and meet the needs of the population. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gaspd798.doc.htm>

Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/C.4/78/L.13)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/78/L.13>

Assistance to Palestine refugees (A/C.4/78/L.11)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/78/L.11>

Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/C.4/78/L.10)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/78/L.10>

Palestine refugees’ properties and their revenues (A/C.4/78/L.12)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/78/L.12>

The occupied Syrian Golan (A/C.4/78/L.14)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/78/L.14>

Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/C.4/78/L.15)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.4/78/L.15>

Second Committee Approves Three Resolutions, Including Text Demanding Israel Cease Exploitation of Natural Resources in Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syrian Golan

... The Committee ... turned to the draft resolution titled “Oil slick on Lebanese shores” (document A/C.2/78/L.21) ... By its terms, the Assembly would reiterate, for the eighteenth consecutive year, its deep concern about the adverse implications of the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of the Lebanese Jiyah electric power plant for the achievement of sustainable development in Lebanon. ... It would further reiterate its request to the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon for the aforementioned damage and to other countries directly affected by the oil slick, such as Syria. ...

The representative of Lebanon said that for the eighteenth straight year, the Committee has overwhelmingly supported the resolution on the oil slick on Lebanese shores in 2006; however, Israel, for the eighteenth year in a row, refuses to comply with the resolution. “Every year we call for action to compensate us and pay reparations for the damage done by this worst disaster in years,” he said. “No one is above the law,” he stressed, adding that UN resolutions should not remain a dead letter. ...

The representative of Israel said ... the resolution ... is deeply misleading, serves no purpose and wastes the time and resources of the UN and its Member States. The resolution, from its first appearance 17 years ago, has been nothing but an exercise in deception and distraction, he said, adding that: “Like the previous 17 versions, this year’s resolution fails to mention that the events in question were the direct result of a conflict instigated by Hizbullah — Iran’s proxy in Lebanon.” Detailing the actions of Hizbullah terrorists against Israel and its people, he stressed that there was no condemnation of terrorism then and there is still none today. The resolution instead condemns the target of terrorism — Israel, he added ...

The representative of the United States ... expressed disappointment that the Committee has again taken up this “unbalanced resolution” that is unfairly critical of Israel and demonstrates a clear and persistent institutional bias directed at one Member State. One-sided resolutions only distract from efforts to advance peace. The United States will continue to oppose every effort to delegitimize Israel. ...

The representative of Iran ... said that the “Israeli regime”, as is their standard practice, sought to divert international attention from their unlawful politics and practices. ... The Committee next took up the draft resolution “Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources” (document A/C.2/78/L.44) ...

By its terms, the Assembly would demand that Israel, the occupying Power, cease the exploitation, damage, cause of loss or depletion and endangerment of the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Further to the draft, it would recognize the right of the Palestinian people to claim restitution as a result of any exploitation, damage, loss or depletion or endangerment of their natural resources resulting from illegal measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power.

Also by the text, it would call upon Israel to halt all actions, including those perpetrated by Israeli settlers, harming the environment, including the dumping of all kinds of waste materials, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and cease its destruction of vital infrastructure. ...

The representative of the United Kingdom ... recognized that the language does not reflect the current context in Israel and Gaza. His delegation’s vote in favour of the resolution does not undermine its enduring solidarity with Israel in the wake of Hamas’ heinous terrorist attacks on 7 October, he said. Voicing support for Israel’s right to self-

defence against terrorism, he stressed that Israel must act in line with international humanitarian law and take every feasible precaution to avoid harming civilians. He noted the devastating humanitarian crisis faced by Palestinians and condemned settler violence against them, stressing that settlements are illegal under international law. ...

The representative of Spain, speaking on behalf of the European Union ... stated that the resolution's use of the term "Palestine" cannot be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine. ...

The representative of the United States noted that President Joseph R. Biden has been clear that Israelis and Palestinians equally deserve to live safely and securely with equal measures of freedom, dignity, justice and prosperity. ...

The observer for the State of Palestine noted that it has now been over a month since Israel, the occupying Power, declared its war against the defenceless Palestinian civilians whom it is obliged to protect under international law. "It continues terrorizing them, with relentless bombardment, day and night, targeting them, their homes, infrastructure, water reserves, hospitals, mosques, churches, health centres and schools, including those under the UN flag," she said, underscoring that some still speak of the right to self-defence of an occupying Power that has made it clear that it is seeking the annihilation of the Palestinian people. "There is no right in this world that permits the slaughter of another people," she said, stressing that it is deplorable and unforgivable that the world is watching the killing of over 10,500 Palestinians. "It is unquestionable that this is happening because Israel has been allowed to behave as a State above the law, never bearing a single consequence for its illegal policies and practices," she said.

