



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

See also the Commons “Debate on the Address”, and Lords debate on the “Kings Speech” that are included in the Israel section below, and written answer 1271 that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Schools: Antisemitism

John Hayes (Conservative) [27] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools reported anti-Semitic incidents in each year since 2013.

Further Education: Antisemitism

John Hayes (Conservative) [39] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many further education colleges reported anti-Semitic incidents in each year since 2013.

Robert Halfon: The UK unequivocally condemns the recent terrorist attacks by Hamas and stands in solidarity with Israel in its hour of need. Antisemitism has no place in our society.

The Department does not hold this information. Whilst the Department strongly encourages schools and colleges to record and report all kinds of bullying, there is not a legal requirement for schools and colleges to record and report incidents of bullying.

The Department has published guidance to support schools and colleges to monitor bullying incidents and evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

The Government is committed to ensuring that all schools and colleges prepare children for life in modern Britain. Every school and college should actively promote the shared values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs.

The Prime Minister has announced that £3 million of extra funding will be provided

to the Community Security Trust to protect schools, colleges, nurseries and synagogues and other Jewish community buildings.

The Secretary of State and Ministers visited a Jewish school to show their support and wrote to school and college headteachers on 17 October to remind them of their relevant responsibilities, including the need to challenge intolerance and actively respond to discrimination, as well as outlining their duties under the Prevent programme. The Department's Educate Against Hate website provides a range of resources and support to challenge discrimination and intolerance, and how to respond where you have concerns. This is available at:

<https://www.educateagainsthate.com/>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/27>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/39>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-new-support-to-keep-british-jewish-communities-safe>

The letter referred to above can be read at

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDFE/bulletins/3763f13>

Crown Prosecution Service

Far-right 'reverend' who exchanged letters with terrorists convicted of stirring up racial hatred

The editor of a far-right website has been convicted of possessing racially inflammatory material including stickers that had been posted in and around Liverpool in 2021 as part of a campaign directing people to a website calling for the establishment of a white master race.

James Costello, 38, was found with the stickers alongside other racist material and recordings he hosted on a website he ran. They were racially offensive and aimed to recruit people to join the violent destruction and subjugation of people of colour, black people and Jewish people.

Costello, who called himself the Reverend, was found guilty of 18 offences of stirring up racial hatred ...

He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment today. ...

Nick Price, head of the CPS Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division, said: "James Costello styled himself as a 'Reverend' as part of his ambition to try and stir up racial hatred wherever possible.

"The messages he posted were intended to sow disharmony and be a violent call to arms against black and Jewish people.

"Our prosecution was able to prove he was responsible for this racist material which should have no place in our society.

"It is right that he has been convicted today for these offences."

Detective Chief Inspector Andy Milligan of Merseyside Police said: "... The racist and offensive material uncovered by our officers was deplorable and could have caused serious tensions, anguish and violence in our community.

"I hope this result show that online hate will not be tolerated and online offenders are not anonymous. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/far-right-reverend-who-exchanged-letters-terrorists-convicted-stirring-racial-hatred>

Equality and Human Rights Commission

Major watchdog report reveals progress and challenges in Britain's pursuit of equality and human rights protections

... The *Equality and Human Rights Monitor* report assesses the status of equality and human rights across Britain, with a particular focus on the nine protected characteristics safeguarded by the Equality Act 2010.

The report is intended to be a reference document for the legal, political and social changes impacting each protected characteristic and the analysis provides an extensive overview of the progress and challenges in areas such as education, health, justice, and work.

It is produced for Parliament every five years by the EHRC, which is the regulator of equality laws in Britain and the human rights watchdog for England and Wales. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/media-centre/news/major-watchdog-report-reveals-progress-and-challenges-britains-pursuit-equality>

Equality and Human Rights Monitor

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2023/Great%20Britain%20Equality%20and%20Human%20Rights%20Monitor-%20accessible%20PDF.pdf>

Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Scotland Fairer?

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2023/Is%20Scotland%20Fairer-%20Equality%20and%20Human%20Rights%20Monitor-%20accessible%20PDF.pdf>

Equality and Human Rights Monitor: Is Wales Fairer?

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2023/Is%20Wales%20Fairer%20Equality%20and%20Human%20Rights%20Monitor-%20English-%20accessible%20PDF.pdf>

TOP

Israel

See also written answers 27 and 39 that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and written answer 1271 that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.

House of Commons Debate

Debate on the Address: Violence Reduction, Policing and Criminal Justice

... col 675 **Yvette Cooper (Labour):** I beg to move amendment (r), at the end of the Question to add:

“and submit to Your Majesty that this House wishes to see an end to the violence in Israel and Palestine; unequivocally condemn the horrific terrorist attack and murder of civilians by Hamas, call for the immediate release of all hostages and reaffirm Israel’s right to defend its citizens from terrorism; believe all human life is equal and that there has been too much suffering, including far too many deaths of innocent civilians and children, over the past month in Gaza; reaffirm the UK’s commitment to the rules-based international order, international humanitarian law and the jurisdiction of the ICC to address the conduct of all parties in Gaza and Hamas’s attacks in Israel; call on Israel to protect hospitals and lift the siege conditions allowing food, water, electricity, medicine and fuel into Gaza; request the Government continue to work with the international community to prevent a wider escalation of the conflict in the region, guarantee that people in Gaza who are forced

to flee during this conflict can return to their homes and seek an end to the expansion of illegal settlements and settler violence in the West Bank; and, while acknowledging the daily humanitarian pauses to allow in aid and the movement of civilians, believe they must be longer to deliver humanitarian assistance on a scale that begins to meet the desperate needs of the people of Gaza, which is a necessary step to an enduring cessation of fighting as soon as possible and a credible, diplomatic and political process to deliver the lasting peace of a two-state solution." ...

col/ 677 We have seen tensions increase as a result of the truly awful events in the middle east. There has been an appalling rise in antisemitism, including some disgraceful incidents this weekend, with Jewish communities feeling enormous anguish and distress. We have also seen an awful increase in Islamophobia and the rise of organised far-right thuggery about which the police raised concerns this weekend. Every one of us in this House must be clear that violence and hate crime have no place on Britain's streets and must face the full force of the law. We must all back the police in taking the action that is needed.

I thank the police for the reassurance work they are doing with synagogues, Jewish schools and mosques as well as their action against the hate crimes that devastate lives and corrode communities. I say to the Justice Secretary and the new Home Secretary that Labour has called for stronger action to tackle both antisemitism and Islamophobia and hateful extremism. Again, we stand ready to work with the Government ...

... every one of us will have been deeply disturbed by the terrible events in the middle east. We want an end to the devastating violence and suffering. We have seen 11,000 Palestinians killed; two thirds of them women and children. Thousands of innocent children are dead. Families are bereaved and parents grieving. It is intolerable. Hundreds of hostages are still being held following the gravest attack on Jewish people on any day since the holocaust. Israeli families are still experiencing the horror and the trauma as the remains of their loved ones are still being identified. Families and communities are still reeling from the events.

We all condemn the truly barbaric attack by Hamas terrorists on 7 October. Under international law, we respect countries' right to defend their citizens from terrorist attacks and also countries' obligations to abide by international law. The conduct of war matters. ...

col/ 678 The rules-based order must not be abandoned.

That is why we must commit to recognising the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court to address the conduct of all parties in the conflict. But it is also why we need an urgent suspension of hostilities: not just a short pause, but ... the time and space to get in fuel, food and water, to rebuild vital humanitarian infrastructure, to protect aid workers, who are losing their lives on a scale we have never seen before in conflict, to put in place protection for civilians and negotiate hostage releases, and to work towards a full cessation of violence and enduring peace so that lives can be saved and the intolerable suffering can end. ...

... it will be achieved through step-by-step intense diplomacy and pressure that recognises how difficult it is when Hamas refuse to agree to stop rocket attacks and pledge again to repeat the attacks of 7 October. We recognise, too, that hostages are still being held, but we still have to make urgent diplomatic progress. We still have to do what we can right now to save lives and make progress in getting hostilities suspended, especially so that humanitarian action can be taken.

We recognise, too, that the only way forward is a two-state solution with a secure and safe Israel alongside a secure and sovereign Palestine. ...

Vicky Ford (Conservative): ... [The Lord Chancellor] ... has not mentioned the crime of terrorism ... There is grave concern that the greater the loss of civilian life in the middle east is, the greater the likelihood of radicalisation and increased terror at home. Does he agree that those of us who believe that now is not the right time to call for a full ceasefire, because of the difficulty of giving it, are not giving Israel a moral blank cheque to continue

with operations in the way it has so far? Protecting civilian life is vital to prevent future terrorism here and elsewhere.

col 682 The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Alex Chalk): ... Anyone who has observed what has taken place cannot fail but to be filled with anguish and distress, so of course it is the case that a nation's right to defend itself is a right to do so consistent with international law. ...

col 687 Julian Lewis (Conservative): ... I think the police made the right call about 11 November, given the law as it stands. What concerns me is that three weeks earlier, on 21 October, a planned demonstration in Golders Green to pray for Israel and the Jewish people was called off after the police advised that it would be subject to intimidation or violence from people who were representing it as a threat against Muslims holding a demonstration for Palestine seven miles away. Does it not concern my right hon. and learned Friend that a peaceful demonstration should be called off in the face of intimidation, and is it not a matter of concern that the people who made the online threats that led the police to give that advice have not, as far as I have learned, been in any way questioned, sought or prosecuted?

Alex Chalk: ... On the basis of what he has said, that does seem troubling. I do not know all the details, of course, but the fundamental point is that anyone in our community, whether they are Jewish or otherwise, should be able to practise their faith without let or hindrance. ... If there are measures that need to be followed up to protect our vulnerable communities, they should be. ...

col 688 Alison Thewliss (SNP): ... It was shocking at the weekend to see the attacks on the police happening outside this very building—attacks that were encouraged in many respects by the rhetoric coming from this Government. In many cases, the signal that Ministers and their colleagues have been putting out has not been a dog whistle but a foghorn. To see the far right out on the streets, bursting through the police, claiming police helmets as if it were some kind of war victory and taking those trophies home, was appalling. The further fallout from this of the Islamophobic attacks on women at stations in the city was appalling and shocking. I hope that those who perpetrated all those attacks will be identified and brought to justice. Likewise, those who have been making antisemitic attacks against our Jewish communities need to feel the full force of the law. ...

col 690 Amendment (h), which was tabled by me and my honourable colleagues, calls for an immediate ceasefire in the middle east. I struggle to cope with the scenes of horror that are on our television screens every night. The horror of 7 October shocked us all, as has the devastation since for the people of Gaza. Both of these things are incredibly difficult to process. How can people behave in this way towards their fellow human beings? ...

col 691 I had to update the figures in my remarks, because the death toll has of course risen. At least 4,506 children in Gaza have been killed—that is one child every 10 minutes, and more than 100 children every single day. A further 1,500 children remain missing under the rubble of bombed-out buildings and are presumed dead. The number of children killed in a single month of conflict in Gaza is more than eight times the number of children killed in Ukraine during the entire first year of the current war with Russia.

Many of the children who have managed to survive so far are sick or at risk of falling ill due to the lack of clean food and water. Oxfam has reported five-hour queues at bakeries and a very real risk of starvation. Nowhere is safe from the airstrikes, not even medical facilities, which are protected under international law. Only one hospital in northern Gaza is still operational, with very minimal service. ...

Riham Jafari of ActionAid has commented on the concept of a humanitarian pause: "What use is a four-hour pause each day to hand communities bread in the morning before they are bombed in the afternoon? What use is a brief cessation in hostilities when hospital wards lie in ruins and when roads used to deliver medical supplies and food are destroyed?"

ActionAid has also talked about the situation facing pregnant women giving birth under bombardment. Giving birth does not fit into a neat four-hour humanitarian pause. Women are giving birth and having caesareans without anaesthetic, and babies are being born into chaos and death—they cannot be guaranteed a ventilator to keep them alive. ... Civilians, who have done nothing wrong, ask us, “How long can this go on?”

Vivian Silver, the 74-year-old Canadian-Israeli peace activist who founded Women Wage Peace, was confirmed murdered in the 7 October attack on kibbutz Be’eri. She was identified by her DNA. She had worked her whole life for peace. When the attack happened, she was having a discussion on the radio from her safe room before the phone cut out. She was challenged on her views on peace in the middle east and, even when an attack was happening and she was in her safe room, she said, “We can talk more about this if I survive.” We should listen to her bravery and commitment to peace this afternoon. Her sons, who have lost so much, are seeking a ceasefire, because they know that this cannot go on. We should commit to peace and understanding in her memory.

col 692 How does this end? All conflicts, at some point, end—there is an armistice, an agreement and papers are signed. The question for all of us in this place is how long this current phase of conflict continues. When does it end?

The UK is always keen to talk up its position as a P5 member of the United Nations Security Council, but what is that worth when we do not back the UN Secretary-General when he calls for a ceasefire? In what reasonable circumstances should António Guterres have to go to the Rafah crossing to plead for aid to get through? Why are we not standing behind the Secretary-General and the United Nations?

If we do not strive for peace, we condemn yet another generation in Palestine and Israel to a cycle of violence, to death and destruction beyond our imagination. ...

col 697 **Imran Hussain (Labour):** I rise to speak to amendments (b) and (h). ...

A foreign policy with morality at its heart would not leave over 2 million Palestinians trapped in a humanitarian nightmare without food, water, medicine or power. ... A foreign policy that is built on morality would not stand by as over 11,000 Palestinians are killed, more than 27,000 are wounded and 7,500 women and children have their lives taken from them, or as schools, hospitals, churches, mosques, refugee camps and homes are reduced to rubble. A foreign policy that is driven by values would not still be advocating the four-hour pauses that do nothing to alleviate the suffering of innocent men, women and children, and do nothing to end the violence that those living in the region have faced for decades. A foreign policy of morality and values would also not leave the Government unable to answer just how many Palestinian lives will be taken before they condemn the actions of the Israeli military in Gaza that continue to violate international law—acts of collective punishment that clearly fall within the definition of war crimes.

col 698 Instead, a foreign policy of morality and values would, front and centre, advocate a ceasefire that ends the bloodshed, allows desperately needed aid to reach those most in need and creates space following the safe return of hostages from meaningful negotiations on a lasting peace. ... The innocent men, women and children of Gaza who are trapped in the never-ending nightmare of conflict, which they did not start and have no power to end, do not need a pause—they need it to stop. The only way we can achieve that is with a real and immediate ceasefire. ...

I also advocate for a ceasefire rather than brief humanitarian pauses, because without a ceasefire—without a real break in the fighting—we will just see the unimaginable suffering, horror, death, destruction and devastation continue to unfold in Gaza. Without a ceasefire, the bloodshed that has already left thousands of innocent civilians dead and has wounded so many more—that has left children without parents, robbed parents of their children, and seen premature babies left to die outside their incubators—will tragically continue. Without a ceasefire, the desperately needed aid and assistance that Palestinians urgently need and cry out for—food, water, fuel and medicine—will not be able safely to enter Gaza. ...

Without a ceasefire, the negotiations working towards a peaceful resolution and a real two-

state solution, for which the region cannot wait any longer, will simply not have the space or the will to succeed. ...

col 699 Michael Ellis (Conservative): In a law and order context, there is a rich and sad irony in today's amendments on a ceasefire: the UK Parliament is soon to vote on a ceasefire in a conflict over which the UK has no control, and a ceasefire that neither side in the conflict wants. Hamas openly say that they will fight on to kill as many Jews as possible—not Israelis, but Jews—and that they would do what they did on 7 October all over again if they could. They openly say that. Israel will destroy Hamas, and will be doing the world and, indeed, the Palestinian people a great service by doing so. A ceasefire would play into the hands of terrorists and terrorism. The Scottish nationalists, among others, have engineered an amendment to this debate to incommode and undermine the Labour leadership, but what they actually undermine is community cohesion and the Jewish community in this country.

If I may, I want to address the Jewish community in the United Kingdom. There is a great deal of fear in the Jewish community, who feel decidedly unsafe and abandoned, vulnerable and isolated, and who have effectively been banned from central London for several weekends now by the risible failure of police actions and the one-sided prejudicial reporting of the BBC and others. Those factors have an adverse effect on law and order as well as on diplomatic moves internationally. We hear of deep hatred for Israel from multiple quarters.

Why do we not see mass demonstrations and similar responses when hundreds of thousands of Muslims and others are killed in conflicts elsewhere? Some 600,000 civilians, including children, have been killed in the past year in Sudan and 300,000 in Yemen. There are countless dead in Ethiopia-Tigray and in Azerbaijan-Armenia. Then there are China's hard-oppressed Uyghur Muslims, and the wonderful Kurds being attacked by Turkey, East Timor and so on. It is difficult not to come to the conclusion that the screaming about Israel is based on the ancient hatred of antisemitism. Why else ignore larger losses of life? We see hate. We see dissent and we see division.

I wish to appeal today, in the limited time available, to a different emotion, which is hope. I say to the Jewish community in the UK and to those of any faith or of none who yearn for peace and reconciliation to be of good hope. There is much to be hopeful about. Why? One of the prime reasons for the timing of the ISIS-style pogrom of 7 October was the blooming flower of a relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia. It was apparently a few months away from fruition ... The Saudi position, as the keeper of the holy places, is such that perhaps a dozen Muslim majority countries would have soon followed suit and opened relations with Israel. However, all is not lost. The good news is that that will still happen, and the signs are that the Saudis will still pursue the project. ...

There are reasons to be hopeful even with Iran. Why there? The theocrats in Tehran are irredeemable; they support and fund terrorism in many areas and oppress and torture their own people, but, in due course, the evil designs of that clerical cabal will fail, just as the evil designs of so many others motivated by hatred have failed. ... Recently, the people of Iran have been encouraged by their regime to chant slogans against Israel, to trample on large Israeli flags, placed deliberately for that purpose at the exit of football stadiums, and to carry out other stunts, but the Persian football masses pointedly declined to do so. ...

col 700 What hope can we look to here in the United Kingdom? I think a lot. We have seen gangs of proto-fascists, frankly, crowd around Marks & Spencer branches, for example, including one in Glasgow. I wonder why the SNP does not wish to mention that in debates. ...

The reality of the matter is that Marks & Spencer, which was once a Jewish-owned company but since 1926 has been owned by thousands of shareholders, is now subject to antisemitic attacks, 130 years after its foundation. Mr Marks first came to the UK escaping, ironically, another pogrom, this one in the 1880s, but there is hope even there because I can tell the House that Marks & Spencer thrives like never before ...

There is even more hope elsewhere. We have a Prime Minister who has supported Israel; a Leader of the Opposition who has withstood the brickbats and those who wish to divide, and is defending the Jewish people from insult and prejudice; and a sovereign, a King, who is a global leader and who will be a source for peace. ...

col 702 Charles Walker (Conservative): ... if I could bring the hostages home and stop the fighting on the streets of Gaza, I would do it and I would do it now. But the truth is that I cannot; no one in this House can. ...

It is not acceptable that any community should be cowed or intimidated from displaying outward expressions of their faith through fear of violence. Let me be clear: whether it be Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism or any other faith, we allow people to express their faith visibly without fear of attack. That is fundamental to this debate. It is not right for any British citizen to be held accountable for the actions of a Government other than their own. My Jewish friends and neighbours are British citizens.

Last Friday I talked to a young Jewish doctor in the NHS who said, "Charles, being Jewish in this country right now is very, very difficult." ... Worshippers leaving a synagogue in Maida Vale on Saturday were abused and suffered verbal threats. The synagogue is near where I grew up, near where I went to school; it is where many of my friends worshipped. This is not acceptable. A house in north London displaying a mezuzah was daubed in paint from top to bottom—not acceptable.

Without equivocation or qualification, I say this: I stand, with good and decent people of all faiths, by the Jewish community. And if any Jews face harm, I and those people will place ourselves in front of those Jews to defend them from that harm. That is a solemn commitment on my part. The Jewish community in this country is small—279,000 people—but it comprises my constituents, my family and my friends, and they are deserving of my support and the support of us all. ...

col 703 Hate laws do not stop hate. We wish that they would, but they do not. Hate is one of the basest of human emotions. ... I want to see peace in so many parts of the world—but what history has taught us is that peace is reached when the cost of hate is so great, when too many people have been killed, when scythes are exhausted, when nobody can take it anymore. ...

Chris Stephens (SNP): ... I hope that [Michael Ellis] will condemn the far-right thuggery we saw at the weekend in London and elsewhere. Those were not counter-protesters—the phrase I have seen being used—but far-right thugs. Every single Member of this House should condemn those individuals, who wore a poppy on their jackets while showing a swastika tattoo at the same time. ...

col 706 Naz Shah (Labour): I rise to speak to amendments (h) and (r). As I have stated publicly, the attack against innocent Israelis on 7 October was an egregious crime against humanity. The families of those killed continue to mourn the loss of their loved ones, and the families of those taken hostage pray for their safe return. It would be a grave injustice not to recognise the acts of terror committed by Hamas for what they are. In the same way, it would be a grave injustice if the world turned a blind eye while innocent Palestinians are being murdered by the hour.

More civilians have been killed in six weeks in Gaza than were killed in 20 months in the Russia-Ukraine war. More children have been killed in Gaza than the annual number of children killed across all conflict zones since 2019. More United Nations workers have been killed in Gaza than in any comparable period in the UN's history, and more journalists have been killed in Gaza than in any conflict period since 1992. Hospitals have been bombed, refugee camps have been bombed and United Nations schools have been bombed. Ambulances, bombed; bakeries, bombed; mosques and churches, bombed; northern Gaza, bombed; Gaza City, bombed; Khan Yunis, bombed; the Rafah border, bombed. Almost every inch of the Gaza strip has been bombed.

More than 11,000 innocent civilians have been killed, and the hopes, dreams, and futures

of nearly 5,000 Palestinian children have ended in mass graves. ...

col 707 We need a political solution to an issue that leads to peace, not one that ends in a way so horrific that it emboldens more terror in the region. ... When Israel acts with impunity and attacks hospitals, UN schools and refugee camps, and the case for the Palestinians is vetoed by the US and UK at the International Criminal Court, the world asks whether our justice is really unbiased.

When we rightfully condemn extremist and genocidal statements by Hamas, but fail to utter a single word about the genocidal rhetoric being spouted by Netanyahu and his right-wing Government, the world asks whether our scales of justice are truly impartial. When we follow the path of justice and the rule of law in the face of Putin's aggression, yet Israel continues to defy UN resolutions with empty words and no action, the world wonders where is the sword of justice ...

We know that eventually there will be a ceasefire in this current crisis—every war ends with a cessation of hostilities. The question is not if there will be a ceasefire, but when. For the people of Palestine, every minute, every hour and every day that we wait is another orphan, another grieving mother and another family wiped out. ...

col 713 **John Hayes (Conservative):** ... in the five years to 2023, an incredible 120,000 people were recorded for “non-crime hate incidents”. Causing offence may be rude, but is it really worthy of police time? The liberal elite who offer a multitude of platitudes about equality are none the less content to see a two-tier justice system in which cultural relativism determines what is investigated and what is not. The law must be applied equally to all, whether they are eco-fanatics or Islamic extremists. For such characters, in the absence of a sense of proportion, anything can be legitimised in the cause of self-righteous purity, and that includes, when they glue themselves to roads, stopping ambulances taking the sick to hospital.

We must end the culture of excusing and rewarding deviant and wicked behaviour. ...

col 714 **Jamie Stone (Liberal Democrat):** ... My party and, I believe, many others believe that a two-state solution is fundamental ... it is the foundation, the rock, on which we can build peace in the longer term.

Colum Eastwood (SDLP): I have been to Gaza. It was a hell on earth before this latest bombardment and it has been absolutely flattened over the last few weeks. ... one of the lessons from our peace process was that the only way to bring about a political settlement is to stop the killing first. When 1,400 Israelis and over 11,000 Palestinians lie dead, surely now is the time to stop the killing and call for an immediate ceasefire.

Jamie Stone: That is precisely why the second main point in my party's amendment is a call for a bipartisan ceasefire right now. I also want to emphasise that the future of Gaza must not be about Hamas. We have to be very clear about that. ...

col 716 **Richard Graham (Conservative):** ... I am very conscious that many of my Muslim constituents feel that today's debate is about Israel, Palestine and Gaza, and perhaps do not know that this is effectively a vote of confidence on the Government's legislative agenda and the specific policing and justice issues covered in today's debate.

The Government's approach to Israel, Palestine and Gaza has been laid out several times, not least in two statements in the last week. ...

I have been to Gaza twice, and I saw the horrors of Operation Cast Lead in 2010. What is happening today is many times worse. It is a humanitarian disaster, but neither side—neither Hamas nor Israel—is calling for a ceasefire. There are still large numbers of hostages and British citizens in Gaza who need to be released, and who need to get out. It is not remotely my task to try to defend what Israel has done over many years in the occupied territories, but today is not the moment to call for a ceasefire when neither side has any intention to observe one and when Hamas have made it clear that they will continue with 7 October-like attacks and massacres for as long as possible. ...

col 721 **Tom Hunt (Conservative):** ... With regard to the broader issue of Israel-Palestine,

I mourn the loss of life on both sides, as everyone in this House does. I am utterly depressed about the situation, as are most of my constituents. I want a two-state solution, just like everybody else does, but I am not convinced that an immediate ceasefire right now would work or be appropriate, when one side would not respect it and has made that abundantly clear. Hamas must be destroyed. Over four years ago, I went to a kibbutz on the border with Gaza. My understanding is that a good number of those people have now been killed in a massacre. We must never forget the evil that happened that day. The enemy of the people of Gaza is Hamas, and we must work cross-party to support Hamas being destroyed. ...

col 725 Helen Hayes (Labour): ... The terror attack perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October was an unspeakable violation, the largest slaughter of Jewish people since the holocaust, and the largest terror attack since 9/11. We stand in solidarity with all those affected: the injured, the hostages and the families who are bereaved or desperately worried about loved ones held captive in Gaza. Israel has the right to defend itself—as would any country in the face of such a horrific attack—but that right is not without limit. It is constrained by international law, which protects civilians, critical infrastructure such as hospitals, and critical supplies such as food, water, medicines and energy.