The representative of Syria said the resolution reaffirms once again the inalienable rights of the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan and the Palestinian people over their natural resources ... However, Israeli actions do not only violate international law, but also destabilize the region, rendering it difficult or impossible for people under occupation to achieve the SDGs. Moreover, Israeli occupation today, more than ever, continues to commit crimes and massacres against the Palestinian people, he said, stressing: "No matter how long the Israeli occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan and Palestine continues, this will not change the rights recognized internationally. These lands are Arab. They will return to their original legitimate owners sooner or later." ...

The representative of Israel said ... the resolution ... is one-sided, ignoring inconvenient facts and based on biased thinking. He said that it was chosen in this Committee to single out only Israel, unjustly, not by one resolution but by two. "No other Member State is treated in this way," he stressed, highlighting his country's view of what is exploitation of natural resources of the Palestinian people by Hamas' death machine. "Metal, intended for water pipelines, is used for deadly rockets," he said, adding that concrete for civilian infrastructure is used to reinforce Hamas' terrorist tunnels under schools, hospitals, UN facilities and residential neighbourhoods. "Food and water intended for civilians is stockpiled for terrorists and only terrorists, and fuel is diverted from hospitals to power Hamas' terrorist activities," he stressed ...

The representative of Türkiye voiced concern about the ongoing carnage in the Gaza Strip and joined other delegations in calling for an immediate ceasefire. ... Priority must be given to the urgent humanitarian needs of the civilian population of Gaza, she said, adding: "There can be no excuse or justification for the deprivation of millions to food, water, electricity and fuel." ...

The representative of Iran said that genocide and war crimes are happening in Gaza before the international community's eyes, as a result of the occupation continuing over seven decades. The Israeli regime's imminent ground invasion into Gaza is a humanitarian disaster and will seriously threaten regional and global peace and security. He regretted that the international community's response to these severe violations has fallen short of holding those responsible accountable. Iran considers the Golan an integral part of Syria's territory and condemns all measures by the Israeli regime

to undermine Syria's territorial integrity. ...

The observer for the State of Palestine ... said that what the Committee heard from the Israeli delegate was typical from the occupying Power, denying crimes committed on a daily basis against the Palestinian population for decades. Neither the resolution approved today nor the ESCWA report are biased, nor do they single out Israel. Rather, it is the occupying Power's complete defiance of UN resolutions that single out Israel. Israeli extremist settlers and officials alike have continued to spread hate, warning of a "greater catastrophe" while making genocidal threats against her people, labelling them "children of darkness" and "human animals", vowing to crush them.

Citing an Israeli minister's proposal to drop a nuclear bomb on Gaza, she said the real reason behind the war is to either forcibly transfer the Palestinian people outside of Palestine or eliminate those who will not leave. "The choice to our people is stark: Leave your country or die," she stressed — in line with the annexationist apartheid plans of the current far-right Israeli Government, the same plans pursued for 75 years. ...

The representative of Israel said that the suffering in Gaza, as a result of Hamas' decision to declare war upon his country on 7 October, is heartbreaking. "Hamas exploits the civilians of Gaza, preventing temporary civilian evacuation from combat zones, seizing humanitarian aid and firing rockets," he stressed, adding that Israel has been warning civilians for three weeks to get out of northern Gaza. "Hamas is a genocidal jihadist terror organization who openly vowed to repeat the atrocities of 7 October until they kill every man, woman and child in Israel," he stated, adding that this threat has to and will be removed. ...

The representative of Iran said the story of Palestine started seven decades ago, not from 7 October. As a standard practice, he said, the Israeli regime diverts international attention away from its unlawful practices by attacking others. It is ironic that a regime famous for such unlawful acts — genocide, war crimes, apartheid policies documented by the UN — allows itself to accuse other countries in such a sinister way. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gaef3594.doc.htm>

Oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/C.2/78/L.21)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.2/78/L.21>

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (A/C.2/78/L.44)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.2/78/L.44>

Third Committee Approves 12 Draft Resolutions, Including Texts on Palestinian Self-Determination, Promoting Democracy, Women Migrant Workers

... The Committee next took up the draft resolution titled "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination" (document A/C.3/78/L.24) ...

The representative of Egypt, introducing the draft on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (IOC), said ... the text demonstrates that the international community has continuously failed in ensuring the enjoyment by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination. The resolution gains a particular significance against the background of the ongoing relentless and persistent genocidal aggression of Israel — the occupying Power — in Gaza, killing more than 10,000 civilians, including more than 4,000 children, more than 3,000 women and more than 600 older persons. The actual numbers amount to more, she added. This is in addition to other violations of the human rights of Palestinians under occupation in Gaza and other occupied Palestinian

territories. The violence against civilians in the West Bank and establishment of illegal settlements violates international law and Israel's genocidal aggression amounts to crimes against humanity, she said. Furthermore, the bombing of civilian infrastructure — including hospitals, schools, places of worship and houses — is a war crime, and the targeting of humanitarian convoys and killing of humanitarian actors and journalists is a violation of international law. So is the forced displacement of civilians, she said. ...

... **the representative of Palestine** said: "They destroyed my city, they destroyed my beloved Gaza, they destroyed my school and my university, they displaced my family, under the rubble are our photo albums, our birthday songs, our mothers' comforting prayers, our fathers' hard work and many shattered souls and bodies." ... "We have reached the last frontier, we have reached the last sky — and this war on Gaza has not ended," she said, noting that the Nakba seems never-ending; it is ongoing everywhere, in Gaza, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and beyond. In Gaza, in just a matter of 30 days, "they have erased our lives", she said, pointing to communication blackouts. "This draft resolution is to confirm our existence and our homeland — our right to remain", she said — adding that it demands the end of Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and reaffirms the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. ...

The representative of Israel recalled that, in an interview from 24 October, Ghazi Hamad from the Hamas political bureau said that the attacks were just the first time and there will be a second and third, with one objective only — the annihilation of Israel. The 7 October attack was not an act of resistance or self-determination but "an act of savagery by a genocidal terrorist organization which openly calls for the destruction of Israeli people". Following the attacks, anti-Semitism and delegitimization of Israel have reached unprecedented levels, she said, noting that an orchestrated political lynch affecting all corners of the world has been launched. Stressing that Hamas is a terror organization which has nothing to do with Palestinian rights or freedom, she said this resolution is not about self-determination but a tool to undermine Israel's very existence. The violent protests, during which the slogan "from the river to the sea" is being called out, have nothing to do with the promotion of peace; instead, they call for the annihilation of the State of Israel. She also reiterated her call for the release of hostages in Gaza.

The representative of Iran spotlighted the long-standing denial of the Palestinian legitimate right to self-determination in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The world is witnessing the intensification of the Israeli regime's violence and atrocities ... Stressing the need to secure the right of Palestinians to self-determination, she encouraged others to show their opposition to Israel's genocidal regime's crimes against humanity. ...

The resolution was approved by a recorded vote of 168 in favour to 5 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru and the United States), with 9 abstentions ...

By its terms, the General Assembly would stress the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, based on relevant resolutions of the United Nations, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative 10 and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It would further stress the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. ...

The representative of the United Kingdom expressed support for the two-State solution and noted that this stance does not undermine his country's solidarity with Israel after the 7 October attacks. Hamas does not speak in the interest of the Palestinian people, who are experiencing a devastating humanitarian crisis in Gaza, while violence is rising in the West Bank.

The representative of the United States said his country remains committed to the right of Palestinians to self-determination. ... Hamas terrorizes Israel and uses Palestinian civilians as human shields, he stressed, adding that visions must be centred around the

two-State solution. ...

The representative of Syria said the Palestinian people are in desperate need of the right to life, before the right to self-determination. ...

... **the representative of Israel** said that suffering in Gaza as a result of Hamas' declaration of war on 7 October against Israel is "heartbreaking". "This is not a war we wanted," she added, noting that Hamas declared war with "horrifying cruelty" — mutilating children in front of their parents and burning families alive. Hamas exploits citizens in Gaza, seizing humanitarian aid and firing rockets from densely populated areas, while embedding terror cells in and under hospitals, UN buildings and schools — itself, a war crime. To move civilians out of harm's way, Israel encouraged civilians in northern Gaza to move "temporarily", she underscored, until the fighting ceases. Hamas prevented this movement. It is a genocidal terrorist organization, vowing to annihilate the Jewish people, she stressed. Hamas is committing war crimes against its own population, she said, adding: "If you want self-determination and to live in peace, look at your leaders. See where they are bringing you." Israel does not want this situation but has no other choice than to protect itself and its borders against all threats. There are two sides in this war, and the terror organization can end it.