We have witnessed a month of unrelenting bombardment of Gaza. More than 11,000 people have been killed, homes and whole neighbourhoods have been destroyed, hospitals have been left unable to function, and a whole population is being denied access to food, water, energy and medicines. We cannot look at the horror and suffering on our TV screens and conclude that the scale of destruction we are witnessing is proportionate, or that denying aid from entering Gaza is within international law. Again, we must stand in solidarity with all those affected: the injured, the families who are bereaved and those desperately worried about their loved ones in Gaza. ...

In calling for a ceasefire, no one is suggesting that the cessation should be unilateral or without conditions: Hamas must release the hostages. In war, ceasefires do not always hold, and we must all be realistic about the intensity of this conflict, but a bilateral humanitarian cessation of the violence—a ceasefire—is surely the minimum we should be demanding in the face of such horrific suffering. ...

col 726 That is not a unilateral laying-down of arms, but a bilateral humanitarian ceasefire predicated on the release of hostages and leading to an internationally brokered peace process and a two-state solution, with a secure Israel living alongside a sovereign, viable Palestine. ...

col 727 Afzal Khan (Labour): For the last five weeks, I have been watching in utter despair as Hamas killed hundreds of innocent Israelis and took over 200 hostages, and as the Israeli military killed over 11,000 Palestinians. The overwhelming majority of Palestinians who have been killed are women and children, not Hamas fighters. They have been killed in their homes, schools and refugee camps, in churches and mosques, while delivering aid and in hospitals as patients, staff and those taking shelter.

At Al-Shifa Hospital, premature babies lie starving, are wrapped in foil to stay warm and are waiting to die. There is no oxygen, no food and no fuel to run generators. As we speak, Israeli troops have entered the hospital, putting patients and staff at grave risk. Over at the Al-Quds Hospital, Israel has fired live ammunition directly at the intensive care unit, with most of the victims being children. ...

Across this country, we have seen hundreds of thousands of people peacefully marching on the streets and urging the Government to call for a ceasefire, despite the former Home Secretary's branding them hate marches. The people of Britain have continued to turn out week after week to demand justice for Palestinians ...

I have visited Israel and Palestine and seen the discrimination and suffering of Palestinians in the west bank and occupied territories. ... It is extremely painful to watch the sheer scale of Palestinians being displaced ...

If we had had a ceasefire yesterday, 144 Gazan children would still be alive today. Israel

has already crossed every red line imaginable and broken international humanitarian laws. History has shown us that military actions alone do not resolve conflicts, and Israel's use of force will not resolve this one. We need a full and immediate ceasefire now. ...

col 730 Zarah Sultana (Labour): I rise to support the amendments in my name and amendment (h) ...

Behind every number we read and behind every horrifying statistic we hear, there were hopes and dreams just as real and just as valuable as yours and mine. I cannot believe that it has to be said, but it clearly does: Palestinian lives matter just as much as anyone else's.

Israel's assault on Gaza has now killed one in every 200 Palestinians in the besieged enclave. Hospitals, ambulances and refugee camps have been targeted. Premature babies in incubators—let me repeat that: premature babies in incubators—are dying because hospitals have run out of fuel. In the illegally occupied west bank, where Hamas are not in power, around 200 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces or armed settlers. ...

The truth is that Israeli officials have been open about their intent. At the beginning of the assault, an Israeli military spokesperson said that the emphasis in bombing was on "damage...not accuracy." A former head of the National Security Council said that the aim was to make Gaza "a place where no human being can exist."

This weekend an Israeli Government Minister said that the war would be "Gaza's Nakba", a reference to the 1948 catastrophe where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homelands and never allowed to return.

None of that is to downplay Hamas's appalling killing of Israeli civilians. I have condemned that already and do so again today. I repeat the calls for the release of all hostages, but, as the UN Secretary General said, none of those crimes excuses what we have seen since. Unlike those crimes, Israel's assault on Gaza has been done with the Government's unequivocal support and complicity, and almost certainly with British-made arms ... When the Government refuse to support a ceasefire, they give Israel the green light to continue its slaughter of innocent Palestinians. When they refuse to support a ceasefire, they are refusing to push back against Israeli politicians and policies that aim to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from their lands. ...

There is nothing humanitarian about letting children eat a little today only to bomb them tomorrow. The only humanitarian way forward is an immediate ceasefire ...

col 735 David Simmonds (Conservative): ... there has been a long-term cycle of violence that is costing many lives on both sides, especially since Hamas took over the governance of Gaza in 2006. Their absolute refusal to countenance a ceasefire, now or on any previous occasion, tends to nullify the humanitarian purpose of ceasefire calls from many quarters. If we are to break that long-term cycle of violence, we need to ensure that we do not vote for a ceasefire that would undermine that. ...

col 738 Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Labour): In speaking to amendments (h) and (r), the House will be aware that I have openly called for a negotiated ceasefire on both sides, along with the release of all hostages. However, neither the Israeli Government nor Hamas have agreed to an immediate ceasefire. Hamas have stated that they will continue with their strikes against Israel, and they have not heeded repeated calls by the UN and others for an unconditional release of all hostages. Likewise, the Israeli Government have rejected growing international calls for a ceasefire and have continued with their relentless bombing. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has stated that a ceasefire would be possible only if all 239 hostages were released.

Who is suffering intolerably in the meanwhile? The Palestinian people. ...

Shockingly, in just 40 days, one in every 200 people living in Gaza is no more. I have been particularly horrified by the killing of more than 4,600 innocent children. That is one child dying every 12 minutes. The number of children killed in just over four weeks of Israeli

bombardment has surpassed the number killed in conflict zones across the globe every year since 2019. ...

Whether or not the Israeli Government and Hamas listen to our pleas, I believe we must call for an end to the violence to save lives. The Netanyahu Government must be made to realise that razing Gaza to the ground and indiscriminately killing Palestinians will not lead to safety and security for people living in the region. It will merely fuel more anger and resentment, taking us further away from peace and prosperity for all and from a viable two-state solution. ...

col 741 Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru): Every day since 7 October, news from Gaza and Israel becomes yet more painful to watch, even for those of us who can choose to look away. While the horrific attack on Israeli citizens by Hamas was appalling, the response by Israel's military is devastating the lives of ordinary people in Gaza. ...

Half of all Gaza's homes are damaged or destroyed. Universities and schools are under frequent attack. We are witnessing in real time the complete collapse of vital infrastructure to support human life, include power lines and water desalination plants. One doctor describes how hospitals in Gaza are now practising medieval-style medicine, with premature babies huddled together to keep warm because their incubators no longer work, and doctors operating on patients without electricity or anaesthetic. In what perversion of international law can anyone justify turning a hospital into a battlefield? ...

It is clear that humanitarian pauses alone are not enough. First, the facts on the ground render them invalid. The UN agency for Palestine has said that communications in Gaza will start to fail as of tomorrow when telecommunications companies run out of fuel to operate their data centres and major connection sites. Without reliable communications, people will not know when the current four-hour pauses in the bombing begin, or indeed when they can begin to undertake the perilous journey across Gaza without access to fuel. Last week, Plaid Cymru tabled a motion in the Senedd calling for an immediate ceasefire. ...

col 747 Rupa Huq (Labour): ... Hate crime should not be on our streets, but sadly, events far off have triggered Islamophobic and antisemitic events ... I was alarmed by reprehensible individuals hooting horns and provocatively waving flags in Acton on 7 October, the day of the worst atrocity in Israel's history. Since then, we have shockingly also seen red paint daubed on two mosques, three times between them, and on a Syrian café. ...

Long before Hamas's despicable slaughter on 7 October started this cycle of violence, the new Foreign Secretary called Gaza an open-air "prison camp" that is unsustainable. Those words are now truer than ever ... We cannot continue at the rate we are seeing, with lost lives and 50% of buildings in Gaza demolished; it is only a month in. ...

col 748 Claudia Webbe (Independent): ... Some 1,400 Israelis have been killed and more than 11,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, around half of them children killed by the Israeli bombs and missiles targeting homes, schools, hospitals, refugee camps, mosques and churches, while almost 3,000 are missing presumed dead under the rubble. ... More children have been killed in Gaza during the last three weeks than the total killed in conflicts around the world in every year since 2019. ...

As we speak, Gaza's largest hospital, Al-Shifa, has been surrounded, stormed and occupied by Israeli forces, trapping hundreds of medics, patients and civilians inside without access to vital supplies, with even food and water running out. Gaza's hospitals are out of anaesthetic and many are out of fuel. Children and others are undergoing surgery for horrific trauma with no pain relief. Premature babies in neonatal care are dying without access to oxygen, and more generally, there are now reports of civilians dying from hunger and starvation, with a lack of food, water and hygiene.

Collective punishment is a war crime and so is forcible transfer, yet the people of Gaza are being driven from their land into the Sinai Egyptian desert. These are war crimes, and the

urgency of the situation, the gravity of the crimes and basic human decency demand that plain language is used. To our shame, the Government, the Prime Minister and the Leader of His Majesty's official Opposition are refusing to acknowledge this. Do they not see Palestinians as humans? Do they not see the burnt out ashes of a barely recognisable human body or the tiny hand of a baby covered in debris reaching out from the rubble? Do Palestinian lives not matter?

We are seeing death by war crimes in plain sight. Every day of delay means more lives are lost, and more women and children are killed by the indiscriminate massacre and barbarism of Israeli bombs. The international human rights community and international non-governmental organisations are united in their demand for a full and immediate ceasefire. ... Our humanity in this House demands that we call for a ceasefire.

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat): ... As you will know, this has been an extraordinarily difficult day for many Members in this House, but for me this is the most difficult day I have had to endure in my parliamentary career. We are now over a month on from the atrocious attacks by Hamas on 7 October, and we were all right to utterly condemn those attacks. But ahead of the votes that we are going to take in a moment, I wanted to let the House know that today I lost my first family member.

col 749 The reason why this is important is that I have spoken about how they are in a church in Gaza City, and they did not, I am afraid, die from a bomb; instead they died perhaps from lack of food, perhaps from dehydration. Their health deteriorated in the last week, and they could not get to the hospital they needed.

Today I wanted to vote for peace. I wanted to vote for a two-state solution, because that is the only way that these horrors will never be seen again. I wanted to vote for getting Hamas out of Gaza, and for those reasons I wanted to vote for an immediate bilateral ceasefire, so that families like mine, but also families in Israel, do not have to endure this anymore. I urge colleagues from all sides to bear in mind that this is more than just party politics right now. ...

col 750 **David Lammy (Labour):** ... Let me turn to the amendments and the horrors of war ... I will start with a meeting I held two weeks ago in Cairo with the Egyptian Foreign Minister. He reminded me that it has been almost exactly half a century since Egypt and Israel were at the height of the Yom Kippur war—a 25-year pattern of conflict that some feared would never end. There were devastating losses in the Sinai and whole armies facing encirclement by the Suez canal. Few expected the narrow diplomatic openings to lead to lasting peace, but diplomats seized those narrow openings.

Then, in 1977, Sadat came to Jerusalem, setting the two countries on a path to a peace that has held ever since. ... Although it may seem impossible in the toxic fog of war, peace is always possible in the end, so 39 days since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas, I ask the House to remember that peace is never simple, and never won easily. ... Everyone in this House wants the fighting to end. The central debate is about the steps to bring that about ...

Peace is never won easily; peace is possible because of diplomacy, because of compromise and because of negotiation. It is our duty in this House to support all the necessary and practical steps to get us there. ...

Clive Betts (Labour): ... The Labour amendment calls for a “cessation of fighting”, which presumably means a cessation of firing. What is the difference between a cessation of firing and a ceasefire? ...

col 751 **David Lammy:** ... I direct him to the statement from the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which clearly sets out five or six steps and five or six different types of occasion where arms are laid down. Some are purely for humanitarian reasons. Others are because some negotiation has begun or some political dialogue is possible. The debate is about how we get to the end, which is that arms are laid down for a lasting reason and the political process—in the end, this will surely end

with a political process—can properly begin. ...

David Lammy: ... [Florence Eshalomi] will have seen also the statement from Hamas just a few days ago that they intend to continue and continue and continue. It is hard to see how a ceasefire can come about if Hamas are not prepared to stop the firing of rockets into Israel, and if they are not prepared to lay down their arms and set those hostages free. ...

Margaret Beckett (Labour): With apologies, may I say to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield South East (Mr Betts), who raised the question of what the difference is between use of the word “ceasefire” and an end to violence, that I fear there is a most unfortunate difference, and that is why I never use the word “ceasefire” and will not be voting for a motion that includes it? That is because, tragically, to some people, calling for a ceasefire means that Israel should stop fighting but not that anybody else should ...

col 753 The Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire (Chris Philp): ... On Gaza ... let us keep in mind that 1,400 innocent civilians were deliberately targeted and slaughtered by terrorists, and over 200 people remain held hostage. As the Prime Minister has set out repeatedly, this Government support humanitarian pauses to ensure that aid can get to civilians in Gaza, given the difficult circumstances. ...