Next, the representative of Syria said that, if, as his Israeli colleague said, "this is not a war that we want", then the country does want war in general — just not this one. Recalling her use of the word "temporary" regarding the movement of northern Gazans, he highlighted that today is 10 November. "Temporary" is similar to what Israel said in 1948 and 1967, and yet the crimes have continued from 1948 until today, he said. ...

The observer for the State of Palestine called on the Israeli representative to read the resolution again. The text does not cancel out any nation or reduce any people's human rights, but rather calls for enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination on their own land. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gashc4399.doc.htm>

The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (A/C.3/78/L.24)

<https://undocs.org/en/A/C.3/78/L.24>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Statement by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

... I just got off the phone with a colleague of ours in Rafah, who had to rush out of Gaza City with his wife – who is seven months pregnant – his two young children and other family members, when buildings around him were destroyed by Israeli bombardments. His children, aged nine and seven, are asking him questions he does not know how to answer: "Why is this happening to us? What did we do?"

Another Palestinian UN colleague in Gaza told me how she had to flee at 1am with her children to find shelter far from home, but that she always keeps her bags close as they may need to flee again at short notice. Her sister-in-law was killed yesterday, and close friends the day before. Water is scarce, and fear is pervasive. Several other colleagues told me they've had to mourn the killings of dozens of their loved ones over the past month. ...

In just a short visit to El Arish Hospital in Rafah, Egypt, I saw many children injured in Gaza – a three-year-old boy with two broken legs, a five-year-old boy and a five-year-old girl with severe burns, an eight-year-old girl with spinal injuries, and others. These were the "lucky" children who suffered terribly but are still alive and receiving proper medical treatment.

As you know, some 4,400 other children have been killed in Gaza in the past month, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. Many others may be trapped under the rubble of bombed buildings. Over 26,000 have been injured – and are either unable to receive medical care because of the collapsing health system in Gaza, or face being operated on without anaesthesia.

I also heard about people with disabilities losing their caregivers and their access to essential medicine. Impossible decisions people have had to make about either leaving behind a family member with a disability and risk being hit en route – or staying with them and risk being hit at home.

And I heard from Israeli human rights defenders, deeply distressed and outraged by the plight of civilians in Gaza. They were also disturbed by what this is doing to Israel. In fact what they said to me and I quote: “We are not allowed to protest for peace – we will return from this war with much less freedom. We don’t know what kind of society will emerge at the end of this.” And I heard from Palestinian human rights defenders their concerns about double standards. ...

The atrocious attacks by Hamas against Israel on 7 October should outrage each and every one of us. There needs to be justice, accountability and remedy for the victims of these atrocious crimes. The hostages need to be brought back home and indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israel needs to cease.

But it is clear that enduring peace and security cannot be delivered by the exercise of fury and pain against people who have no responsibility for the crimes that were committed ...

The extensive Israeli bombardment of Gaza, including the use of high impact explosive weapons in densely populated areas, razing tens of thousands of buildings to the ground, is clearly having a devastating humanitarian and human rights impact. ... Israel must immediately end the use of such methods and means of warfare, and the attacks must be investigated. ...

Strikes on hospitals and in the vicinity of hospitals in Gaza city have been particularly intense ...

International humanitarian law is clear: it extends special protection to medical units and requires that they be protected and respected at all times. Any use by Palestinian armed groups of civilians and civilian objects to shield themselves from attack is in contravention of the laws of war. But such conduct by Palestinian armed groups does not absolve Israel of its obligation to ensure that civilians are spared – that the principles of distinction, precautions in attack and proportionality are respected. ...

All forms of collective punishment must come to an end.

Demands for civilians to relocate to an Israeli Defence Force designated “safe zone” are also very alarming. A so-called “safe zone,” when established unilaterally, can heighten risks to civilians, and raises real questions as to whether security can be guaranteed in practice. ...

What is needed, urgently, and I said it many times, including at the Rafah border crossing in Egypt, is for the parties to agree to a ceasefire on the basis of critical human rights imperatives – to deliver food, water and other essential goods to people who desperately need them and where they need them, throughout Gaza; for all hostages to be released ...