We are also working actively with international partners, including President Sisi of Egypt, to make sure the Rafah border crossing, which I have visited, is opened more to allow critical aid in. In order to ensure that civilians in Gaza are protected, our Government are actively engaging with the Government of Israel to ensure that they obey international law and redouble their efforts to protect civilians in Gaza. That is the humane and civilised thing to do, and this Government will continue to call for that.

However, a ceasefire with Hamas in place cannot be just. Hamas have said that they intend to destroy Israel, and that they would once again perpetrate atrocities like those committed on 7 October. They continue to hold hostages, including children and British citizens, and they continue to fire rockets into Israel. To ask Israel to cease firing unilaterally would not be fair or just. In order to have a just peace and a lasting, permanent ceasefire, we need a two-state solution with a sovereign and recognised Palestinian state on the west bank and in Gaza, guaranteeing their security and the security of Israel alike. All of us in this House and beyond should redouble our efforts to bring about that two- state solution, and to bring about the peace we saw in the aftermath of the Oslo accords, passed in 1993. That shows there is a path—it is difficult but it can be trodden. Only with a just and lasting peace can we see a just and lasting ceasefire. ...

Question put, That the amendment [r] be made.

The House divided:

Ayes

183

Noes

290

Question accordingly negatived.

Amendment proposed: (h), at the end of the Question to add:

“but respectfully regret that the Gracious Speech fails to include measures that would require the Government to uphold international law and protect all civilians in Israel and Palestine; unequivocally condemn the horrific killings by Hamas and the taking of hostages; reaffirm that there must be an end to the collective punishment of the Palestinian people; call for the urgent release of all hostages and an end to the siege of Gaza to allow vital supplies of food, fuel, medicine and water to reach the civilian population; note the growing calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire from the United Nations and its aid agencies; and therefore call on the Government to join with the international community in urgently pressing all parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire.”—(Stephen Flynn.) ...

The House divided:

Ayes

125

Noes

293

Question accordingly negatived. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-15/debates/91A91AE0-3AE5-4111-AC48-354F8AC2AFFD/ViolenceReductionPolicingAndCriminalJustice>

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 Lords Debate

King's Speech: Defence

col 492 **The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (The Earl of Minto):** ... Today, we are living in a world of multipolar conflict, the most recent beginning on 7 October, when Hamas committed a terrible, unprovoked pogrom against innocent citizens in Israel, the worst attack against Jews since the Holocaust. Since then, we have been clear about our unwavering support for Israel's right to self-defence as well as the importance of adhering to international humanitarian law. We have dispatched UK military assets to the region to carry out surveillance and act as a deterrent, and we have committed £30 million in additional aid to the Occupied Palestinian Territories, more than doubling our existing support for this year. This will allow trusted partners to distribute essential relief items and services, such as food, water and shelter. In recent weeks, the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary have all paid visits to the region and discussed the risk of escalation extensively with partners.

But the current war in the Middle East only serves as a reminder of how interlinked the threats we face are. Lurking behind Hamas is the spectre of Iran, which continues to pose an unacceptable risk, not just to Israel but to her neighbours. Iran's proxies—Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Houthis in Yemen—have all displayed their aggressive intent. Iran in its turn is allied to Russia, which it continues supplying with suicide drones. ...

col 499 **Lord Coaker (Labour):** Of course, the news is dominated by the conflict in the Middle East. We have seen scenes on our streets relating to the conflict. We all utterly condemn anti-Semitism and Islamophobia—they have no part in our society. There is a need for a full and immediate humanitarian pause in the fighting across the whole of Gaza to alleviate the suffering of Palestinian civilians and for Hamas terrorists to release the hostages. Urgent steps must be taken to continue the efforts to prevent wider regional escalation. ... All of us, through the available international bodies, need to redouble our efforts to achieve a two-state solution to bring peace and stability. ...

col 505 **The Lord Bishop of Southwark:** ... There is nothing that justifies the attacks on Israeli citizens on 7 October, let alone the taking of hostages and the evil nature of those atrocities. But does the difficulty of military operations against Hamas positions in Gaza City allow the Israel Defense Forces to set aside some aspects of international humanitarian law to manage that difficulty? Clearly, it does not. A ceasefire in Gaza is not only to be hoped for but needs to begin now, with extended pauses for humanitarian relief, medical care and supplies, which will alleviate the ever-increasing levels of innocent suffering. I echo the noble Lord, Lord Coaker, in condemning anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. ...

col 506 **Lord Ashton of Hyde (Conservative):** ... At present, the world's attention is,

understandably, focused on events in Israel and Gaza. I do not see a conflict between, on the one hand, robustly supporting the right of Israel to defend itself against terrorists who murder, torture and kidnap innocent civilians and, on the other hand, also expecting Israel to do so, as far as possible, without causing the same suffering to innocents that they themselves have received. Secondly, Israel must have a realistic strategic purpose behind its actions—otherwise, however many thousands of Palestinians are killed in Gaza, hundreds of thousands of their resentful fellow citizens will be left, many with no employment and no hope, and the whole bloody mess will continue. ...

col 509 Baroness Ludford (Liberal Democrat): ... Turning to the Israel-Gaza situation, I attended at lunchtime a screening of the footage taken from the body cameras of Hamas terrorists—and from CCTV, victims' phones and Intercept—who participated in the horrific outrages of 7 October. I did not want to attend but I felt I had to out of respect for the victims. Let us be clear: this was not a Hamas war on Israel; it was a massacre—a pogrom—of Jews. As the Hamas terrorists celebrated the number of Jews they were killing, whose bodies they burned and mutilated, they cried, "Praise Allah. Allah is great". This is desecration of the great religion of Islam.

While most people attending the pro-Palestinian marches in London have not expressed hatred towards Israel and/or Jews, some have. The steep rise in incidents of anti-Semitism has been appalling, and for our Jewish fellow citizens to feel frightened or uncomfortable coming into central London, or wearing visibly Jewish dress, such as the kippah, is deeply shaming. I also deplore any incidents of Islamophobia. I of course understand the calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, but I would like to know how, in that case, Hamas is going to be removed from Gaza and its military capacity eradicated, as not only Israel wants. I note the US confirmation that Hamas is using the Al-Shifa hospital as an operational base.

col 510 Lastly, on a question asked many times, can the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, in replying, tell us why on earth the Government will not proscribe Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps?

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (Crossbench): ... I echo, of course, [the Prime Minister's] condemnation of the appalling atrocity on 7 October and of Hamas. I am also glad that he called for "urgent" and "humanitarian pauses" in Gaza.

Some 120 countries voted in the UN for a ceasefire; I am still not quite clear why we cannot be in that number. I suppose it is because the word is deemed to imply parity of esteem and legitimacy and so cannot apply to a terrorist group. I do not know. I think most of the world simply wants the killing to stop, and it would be in Israel's interest to listen to that, because current tactics are simply breeding new recruits for Hamas—just as the killing in Beirut 40 years ago was the making of Hezbollah. We need to help, by working on the Qatari Government, who play host to Hamas, or the Iranian Government, who are the funders of Hezbollah, or the Russians, who arm Hamas. ...

col 512 Lord Roberts of Belgravia (Conservative): ... As far as Gaza is concerned, wars are not won by ceasefires. Humanitarian pauses are of course a good idea, but nothing must impede or hamper the Israeli Defense Forces in their operation to try to extirpate Hamas. Israel has the right to do that, and we should be on its side. ...

col 514 Lord Hannan of Kingsclere (Conservative): ... in a lot of the global South, people put the two things together and accuse us ... of stunning double standards. ... They will say things such as, "How would you feel if Putin had ordered Ukrainian civilians to clear out of half of Ukraine?", "How would you feel if Russia had bombed two Polish airports in the way that Israel pre-emptively bombed two Syrian ones?", or "How would you react if Russia cut off Ukrainian energy?". Actually, they say, "We know how you reacted to that; you called it a war crime and called for trials".

We may have what we think are good answers to those things. We might point out that in both cases a fundamentally open and law-based society is at war with a fundamentally terrorist state, a state that has no rule of law and is actuated only by force. We might point

out that there is a huge difference between the unprovoked attack on Ukraine and Israel responding to the abominations of 7 October. But from the perspective of the rest of the world, that all looks like western realpolitik dressed up in the language of moralising. ...

col 515 Lord Parekh (Labour): ... What Hamas did was savage, barbaric, brutal and utterly unacceptable. The response to that by Israel was much more civilised, but nevertheless not entirely above board. There are questions about whether killing 10,000 people in the Gaza Strip in response to the loss of 1,400 people in Israel was the proper answer. What the conflict did was to damage both parties. It certainly damaged Hamas, and rightly so, but it also damaged Israel—not just physically but by affecting its reputation outside. When you go into a war or fight a conflict of this kind, you do not come out clean; you also stoop to the level of your opponent. The result, therefore, is a fine community, a highly talented community, finding itself having to depend on the sufferance of its fellow citizens. They have got to be shown to be using the markers of Jewish identity. They have to be careful in taking all those steps. ...

Why is this conflict one of the longest in human history? Why has it been the fiercest? Why has it become a kind of litmus test of one's concern for the poor and marginalised? Why is your concern for equality tested by whether you care for the Palestinians or not? Why has this conflict become so central to our moral and political understanding?

Precisely because this has happened, we have reached a situation where any action or conflict involving Palestine and Israel draws out millions. It draws out all kinds of strong passions, many of which are unsustainable or unjustifiable, but are nevertheless strongly felt by those who express them. ...

The answer I suggest is not simply Islamic radicalism. It is at two levels. First, I do not think that the negotiations that have taken place between the Israelis and Palestinians have been conducted in good faith. Each side has hidden motives. Israel, for example, would like to see the Palestinians dispossessed and thrown out of Israel and the Palestinians would like to destroy Israel or reduce it to a minority clamouring for rights.

So it is very important that the two sides talk to each other and create a situation of accommodation and peace. Otherwise, the cycle of violence and hatred will continue. Every death engenders more hatred. Unless we find some way to terminate or tame this cycle, we will be responsible for whatever deaths occur.

col 516 Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (Liberal Democrat): ... First, there is no place for anti-Semitism, either in public or private, in our country. Secondly, Israel has a right to take proportionate action to protect its citizens and territory in light of the vicious, callous and barbaric attack of Hamas. But we, in turn, are entitled to question the exercise of that right. Proportionality depends on circumstances. Let me offer this clarification: action in self-defence must be proportionate in method, but the results of any such method should themselves be proportionate. There are terrible and continuing events by the action of Hamas, but the Government of Israel do not have carte blanche. If you rely on international law for the advantage it gives, you cannot ignore the obligation it creates in return.

It is said on behalf of the Israeli Government that the damage to life, limb and property as a result of their military action can be described as "collateral". It does not seem collateral to those who have been injured, and even less so to those members of families where whole generations have been lost. What does the euphemism "collateral" mean? I suggest that it cannot be used to describe severe damage that is known to be inevitable. The more damage done to civilians and property in Gaza, the greater the risk that similar organisations and countries sympathetic to Hamas may seek to intervene.

We should now ask what victory will look like. Who will take responsibility for the homeless, the recovery of the injured and the rebuilding of Gaza? The cost of reconstruction, social and physical, is increased by every action of so-called "collateral damage". A military solution will not resolve these issues, but who would come to a political conference? Hamas, if defeated, is unlikely to do so, and Israel if victorious will see no reason to do so either.

Gaza will be a wasteland—just the circumstances Hamas will try to exploit for recruitment. Would it not be an irony if the present action became a recruiting sergeant for the terrorist organisation Hamas?

col 517 The truth is that the least-damaging outcome would be a ceasefire as soon as possible. That would ensure an opportunity for hospitals to be properly serviced and their patients properly cared for—no more pictures of premature babies fighting for their lives. For the preservation of the life, limb and dignity of the Palestinians in Gaza, there is no valid option other than a ceasefire. ...

col 518 **Baroness Helic (Conservative):** ... Nowhere has our commitment and that our allies to international law been more under stress than in the Israel/Gaza conflict. Let me be clear: Hamas committed an act of terror and terrorism with executions, the kidnapping of families and reported instances of sexual violence of the most horrific nature. The killing and abuse of civilians can never be justified. It is abhorrent, it is evil and it is cowardly. ... If we have learned anything from the experience of fighting terrorism, from Afghanistan to Iraq, from Abu Ghraib to Guantanamo, it is that when we depart from international law, we betray our values and we do not protect our country but inflame the very problem we are trying to address. We seem to have forgotten these lessons in our response to the Gaza/Israel crisis. As we speak, Israeli military operations include disproportionate attacks on civilian targets and a deliberate policy of withholding water, electricity, fuel and humanitarian aid, none of which is defensible from a legal or moral point of view.

col 519 None of us on any side of your Lordships' House can claim to have been taken by surprise with these tactics. They were announced in advance when Prime Minister Netanyahu said that the Israel Defense Forces would turn Gaza into rubble and when Major General Alia addressed the population of Gaza saying: "Human animals must be treated as such. There will be no electricity and no water ... there will only be destruction". I have no doubt that such statements, and their operational implications, were reported back by our diplomats, yet we still gave unquestioning political support to the operation that unfolded. By being an uncritical friend, we have helped open the door to terrible suffering, with long-term implications for peace in the region and around the world. In a way, we failed Israel. We failed Palestinian civilians as well and, dare I say, we failed the British people too.

International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan KC recently wrote that "if there is a doubt that a civilian object has lost its protective status, the attacker must assume that it is protected".

He noted that "the burden of demonstrating that this protective status is lost rests with those who fire the gun, the missile, or the rocket in question".

This is a tough task, but it is the task we set ourselves to avoid the horrors and suffering of past conflicts—the call democracies must be able to answer. Human rights and international humanitarian law are not à la carte. We do not get to choose which we like and which we do not, and in which context they apply. ...

col 520 **Lord Anderson of Swansea (Labour):** ... We have been complacent in imagining that the Abraham accords would lead to a new era and have ignored the cauldron of misery among the Palestinian people. Can anything positive emerge from the shock on Israel?

What is clearly true is that Hamas has the intent of destroying Israel. It has said it would attack Israel again and again, and it is hardly surprising that Israel looks now to Hamas, sees that it has that intention and tries to ensure that it does not have the resources to carry it out. That is the reality facing Israel. Clearly, it demands not unconditional support for Israel but recognition of its dilemma, and that it acts in a proportionate way—however we define that. The shock provides a possible opportunity for peace. ...

col 522 **Lord Dobbs (Conservative):** ... I wonder why it seems that those who shout most aggressively about inclusion spend so much of their time trying to exclude others ...

And in respect of Jews, of course—right now, especially Jews—it is free speech, I suppose,

although when it promotes violence, hatred and bloodshed, it is not free at all. It is the costliest speech imaginable. ...

col/ 525 Lord Browne of Ladyton (Labour): ... My honourable friend Rachel Reeves, speaking yesterday, rightly stated: “The way to stop this killing and the way to save lives is for the international community to come together” and for pressure to be applied to Hamas to secure the release of Israeli hostages. She also exhorted Israel to show restraint in imperilling the lives of innocent civilians. ...

Israel must be allowed to defeat Hamas and recover its hostages but, as politicians of all stripes in the UK, as well as the US Secretary of State, have made clear, that should not be interpreted as a licence for disproportionate, retaliatory violence against Palestinian civilians. ...

col/ 526 Lord Leigh of Hurley (Conservative): ... My Lords, shortly before the fateful day of 7 October, I had just read Jonathan Freedland’s book *The Escape Artist* about the one person who managed to escape successfully from Auschwitz, and I had just started the outstanding book by my noble friend Lord Finkelstein entitled *Hitler, Stalin, Mum and Dad*. Both works tell remarkable stories about a minuscule number of exceptionally brave and strong people who managed to escape the horrors of the Holocaust physically, if not mentally. Of course, 6 million Jews did not survive, and the Jewish people swore: never again. Nearly all the world, and certainly the western world, agreed that the Jewish people should be granted the right to live in a very small part of the land that some of them had called home for some 2,000 years.

The history is relevant ... to the recurrent war in the Middle East in order to understand that Israel is not prepared to take any chances against a group that declares it wants to exterminate its citizens. Those who chant “From the river to the sea”, as they are doing right now outside our House, should know that every time they chant that particular chant they stiffen the resolve of the Jewish people to ensure that the wish that that chant expresses of wiping out the Jewish state will not be allowed to take place, whatever the cost. While many who marched last weekend did so with a simplistic desire to stop pain and suffering, it is clear, as video clips testified, that some did not, calling for “Death to the Jews” and “Hitler was right”.

The conflict is most unlikely to end with a ceasefire as Hamas has made clear, through the likes of Khalil al-Hayya, that the goal of the war was not to improve life in Gaza for its inhabitants but to turn the state of war with Israel into a permanent one. Iran wants borderless open war against Israel to annihilate Israel. It may actually be that Hamas launched its atrocities against Israel without Iran’s support, as Iran would rather have waited until such time as it became a nuclear state. ...

col/ 527 The existential threat that Israel faces requires it to eliminate Hamas as best it can. Of course, warfare cannot defeat an ideology, but it can neutralise it, if only for a while, and it can certainly neutralise its ability to commit the genocide that it seeks. So the heart-breaking pictures of innocents in Gaza killed because Hamas used them as human shields will haunt us, but we must remember that the IDF is recognised by British military experts as one of the most humane armies in the world. Every single attack is carefully considered and warnings, even as localised as specific telephone calls, mark them out as undertaking a campaign unlike any other ever undertaken anywhere in the world’s history, to try to mitigate civilian casualties.

It is now clear that Hamas stores weapons in tunnels right underneath Gaza’s al-Rantisi hospital and others—in tunnels most probably built in part by aid given to Gaza in good faith by countries such as our own and stolen by Hamas for its leaders’ benefit. ...

I am afraid I do not believe that the two-state solution will happen in our lifetime. Rather, a more innovative structure may be required whereby Palestinians have control over nearly all aspects of their lives, but not security or defence—rather like in this country, where the devolved nations do not have their own military. ...

We are rightly offering humanitarian help to Gazan citizens. British military personnel have outstanding skills in medical rehab for combat casualties, as I saw for myself at a Royal Marines fundraiser that I was honoured to attend last week. They are ready and able to assist Israeli soldiers injured in combat. Will my noble friend Lord Minto respond to this request?

Secondly, we need to be at the centre of the plan to rebuild Gaza. We should be talking to the Arab countries—and others who are understandably and correctly expressing sympathy for those Palestinians who are caught up in this conflict—about a reconstruction fund of some \$100 billion, ideally with grants available to every citizen of Gaza to rebuild their lives, free from Hamas and Iran. Israel has created a booming economy next door to Gaza, and it can be done in Gaza under a different leadership. ...

col 531 Lord Palmer of Childs Hill (Liberal Democrat): ... it is worth starting my remarks by reminding the House ... of the brutal murder of men, women and children by Hamas on 7 October—1,400 innocents murdered by Hamas death squads. There were 226 partygoers going for a gig with music who were killed while enjoying life; 240 Israelis were taken hostage, and we can only pray that they will live.

Israel retaliated. Did anyone, including Hamas, think it would be otherwise? At the same time, and still to this day, Hamas and Islamic Jihad are firing rockets at Israel, and Israel's border towns have been evacuated in the north and south. But, very sadly, the retaliation has resulted in far too many deaths and injuries, and a lack of fuel, water and food for the poor people of Gaza. A real humanitarian problem has arisen out of this conflict, not unconnected to the Hamas policy of using the people of Gaza as human shields. There is a need for a pause in hostilities to lead to a return of Israeli hostages, a ceasefire and increased humanitarian relief.

We never know what to believe. You see all these stories coming out, and you are never sure what it is. There was a picture of people fleeing from hospitals in northern Gaza and being shot down. Logic shows that Israel wanted them to flee to southern Gaza. The only people who did not want them to flee were Hamas, so logic says, "Who shot them?". ...

Yesterday IDF troops took control of Gaza City's al-Rantisi hospital, and discovered and showed a weapons trove in the basement, including suicide vests, grenades, AK47 assault rifles, explosive devices and RPGs. ... Now troops surround Gaza City's al-Shifa hospital, and I understand that today they have entered the compound. What will they find in its basements and tunnels beneath the site? ...

We want a ceasefire, but an interim thing that I hope we could all agree on is that there should be a cessation of aerial bombardment, be it rockets from Hamas and Islamic Jihad or aerial bombardment from Israel—because aerial bombardment is the most unfeeling sort of war that there is, with no contact.

col 532 Moving on, we urgently need an international consensus around a plan for a post-Hamas Gaza. ... I invite noble Lords to agree that Hamas cannot be able to rule Gaza either politically or militarily. That is Israel's aim... It has to be a Palestinian Government to secure legitimacy in Gaza and the West Bank, and in this we need the support of Arab states. ...

Lord Stevens of Birmingham (Crossbench): ... For those of us ... who have now seen the sickening video footage shot by the Hamas terrorists themselves, it is tragically obvious that there can be no enduring peace until Hamas is decisively militarily removed from Gaza. Only once that has been achieved will massive reconstruction and support be possible ...

However, in the meantime, as Timothy Garton Ash has put it in a different context, I think today's debate is really reminding us that "European countries need to abandon the post-Wall illusion that peace can be secured entirely by nonmilitary means". ...

col 533 The Lord Bishop of Chelmsford: ... The terrorist actions of Hamas on 7 October must be condemned ... and Israel's right to self-defence must be affirmed. We must also

continue to affirm that this right needs to be exercised in adherence with the principles of international humanitarian law. The violation of international humanitarian law by both sides is shocking and will, I fear, have repercussions beyond the confines of this war, as will the killing of more than 100 UN aid workers, the highest number in the UN's history. Does the Minister agree that, notwithstanding Israel's right to self-defence, the scale of the suffering inflicted on civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including churches and other places of worship, is wrong? Israel's actions are neither proportionate nor discriminate, and do little to advance the cause of peace. ...

col 536 Lord Sharkey (Liberal Democrat): ... My Lords, I join other noble Lords in supporting Israel's absolute right to defend itself and condemning the barbaric atrocities of the terrorist organisation Hamas. I echo Mr Blinken in saying that it matters greatly how Israel defends itself. International law must be respected. ...

col 542 Lord Vaizey of Didcot (Conservative): ... I want to begin briefly by putting on record my strong support for Israel following the start of the Israel-Gaza conflict. It is my unequivocal view that Israel has been subject to the most horrific terrorist attack that we have seen perhaps since 9/11, with the death of 1,400 innocent Israeli citizens. I do not want to play some macabre game about who has suffered worst from terrorist attacks, but this is probably the worst terrorist attack the world has seen for quite some time. My mother is Jewish, although I was brought up as an Anglican, and I have distant relatives who live in Israel, who I was lucky to meet just over a decade ago when I went to Israel as a Minister. In fact, they lived on Kibbutz Be'eri, and one of them had to hide for 12 hours but luckily survived, so this feels very close to home.

I feel very strongly that Israel has the right to defend herself and that the siren calls for a ceasefire are utterly misleading. Peace is a long way away; I would not say that we should not strive for it, but we should not use British influence to try to help it along the way. One thing I have felt even more strongly about than I thought I ever would is watching what is happening on our own shores and the isolation of the Jewish community in this country. Never have I felt more strongly that Israel has a right to exist and that it is an absolute necessity that it exists. ...

col 543 Lord Triesman (Labour): ... I would guess that there are few United Kingdom Jewish families without relatives who are caught up in the unfolding tragedy in Israel and Gaza, and I am no exception to that. The solidarity across this House in the face of the events and the growth, which is absolutely manifest, in domestic anti-Semitism, the unity that we have and the way in which it has been expressed, have been inspiring and I am deeply grateful for that, just as I am grateful when the same comments are made about Islamophobia and our need to deal with it.

Hamas has created this catastrophe, assisted by Iran and Russia—but it created it, and the impact of the barbaric terrorist attack on 7 October, in which fellow British citizens were killed, just as there are fellow British citizens abducted as hostages. We want them back. The problem cannot be overstated. About 1,200 to 1,400 babies, children, families and old folk were butchered, overwhelmingly on the grounds that they were Jews. ... On the day, they burned people alive, dismembered them and filmed them in their agony—and some of us, sadly, have seen those films.

col 544 To understand the scale of the shock that there has been to the community which I come from—I know numbers tell only part of the story—on 9 November 1938, almost an anniversary, the Kristallnacht pogrom took 91 Jewish lives. On 7 October, it was 13 times worse, and if you pro rata it, well over 100 times worse. ... I am not going to pretend to your Lordships' House that I feel a lot of personal fear—I do not pretend that I do—but I tell you now that I will not let my daughter go into central London on her own, although it is her home town, because I fear for her.

That, of course, is just the start of the horror that Hamas has caused, and we have to be able to hold two contrasting thoughts in our heads at once, although it is not always easy: this

is not a monochrome tragedy. The babies and civilians in Gaza are also lives taken— invaluable lives and futures destroyed—and when anybody uses the words “human shields”, they do well to remember that the word “human” is at the beginning of that phrase. Hamas is monstrous, but those who are rightly battling to free the 240 hostages have to remember that the shields are human. They have not chosen to be shields, they are not simply collateral damage and they need fuel, water, food and medicines delivered consistently through humanitarian pauses and safe routes. It is quite right that Israel should try to defang Hamas. ... It is also right to defang the settlers on the West Bank who are so intent on not allowing Palestinian communities to develop their own political institutions. ... We need to grasp that political discussions must involve people with at least a basic view, which Hamas will never be able to accept, I know, and will never discuss in the form of a peace treaty—but then nor will Mr Netanyahu. ...

col 548 Lord Hussain (Liberal Democrat): ... I strongly believe that there is no military solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict. The current situation in Gaza and Israel requires an immediate ceasefire to address the humanitarian catastrophe. ... A ceasefire should not be the end goal in itself but a chance to end the violence, ensure unfettered humanitarian assistance, get the hostages released and begin the process for a new political reality for Palestine. ...

col 549 Lord Mann (Non-affiliated): Liel Hetzroni was 12 years old. She and her twin brother were murdered. Her grandfather was slaughtered. It took 38 days to identify her remains. A family torn apart, perhaps irretrievably. No burial was possible, so horrific was this murder, so a funeral took place where her toys were buried. Twelve years old—and there are hostages much younger enslaved today. ...

col 550 I will ... be bringing forward new opportunities for us, the parliamentarians, to stand up for and alongside our Jewish communities. We will not abandon them and leave them alone; nor will we accept any anti-Muslim racism in our country for our people. One country, many communities, protecting and protected against hatred. The time will come, we hope and pray, with every hostage released and Hamas destroyed, when we have the opportunity—no, the obligation—to create a lasting stability of economic prosperity and thereby peace.