I also appeal, as a matter of urgency, for Israeli authorities to take immediate measures to take steps to ensure protection of Palestinians in the West Bank – who are being on a daily basis subjected to violence from Israeli forces and settlers, ill treatment, arrests, evictions, intimidation and humiliation. ...

This year, Israeli forces have increasingly used military tactics and weapons in law enforcement operations. Yesterday alone, at least 14 Palestinians were killed by Israeli Forces in Jenin refugee camp. There were also four other casualties across the West Bank yesterday. Law enforcement operations in the Occupied West Bank must be conducted in strict accordance with international human rights law.

There has also been a sharp increase in settler violence and takeover of land across the

West Bank. Since 7 October, nearly 1,000 Palestinians from at least 15 herding communities have been forced from their homes. In the context of the coercive environment they live in, the displacement of these communities may amount to the forcible transfer of a population – which is a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. ...

And human rights defenders are increasingly threatened with violence if they document violations. ...

Rather than discrediting and penalizing human rights defenders – and the UN – for documenting violations, the authorities need to ensure accountability which is an essential step towards de-escalating tensions at this volatile time. ...

I also strongly condemn the use of dehumanizing language, in particular by political and military leaders in Israel as well as by Hamas. ... The Government of Israel must take all measures to put an end to incidents of hate speech and incitement against Palestinians. Some of the statements coming out from high-level officials are not only abhorrent, they can amount to incitement to hatred and violence – and in some cases could contribute to evidence of intent to conduct hostilities in a manner contrary to the laws of war. ...

Stop the violence. Guarantee the safety of humanitarian workers. Provide safe access to ensure humanitarian assistance to all those in need. Make sure people have enough to eat, clean water to drink, medical care and shelter. Free the hostages. Bring to justice – in line with human rights law – the perpetrators of serious violations. ...

To read the full statement see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/11/statement-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-volker-turk-israel-and>

UNRWA

Statement of Mr Philippe Lazzarini the Commissioner-General at the Joint Emergency Summit of the League of Arab States and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

The past month has been incredibly painful for all of us.

UNRWA, the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees, is in mourning for 101 colleagues confirmed killed in Gaza. ...

Across the Gaza Strip, more than 10,000 people have reportedly been killed, with the majority to be women and children. Many more are surely still under the rubble.

The Israeli Forces have pushed over 1.5 million people out of the north of the Gaza Strip.

More than 700,000 women, children and men now live in UNRWA schools and shelters.

I was in Gaza last week, my first time since the war started.

What I saw will mark me forever.

Every little girl and boy I met in an UNRWA shelter asked me for bread and water.

Children used to learn and laugh in the school I visited.

Now, the school is an overcrowded shelter that lacks the minimum standards for a dignified life. ...

Today, Gazans feel de-humanized and abandoned.

They are yearning for reassurance, especially from their Arab and Muslim brothers and sisters, that they hear the crying of their children, and see the fear in the eyes of their mothers.

On Thursday, I addressed the International Conference in Paris to support civilians in Gaza.

I warned of the dangers of double standards.

I explicitly described the ongoing campaign aimed at dehumanizing Palestinians.

I also firmly stated our position against the forced displacement of the people of Gaza, most of whom are descendants of Palestine Refugees. ...

The West Bank has reached a boiling point, with the Israeli Forces and settler violence claiming lives daily.

The Lebanon-Israel border is simmering with tension. ...

The Palestinians in Gaza have always relied on the Arab and Muslim world for solidarity. ...

I need you to firmly defend the Agency against false and insidious claims that its schools teach hatred or that it has let the civilians in Gaza down. These accusations come from those who want us to fail. ...

We must also consider the day after.

A political solution has become a matter of life and death for millions of people.

A genuine prospect of Palestinian statehood is critical.

We must step back from the brink before it's too late. ...

To read the full statement see

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/statement-mr-philippe-lazzarini-commissioner-general-joint-emergency-Summit-League-Arab-States>

UN Development Programme

The Gaza War: Expected Socio-Economic Impacts on the State of Palestine

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-11/2301926e-policybrief-gazawar-escwa-undp-10nov-10pm.pdf>

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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>

The Equality Act 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2023 [Draft]

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/9780348253191/contents>

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

**** closes in 5 days**

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/>

**** closes in 5 days**

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/>

**** closes in 5 days**

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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