Our Arab friends in different states will be there in different but critical ways. It will need an Israeli leadership and a Palestinian leadership with vision, wisdom and courage. ...

Our Muslim communities have been abused, demeaned and vilified. Our Jewish communities, already traumatised by the incomprehensible nature of the murder of their family and friends, now fear a cacophony of hatred. Let us say: we have your backs; we will not be bystanders. The only question for our two Houses of Parliament is how overwhelming and permanent that solidarity will be. ...

col 552 Lord Stone of Blackheath (Non-affiliated): ... There is a need, first, for hope and respect for Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. We need to arrive at a position where the nations of the world, including the United Kingdom, are ready to acknowledge and recognise the state of Palestine alongside Israel.

Secondly, we should agree to create a long-term plan for those two nations, Palestine and Israel, to enjoy a future where everyone benefits. ...

Also, it has been suggested that, since Mount Sinai is sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians, we could invite leaders from all faiths to walk slowly up the mount from different directions and meet at the top, and they could declare that they all worship one God. Then, the area around could become a peace park, with hotels and wonderful venues for vacations, meditation, co-operation, conversation and exchanges of love and wisdom. ...

col 553 Baroness Mobarik (Conservative): ... The Prime Minister spoke about “realism” and “values”, about the UK’s ability to “promote peace and security”, and of this being “a moment for moral clarity”.

These words give a glimmer of hope, of intent, to help resolve what is a truly bleak situation.

Around 1,400 have been killed in Israel and more than 11,000 in Gaza, two-thirds of them women and children. Indeed, if there is no moral clarity now then we are surely doomed. It is a time like no other to reflect on our values: our belief in the sanctity of human life, protecting the innocent, the right to justice, the right to self-determination, and adherence to international humanitarian law, because adherence to the law cannot be compromised for the sake of convenience or for fear of censure. ...

col 555 **Lord Campbell-Savours (Labour):** ... Netanyahu and the settlement movement have alienated world opinion and undermined worldwide support for the Jewish homeland, and policies of repression in Gaza and the land grab in the West Bank, while assisting the settler movement, have been disastrous. They have shattered the Oslo process, thereby breeding the worst forms of anti-Semitism.

So where do we go from here? I find it hard to condemn Israel, but there has to be urgent change. Post-conflict Gaza and the West Bank need to be internationally re-recognised by all as the new Palestinian state. Palestine should be given full protectorate status under a renewed United Nations mandate, the legal definition of which is defined as a state under protection by another state for defence against aggression and other violations of law.

The new state should be free of all Israeli jurisdiction and occupation. An administrative power should be appointed under a process administered by the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, perhaps very similar to the arrangements under the 1945 Berlin declaration, with defined geographic areas for individual national responsibility. The boundaries should be as advised under the Geneva accords, with the creation of a limited number of agreed settlements. However, with the murder of 1,300 innocent Israeli citizens and the consequential brutal assault on Gaza, regional tensions are likely to remain high and Israel will need further security guarantees. Gaza will require a protective wall that blocks the import of weaponry. This wall should be provided under the proposed UN mandate.

The answer to this crisis is not to further restrict the Palestinians, which is current Israeli policy. Gaza and the West Bank, united under a single administrative authority, should be physically linked by a security-fenced roadway to allow the free flow of people and goods under strict security control. It could be modelled on the Berlin corridor. Yes, that is controversial, but I am afraid that we need compromise and new thinking all round. ...

col 557 **Baroness Foster of Oxtou (Conservative):** ... It has been 40 days since one of the worst atrocities since World War II took place, carried out by Hamas terrorists on Israeli soil. Yet within 48 hours the sophisticated propaganda machine run from Iran—that bastion of human rights, according to the UN—had managed to put the blame on Israel. Those 1,400 men, women and children massacred and the 240 hostages—some British, by the way—are rarely mentioned in the media and elsewhere. The focus is solely on Gaza, the home of 100,000 Hamas terrorists, where women and children are used as human shields and where billions of pounds in aid has been siphoned off to buy weapons and luxury for those who supposedly lead them, right under the noses of the UN, the EU, Governments and agencies which have turned a blind eye.

Terrorism is a cancer which spreads if untreated. Let us recall the IRA. ... But while the IRA tried to bomb us into oblivion, the slow creep of Islamic extremism was on the rise. ... the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood went unchecked. A once peaceful religion was being slowly hijacked by ideology.

The modus operandi of these death cults is to destroy Jews, infidels and anyone who stands in their path. ...

col 558 These are not always peaceful protests, whatever the naive or the apologists may say. For too many outside tonight, this is not about being pro-Palestine. They are anti-Israel and anti-Jewish and have been whipped up by Islamic extremists calling for jihad. One of them is even an NHS GP from London, who is apparently in charge of Hizb ut-Tahrir, HT, which is apparently not a terrorist group. There are activists from some mosques who are clerics spouting death and destruction. It is out there, and it is on the

record. This is brainwashing children and leaving so many decent people afraid to speak out.

The public have lost confidence in the authorities, and political correctness has stifled debate. Multi-culturalism has become a myth, and it will fail if one or two sections of society refuse to integrate and insist on imposing an ideology on everyone else. This is a holy war, when all decent people of all religions and none need to come together, stand up, speak out and be counted. Appeasement is not an option. Why is the IRGC not a proscribed terrorist group when it is Iran that pulls the strings? ...

Israel is fighting for her very existence, and our Jewish friends and neighbours are fighting just to live in peace. This is a battle we cannot lose—otherwise, we are all lost. ...

Lord Lee of Trafford (Liberal Democrat): ... To understand Israeli reaction to the vile and barbaric 7 October attack by Hamas, we have to multiply the numbers killed and taken hostage by seven—the differential in our respective populations. How would we react if we lost 8,500 killed and 1,700 taken hostage? ...

col 559 Israel called up reservists ... and launched an attack to eliminate Hamas once and for all. But we must ask whether this can realistically be achieved. Having spent years constructing a vast network of tunnels, unquestionably using funds meant for Palestinian welfare, it is well prepared and dug in, certainly below schools, mosques and hospitals. Key Hamas leaders are living abroad, and many fighters will have dispersed into the wider population. Yes, Israel will massively degrade Hamas and destroy much weaponry and infrastructure, but I fear it will live on, augmented by new revengeful recruits following Israel's military actions, with its ideology of destroying Israel continuing.

However, I have to say that I am appalled at the scale and ferocity of Israeli bombing and shelling. In war there is always collateral damage, of course, but 10,000-plus targets in a densely populated territory the size of the Isle of Wight has wrought sickening bloodshed and destruction, and has probably, sadly, killed some hostages as well.

Israel has cut off to the wider population food, water, medical supplies and fuel that could have been delivered safely by the UN or similar. Hamas will surely have stockpiled in tunnels. Had Israel been clever, she would have increased such supplies and certainly guaranteed them in relation to an agreed release of hostages ...

I believe a ceasefire is now a must for three reasons: first, to negotiate and as a condition for the release of all hostages; secondly, to avoid further loss of innocent lives; and, thirdly, to avoid giving Hezbollah cause to significantly enter the conflict, an action that would certainly bring about severe Israeli fatalities and destruction. ...

col 561 **Lord Marlesford (Conservative):** ... The parent and political wing of Hamas, and many other Islamist terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda, is the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood was formed in Egypt in 1928 ... Hamas was founded in 1988. When it was founded, it was described in its constitution as the military arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. ...

Political Islam, which is the hijacking of the ideology of the noble religion of Islam, is a major threat to world security and peace. ... Political Islam seeks a worldwide caliphate under sharia law: a theocracy without national borders. Thus, like any theocratic state, it is the antithesis of democracy, because it does not provide for a change of government by election. ...

col 563 **Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws (Labour):** ... The world was revolted by 7 October, but it is also horrified by what it is seeing daily on its screens happening to the children and civilians of Gaza. Children do not start wars and babies do not support Hamas. It is an interesting fact that almost half the population of Gaza was not around when Hamas was voted for all those years ago. So we should not be dancing on pins; we should be calling for an immediate ceasefire. ...

The other matter is one of distinction. The principle of distinction means you have to distinguish between military objectives and civilians, but that is not happening ... if one

party does not adhere to the rule of law—and clearly Hamas has not—it is not a green light to the other side to ignore the laws of armed conflict. ...

We have limited universal jurisdiction in this country, because it applies only to citizens or residents. That means we would not be able to arrest Hamas people if they arrived at Heathrow Airport, such as the man who suggested from Lebanon that it was possible to repeat and repeat the events of 7 October and that in fact Hamas should extinguish the “Jewish entity”, as he called it. ... So I am calling on the Government to amend their legislation, when they get the opportunity with the Criminal Justice Bill, to remove those limits. ...

col 564 Lord Walney (Crossbench): ... there is a huge danger for the UK and the West to be myopic in their focus when they talk about the need to follow international law and blame Israel for the situation, when it is of course Hamas that has embedded itself in hospitals, deliberately targets civilians, deprives its citizens of fuel so that it can fuel its rockets and tries to manipulate the international media, with the help of Iran, through disinformation on a scale that all too often gets through. Too often our focus is on Israel alone. ...

col 572 Lord Winston (Labour): ... my direct ancestor, Joseph ben Ephraim Karo ... was a great sage. He was brilliantly educated, speaking Arabic, of course, as well as Hebrew. He eventually landed up in northern Israel, in a place called Safed. There he founded a community which eventually grew to 14,000 people, nearly all of them Jewish. There were 18 seminaries there and Muslims came and sat at his feet, because they had a very close relationship. They came mostly from what is now Syria and Lebanon. Now, in the north of Israel, Hezbollah shoots its missiles, and my great nephew is watching out and holding guard.

In many of Lord Sacks’s speeches—I can count 19—in this House, he talks about the central moral principles of Judaism, and he emphasises the Pikuach nefesh, the notion of the sanctity of human life, the idea that we are made in the image of God. It has been hard for me to talk in this debate. I have to say that I am bewildered by doubt, haunted and deeply dismayed by what is happening.

I am not fighting this war, and I know from experience—I go to Israel very frequently professionally—that the IDF has high moral principles which we all share. There have of course been calls during this debate and elsewhere for a ceasefire. That might be for the best, but none of us here in this Chamber is a general fighting this war, and unless we have the detail of what is actually happening, I do not think we are in a position to judge; we are not on the front line and we do not fear for ourselves. We have to accept that we are dealing with a completely unprincipled enemy that has done what it has done repeatedly for years, ever since Israel left Gaza and after many so-called negotiated ceasefires, which have been repeatedly broken.

We can judge things only by reported news, and I regret that the media has frequently been highly irresponsible, to say the least, in its reports. The suffering is of course utterly appalling, and we shed tears over it, but it is also newsworthy to report atrocity, even when the facts are unclear, and even when we are certain: Gazan citizens are used as—forgive me, not as a shield, that is too kind a word; they are expendable. That is the truth of the matter.

One important result of this war, like nearly all wars, is the corruption of truth. ... As the Talmud says, it is like murder. It is not the murder just of one person, the person who is being lied about, but also of the person who promotes that lie and the people who listen to it—so a minimum of three people are effectively dead, according to Talmudic teaching, as a result of falsehoods made of lies and libels. ... Sadly, the media has published many falsehoods and, I think, made it very difficult to judge what is happening. ...

col 573 Lord Singh of Wimbledon (Crossbench): ... We are all moved by the suffering of the hapless people of Gaza ... Astonishingly, we and the United States, in our refusal

to call for a ceasefire, give our tacit approval to Israel in its collective punishment of the people of Gaza for the sins of Hamas. Why? United States President Biden put it succinctly: “Israel is an important ally”. ...

col 583 Lord Collins of Highbury (Labour): ... I have talked before in the Chamber about the horrors that Hamas committed. I have not seen the films, but I have spoken to the families of people affected. Not only do they have the horror of knowing that their relatives are hostages, but those relatives have had their families murdered, and that has to be at the top of our mind when we consider this issue.

We all have to be determined to hold those people who committed these horrors to account. They cannot be allowed to get away with it. However, we also have to consider the impact in Gaza. We have heard that more than 11,000 Palestinians have reportedly been killed, and every one of those lives mattered. ... neither should we forget the UN workers and humanitarian workers who have suffered the same fate. These deaths are shocking and cannot be ignored. ...

I hope that tonight the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, will confirm very clearly that the UK Government recognise the ICC’s jurisdiction to address the conduct of all parties in Gaza. Previous Prime Ministers have put that in doubt.

Gazans need aid now—medicine, water and fuel. A full, comprehensive and immediate humanitarian pause in the fighting across the whole of Gaza is now necessary to alleviate Palestinian suffering and for Hamas terrorists to release the hostages. ... Hamas’s stated aim is to wipe Israel off the map, it committed the most brutal attack on Jews since the Holocaust, and now it is using innocent Palestinians as human shields. ...

col 584 The reality is that neither the long-term security of Israel nor long-term justice for Palestine can be delivered by bombs and bullets. We must seek a path to a political process that leads to two states: a secure Israel and an independent Palestine. ...

col 588 The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon): ... I am an eternal optimist about our incredible country. If we had not seen the success of cohesion, I would not be standing before your Lordships today—a Muslim Minister for the Middle East would not be reporting to a Prime Minister of the Hindu faith. These are times for celebration, notwithstanding our challenges. That is a reflection of our cohesion, our welcoming nature as a country and our sense of equality of opportunity. We all share those values and should strive for them. ...

col 589 I will talk about the abhorrent terrorist attacks committed by Hamas against Israel and its international citizens. When I met with Mansour Abbas, who is the leader of one of the Israeli Arab parties, he said to me, “Minister, they were international citizens but they were also Israeli citizens—who are Arabs, who are Muslim, who are Christian”. That is the rich diversity of the state of Israel—21% of its population is non-Jewish. So, yes, we should also recognise the importance of all communities that constitute the modern, diverse Israel. ...

col 590 Maybe one silver lining in this extremely dark cloud over the Middle East is that the world is seized of this issue right now and we should make it count. ... The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Chelmsford talked about getting aid through. We are doing that; we have stood up aid, but it is important that it is consistent and that is why we are also looking at opening up other routes. We are talking directly to the Israelis about Kerem Shalom, for example. There are six lanes there. In Rafah, there is one lane. The maths is obvious ... We need to condemn unequivocally the abhorrent attacks. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2023-11-15/debates/89F2D3E4-7E20-4D4A-8CC5-E4FE3553AFA5/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

Prime Minister's Questions

Neale Hanvey (Alba): Last week, Members from across the House heard testimony from a young Israeli man who lost both his peace-campaigning parents in the 7 October attack. This morning, we heard from Palestinians who have lost generations of families in the south of Gaza because of the military attacks there. This is a question of humanity and morality. The Prime Minister has an opportunity to lead the calls for peace, or to endorse death, violence and destruction. Which will he choose?

The Prime Minister: I think that is an extremely naive and simplistic way of looking at the problem. The hon. Member failed to mention the fact that a proscribed terrorist organisation perpetrated an awful attack on over 1,000 individuals. Israel has every right to defend itself in those circumstances. People in that country would expect nothing less than for it to provide security for its citizens. Of course, alongside that, it must abide by international law. We will do everything we can, as I have said, to ensure that aid flows in and alleviates the suffering of the people in Gaza.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-15/debates/6CECE414-DF89-4647-96C6-7C6F1050FC2E/Engagements#contribution-1B4D8641-EB43-47AE-A9F2-236712A29DD9>

Desmond Swayne (Conservative) [900083] If a two-state solution is to have a chance, Hamas must be defeated, but there will also first have to be a more enlightened policy of administration in the occupied west bank, mustn't there?

The Prime Minister: ... The UK's long-standing position on the middle east peace process is very clear: we support a negotiated settlement, leading to a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state in Gaza and the west bank. I spoke about this on Monday. Both Israelis and Palestinians have a right to live in peace and security. The longer-term governance of Gaza and security needs to be looked at in the round. It is something that I have discussed repeatedly with President Abbas. We agree with the United States that Gaza should ultimately be under the control of the Palestinian Authority. We will continue to support President Abbas and his people to get to that outcome.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-15/debates/6CECE414-DF89-4647-96C6-7C6F1050FC2E/Engagements#contribution-A04B0073-61EF-4862-94DD-3959B9B999D3>

Dawn Butler (Labour) [900080] I thank the Prime Minister for meeting my constituent Noam. It has been 40 days since his mum, Ada Sagi, was kidnapped by Hamas on 7 October. We all condemn Hamas's actions and fight for the return of all hostages. Noam wants the language of love to be louder than the language of hate. Some 11,000 Palestinians have been killed, more than 4,000 of them children. International law is important. Does the Prime Minister agree that we can support Israel but also call out breaches of international law?

The Prime Minister: I have been consistent from the start that while Israel has a right to defend itself, it is important that it complies with international law. It is a point I have made in every meeting or phone conversation I have had with Prime Minister Netanyahu. It was a privilege to meet the hon. Lady's constituents and to hear of the pain they are going through, which I have enormous sympathy for. That is why we are doing everything we can to bring hostages home. We are engaged intensively in diplomatic activity in the region and working to get foreign nationals and British nationals home, and I am pleased to say that well over 200 have now left Gaza. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure that everyone can safely leave who needs to.

House of Commons Written Answers

Gaza: British Nationals Abroad

Stephen Morgan (Labour) [428] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of British citizens in Gaza.

David Rutley: The safety of all British nationals continues to be our utmost priority. We are using all the tools available to us to maximise our chances of bringing British nationals back home to their loved ones. The Foreign Secretary will work with his Israeli counterparts along with international partners to establish a safe passage for more British nationals out of Gaza, following the opening of the Rafah Crossing. We are not commenting on numbers of British citizens within Gaza in order to protect ongoing operations.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/428>

Visas: Gaza

Caroline Nokes (Conservative) [190] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department is taking steps to help support British citizens fleeing the conflict in Gaza to obtain visas for family members to travel with them to the UK.

Robert Jenrick: The UK Government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that it is able to respond appropriately. Flights were initially facilitated to help British citizens wanting to leave Israel.

British citizens and their foreign national dependants (spouse, unmarried/civil partner, child under 18), may come to the UK provided they have valid travel documents and existing permission to enter or remain in the UK; or are non-visa nationals.

Individuals who do not meet these criteria should apply for a visa to enable them to enter the UK in the normal way.

UKVI is working closely with the FCDO in supporting family members of British nationals evacuated from Gaza who require a visa, signposting the necessary steps and expediting appointments at the Visa Application Centre.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/190>

Refugees: Palestinians

Caroline Nokes (Conservative) [191] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she is taking steps to help ensure there are effective routes for refugee family reunion in the UK for Palestinian refugees seeking to join family members in the UK.

Robert Jenrick: The Government's refugee family reunion policy provides a safe and legal route to bring families together. This route allows for family reunion applications from recognised refugees who have protection status in the UK.

The UK has a proud history of supporting refugees. Since 2015, we have offered a safe and legal route to over half a million people seeking safety in the UK. The UK continues to welcome refugees through our existing resettlement schemes which include the global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Community Sponsorship, the Mandate Resettlement Scheme and the family reunion route.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/191>

Hamas: Hostage Taking

Dan Carden (Labour) [423] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help secure the safe release of hostages in Gaza.

David Rutley: The Government's thoughts are with those families who are facing unimaginable uncertainty and fear because of Hamas' despicable attacks and kidnappings. This is a fast-moving situation and we do not comment on individual cases. The safety of all British nationals continues to be our utmost priority and we continue to do everything we can to secure the release of hostages, including working with Israeli counterparts and international partners to ensure British nationals in Gaza can leave safely.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/423>

Ismail Haniyeh

Andrew Rosindell (Conservative) [97] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what information his Department holds on the role of Ismail Haniyeh in supporting Hamas terrorist activity from Qatar.

David Rutley: It is the longstanding policy of successive British Governments that we do not comment on intelligence matters. The UK Government closely follows the security situation in the Middle East and maintains a regular dialogue with international counterparts.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/97>

Gaza: Disasters Emergency Committee

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [305] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Disasters Emergency Committee on the potential of establishing an appeal for Gaza.

David Rutley: The UK remains committed to mitigating the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. We are working closely with our international partners on ensuring humanitarian aid reaches the people who need it most. We are engaged with the Disasters Emergency Committee on their plans for launching appeals. The UK has committed to a further £30 million in humanitarian assistance that will be distributed among trusted partners.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/305>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Israel: Palestinians

Andrew Western (Labour) [642] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to help ensure that Palestinian civilians can secure safe passage out of Gaza.

Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

Andrew Western (Labour) [643] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to help facilitate the opening of an international humanitarian corridor in Gaza.

David Rutley: Our focus is on securing safe and unimpeded humanitarian access and the UK is leading calls for humanitarian pauses and for the opening of the Kerem Shalom crossing to facilitate delivery of critical humanitarian aid. The UK Government is at the forefront of the global efforts to help Palestinian people access the vital support they need and has committed an additional £30 million of aid for the Occupied Palestinian Territories to help provide essential relief items such as food, water and shelter. This funding will allow key UN agencies and trusted partners to provide essential relief items and services.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/642>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/643>

Gaza: Israel

Dan Carden (Labour) [419] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on restoring the supply of (a) food, (b) water, (c) fuel and (d) medicines to Gaza.

David Rutley: In conversations with their counterparts the Prime Minister and former Foreign Secretary have been clear: whilst we support Israel's legitimate right to defend itself, and we are aware of Israel's concerns about the stockpiling of aid by Hamas terrorists, that does not negate the need for aid to urgently get to those who do need it in Gaza. The Prime Minister has been very clear about the need for unimpeded and safe humanitarian access for lifesaving aid, so it reaches civilians. We are urging Israel to open other border crossings, such as Kerem Shalom, to enable more humanitarian aid to reach civilians in need and we will support humanitarian pauses where they help aid to enter. The UK remains committed to mitigating the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and we continue to call for International Humanitarian Law to be respected, while standing alongside the people of Israel against the terrorist group Hamas.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/419>

Israeli Settlements: Crimes of Violence

Kerry McCarthy (Labour) [99] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will raise the matter of settler violence in the South Hebron Hills with the Israeli Government.

Leo Docherty: Our position is clear: we strongly condemn any incidence of violence against settlers by Palestinians. Reports of Palestinian civilians being murdered by settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are appalling. Israel must take tangible steps to grip settler violence, and to hold those responsible accountable. The Prime Minister and the former Foreign Secretary have raised this with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Cohen, and we have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. As the Prime Minister said, we stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people, who are also victims of Hamas. We continue to urge all sides not to take steps which would inflame tensions and move us away from the cause of peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/99>

House of Commons Library Briefing

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Parliamentary reading list (2020 – 2023)

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9873/CBP-9873.pdf>

United Nations

Adopting Resolution 2712 (2023), Security Council Calls for 'Urgent and Extended' Humanitarian Pauses in Gaza, Immediate Release of Hostages

... the Security Council adopted resolution 2712 (2023) by a vote of 12 in favour to none against, with 3 abstentions (Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States), by which it called for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors through the Gaza Strip to facilitate the provision of essential goods and services.

Further to the text, the Council called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas and other groups, especially children, and urged the parties to refrain from depriving the civilians in Gaza of life-saving services and humanitarian assistance. ...

Vanessa Frazier (Malta), presenting the draft resolution, said that the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza, ever since the horrific terror attacks of 7 October, is deeply troubling. On that day, children were killed and taken hostage. Since then, more than 4,600 are reported to have been killed in Gaza, and some 1,500 are deemed missing. Many are likely trapped beneath the rubble. The lives of newborn and premature babies at Al-Shifa Hospital are in grave and imminent danger. More than 1 million people are displaced, and more than half are children.

The draft resolution aims to ensure respite from the current nightmare in Gaza and give hope to the families of all victims, she said. It focuses on the plight of children trapped and of those being held hostage. ... It provides for the establishment of urgent humanitarian pauses and corridors throughout the Gaza Strip for “a sufficient number” of days. Such measures would facilitate the continuous and unhindered provision of essential goods and services, which are important to the well-being of civilians, especially children.

Its passage also would enable urgent rescue and recovery efforts, including for missing children in damaged and destroyed buildings, and the medical evacuation of sick or injured children and their caregivers, she said. ...

Lana Zaki Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) ... said since the start of the conflict the Council has been unable to produce anything that would alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza and that outside the UN building it looks indifferent to this suffering. Today, the Council has an opportunity to begin changing that perception ... It can come together for the Palestinian children and other Palestinians sheltering, the Israeli children and other Israelis still hostage, and UN and humanitarian workers trying to alleviate suffering on the ground. ...

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (United States) ... said the world has watched with understandable frustration and increasing concern as the Security Council has been unable to speak out on this pressing matter of international peace and security. ... she is horrified that a few Council members still cannot bring themselves to condemn the barbaric terrorist attack that Hamas carried out against Israel on 7 October. “What are they afraid of?” she asked. “Let’s be crystal clear: Hamas set this conflict in motion.”

The United States could not vote yes on a text that did not condemn Hamas or reaffirm the rights of all Member States to protect their citizens from terrorist attacks and will continue to urge the Council to condemn Hamas’ actions. However, the United States did support many of the important provisions, she said, pointing out it is the first adopted text that mentions Hamas. ...

Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom) said that it is “right” that the Council is calling for a humanitarian pause for a period of days long enough to get life-saving aid to those who need it. “This will save lives,” she stressed. For its part, the United Kingdom has doubled its aid to help civilians in Gaza. All parties must give civilians the protection that is their right under international law. This includes respecting the sanctity of hospitals. She welcomed the resolution’s call for the immediate and unconditional release of Israeli hostages. “It is unconscionable that Hamas continues to hold men, women and children, causing terrible fear and suffering for their families,” she said. ...

Nicolas De Rivière (France) said his country supported the resolution because the humanitarian situation in Gaza is “already catastrophic”. ... However, he regretted that several essential messages are not included in the resolution. The Council must continue to work to achieve a broader expression, including condemnation of the Hamas attack, the recall of Israel’s right to defend itself and its population with absolute respect of international humanitarian law, a call for an immediate and lasting truce that could lead to a ceasefire, as well as a call for avoiding regional spillover. ...

Pascale Baeriswyl (Switzerland) said that this first step by the Council comes belatedly. She emphasized the plight of the victims affected by the Hamas terrorist attacks, highlighting the tragic loss of thousands of civilians in Israel and throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 7 October. Switzerland recognizes Israel's right to ensure its defence and security. "We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages," she said. Their captivity in Gaza in appalling conditions for more than a month is unjustifiable, as were the acts of terror and indiscriminate attacks perpetrated by Hamas against Israeli civilians since 7 October. ...

Mr. Nebenzya (Russian Federation) said ... Without supplies of fuel and in the next few hours, according to estimates by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Gaza will be without any communication, without Internet and completely isolated from the outside world. Meanwhile, the Israeli army is storming the Al-Shifa Hospital. "We're hearing worrisome reports about executions of medical personnel," he said. Humanitarian pauses are not and cannot be a replacement for a ceasefire, or even a truce. ...

Ms. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates) ... [said] Where Hamas is not operating, Palestinians are also losing their lives on land internationally recognized as part of their future State. During the past 40 days, almost 200 Palestinians have been killed in the occupied West Bank due to settler violence and raids. This must stop and Israel must hold accountable those responsible.

She said Member States now need to use this resolution. Her country will receive 1,000 Palestinian children and their families for medical treatment, with the first group hopefully arriving this week. It hopes to establish an emergency field hospital in the Gaza Strip. ...

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, said that the Security Council should have called for a ceasefire a long time ago. "Gaza bleeds. Death, devastation, destruction everywhere. No one was spared," he said. ... he emphasized the killing by Israel of 11,000 Palestinians, including 5,000 children; indiscriminate attacks; assaults on hospitals and schools; killing of United Nations staff, journalists and doctors; as well as the racist Israeli propaganda methods.

Operative paragraph 1 of the text demands all parties to comply with international law, he said, asking whether Israel has ever been held accountable for continuously committing crimes against the Palestinian people and dismissing decades of calls for respecting the law. ... The bombings and incursions must stop now. Humanitarian aid must come in now. Fuel must come in. Stressing that millions of lives hang in the balance, he added: "This madness must be brought to an end." ...

Stop the killing, stop the forced displacement, allow humanitarian aid in and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, he urged. These should not be words in a resolution, but a reality on the ground. He went on to warn against allowing Israel's narrative — which justifies killing of Palestinians without accountability — to dominate. "There is an alternative reality in which Palestinians are free and no Palestinian and no Israeli is killed. It is time for it to prevail. It is time for peace," he concluded.

Brett Jonathan Miller (Israel) commended the Council for calling for an immediate release of the 239 hostages. However, the resolution will sadly "fall on deaf ears" when it comes to Hamas. On 7 October, Hamas terrorists launched a barbaric invasion into Israel, murdering, raping, and brutalizing innocent civilians. Since then, the Council has convened on the matter almost 10 times and still has not succeeded in condemning Hamas' 7 October massacre. Today's resolution focuses solely on the humanitarian situation in Gaza. "It makes no mention of what led up to this moment," he said. Hamas has made it clear that given the chance, it will commit its atrocities again. "They have shown the world that the genocidal rhetoric is not hyperbole, but an oath to annihilate Israel by any means," he said.

"This is not about retaliation, or revenge for Hamas' violence, it is Israel upholding the right to self-defence, ensuring that such horrors are never repeated," he emphasized. ... Israel

has already implemented humanitarian pauses during which Gazan civilians can temporarily evacuate the active war zone. Hamas, on the other hand, murders Gazans as they try to evacuate. Israel has approved the entry of nearly 1,400 trucks with thousands of tons worth of aid. Meanwhile, Hamas is holding food, fuel, and medical supplies for its terror machine.

Yesterday, Israel supplied neonatal incubators and medical supplies to Al-Shifa Hospital, he said. Just two days ago, Israel handed over 300 litres of fuel to Al-Shifa Hospital. Hamas prevented the hospital staff from accepting it. Hamas' goal is to intensify and deteriorate the humanitarian situation in Gaza to broadcast Palestinian hardship to the world, and by doing so, exploit this very body to tie Israel's hands. Bringing the hostages home is Israel's top priority. Israel will continue to do whatever it takes to accomplish this goal. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15496.doc.htm>

Resolution 2712 (2023), referred to above, is not yet available online.

UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

United Nations Security Council Resolution on the situation in Gaza puts children first

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, Mrs. Virginia Gamba welcomed today's adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 2712 (2023) addressing the humanitarian situation in Gaza. This adoption sends a critical message to parties to the conflict, namely Israel, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad reminding them about their obligation under international humanitarian law, particularly when it comes to the protection of children. ...

'I welcome the child-centered approach of this United Nations Security Council Resolution, which is critical in a heavily populated area like Gaza where almost half of the population is under 18 years old. As we know, children are disproportionately impacted by war. Children do not start armed conflict and we must protect them. All parties to conflict must respect their international obligations, even in times of war,' said the Special Representative.

Children and their protection should be everyone's concern. Over the past six weeks, children have been abducted, killed, and maimed daily, while hospitals and schools have been attacked rendering them useless for the purpose for which they were built. "The situation in Gaza is horrific and children have suffered from death, injury, and denial of humanitarian assistance and access; abducted children are also held in Gaza, while hospitals and schools are being destroyed. These are all grave violations in the children and armed conflict agenda. This situation must stop now," added the Special Representative. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2023/11/united-nations-security-council-resolution-on-the-situation-in-gaza-puts-children-first/>

Resolution 2712 (2023), referred to above, is not yet available online.

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk briefs States on his visit to the Middle East

... Rarely have I heard such disturbing testimony about the catastrophic harm that ordinary

people have endured, and which continues to mount. And never in my career of working in many crisis situations around the world have I met such an outpouring of fear, anger and despair.

The people of Gaza, who for years have been profoundly impoverished behind barbed wire fences, are enduring bombardment by the Israeli Security Forces of an intensity rarely experienced in this century.

One in every 57 people living in the Gaza strip has been killed or wounded in the past five weeks, according to figures from the Gaza Ministry of Health. ...

In Israel, according to the authorities, 1,200 people, including many children, were killed in horrific attacks by Hamas and other armed groups on 7 and 8 October. 239 people, including children, were captured and taken to Gaza. And the nation has been thrown into shock.

It is apparent that on both sides, some view the killing of civilians as either acceptable collateral damage, or a deliberate and useful weapon of war. This is a humanitarian and human rights crisis. It represents a breakdown of the most basic respect for humane values. The killing of so many civilians cannot be dismissed as collateral damage. Not in a kibbutz. Not in a refugee camp. And not in a hospital.

As bombardment continues by air, intense urban warfare is also underway. In the very few hospitals that are still functioning, doctors operate on screaming children without anaesthetic, using mobile phones for light. ...

Many ordinary people have been forced to move south, seeking some kind of safety. They are carrying elderly family members, and terrified, sometimes wounded children, moving slowly on a bomb-cratered road. Others are unable to undertake the journey: hundreds of thousands of people – including many children, wounded, and people with disabilities – reportedly remain trapped in northern Gaza, where humanitarian access has become impossible.

The total depletion of fuel supplies is imminent, according to UNRWA, and it would be catastrophic across all of Gaza – leading to the complete collapse of water, sewage and crucial healthcare services, and ending the trickle of humanitarian assistance that has been permitted to date. Massive outbreaks of infectious disease, and hunger, seem inevitable.

Current proposals for a so-called 'safe zone' are untenable: the zone is neither safe nor feasible for the number of people in need. ...

No-one is above the law, and international humanitarian law is clear.

All parties to every conflict must, at all times, distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks directed at civilians or protected civilian objects – hospitals, schools, and the markets and bakeries that constitute a lifeline – are prohibited. Indiscriminate attacks – for example, aiming indiscriminate projectiles into southern Israel – are prohibited. Attacks where the likelihood of civilian death, and damage to protected objects, is disproportionate to the concrete and direct military advantage – as constantly risked by Israel's use of explosive weapons with wide-area effect in densely populated areas of Gaza – are also prohibited. Forced displacement is prohibited. The taking and holding of hostages is prohibited, as is any use of civilians to shield locations from military operations. Collective punishment – as in the case of Israel's blockade and siege imposed on Gaza – is prohibited. ...

And it must be clear that breaches of international humanitarian law – even war crimes – committed by one party do not, ever, absolve the other from compliance with the clear principles of the law of war. ...

The crisis extends well beyond Gaza. I am deeply concerned about the intensification of violence and severe discrimination against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In my view, this creates a potentially explosive situation ...

As I [warned](#) last Friday, settler attacks on Palestinians are increasing, and Israeli security forces have stepped up their use of military weaponry in law enforcement operations. ...

Today, among both Israelis and Palestinians, entirely separate narratives are building up, parallel to each other and with no connection between them. Profound historical traumas have been revived. ...

A vortex of disinformation and dehumanising rhetoric is tugging people away from reason and humanity, blocking the work of identifying and clearing the way out and forward.

We must not let rage submerge our moral compass. We must not lose our grip on reality to the myth that pain can be eradicated by unleashing it on a scapegoat. We must insist on the truth. And we must continue to insist on the humanity, and the value, of every life that is affected or destroyed in this fighting. ...

What kind of societies will emerge from this conflict? And where is the way out?

Israelis' freedom is inextricably bound up with Palestinians' freedom. Palestinians and Israelis are each others' only hope for peace. ...

Without genuine accountability, contested narratives cannot be resolved; and people will be unable to contemplate a shared, common future alongside each other. Accountability is the key to opening the possibility of a genuinely different reality. ...

Finally, it is clear that the Israeli occupation must end. It is essential to ensure the rights of Palestinians to self-determination and to their own State. And it is essential to acknowledge that Israel has a right to exist. ...

To read the full briefing see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/11/un-human-rights-chief-volker-turk-briefs-states-his-visit-middle>

Gaza: UN experts call on international community to prevent genocide against the Palestinian people

Grave violations committed by Israel against Palestinians in the aftermath of 7 October, particularly in Gaza, point to a genocide in the making, UN experts said today. They illustrated evidence of increasing genocidal incitement, overt intent to “destroy the Palestinian people under occupation”, loud calls for a ‘second Nakba’ in Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, and the use of powerful weaponry with inherently indiscriminate impacts, resulting in a colossal death toll and destruction of life-sustaining infrastructure.

“Many of us already raised the alarm about the risk of genocide in Gaza,” the experts said.

“We are deeply disturbed by the failure of governments to heed our call and to achieve an immediate ceasefire. We are also profoundly concerned about the support of certain governments for Israel's strategy of warfare against the besieged population of Gaza, and the failure of the international system to mobilise to prevent genocide,” they said. ...

“This occurs amidst Israel’s tightening of its 16-year unlawful blockade of Gaza, which has prevented people from escaping and left them without food, water, medicine and fuel for weeks now, despite international appeals to provide access for critical humanitarian aid. As we previously said, intentional starvation amounts to a war crime,” the experts said.

They noted that half of the civilian infrastructure in Gaza has been destroyed, including more than 40,000 housing units, as well as hospitals, schools, mosques, bakeries, water pipes, sewage and electricity networks, in a way that threatens to make the continuation of Palestinian life in Gaza impossible.

“The reality in Gaza, with its unbearable pain and trauma on the survivors, is a catastrophe of enormous proportions,” the experts said.

“Such egregious violations cannot be justified in the name of self-defense after attacks by Hamas on 7 October, which we have condemned in the strongest possible terms,” the experts said. “Israel remains the occupying power in the occupied Palestinian territory, which also includes the Gaza Strip, and therefore cannot wage a war against the population under its belligerent occupation,” they said.

“In order to be legitimate, Israel’s response must be strictly within the framework of international humanitarian law,” the UN experts said. “The presence of underground tunnels in parts of Gaza does not eliminate the civilian status of individuals and infrastructure that cannot be directly targeted nor suffer disproportionately,” they said. The experts also raised the alarm about the escalation of violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, by soldiers and armed settlers. ...

“We are deeply distressed at the failure of Israel to agree to – and the unwillingness of the international community to press more decisively for – an immediate ceasefire. ...

They also expressed alarm over discernibly genocidal and dehumanising rhetoric coming from senior Israeli government officials, as well as some professional groups and public figures, calling for the “total destruction”, and “erasure” of Gaza, the need to “finish them all” and force Palestinians from the West Bank and east Jerusalem into Jordan. The experts warned that Israel has demonstrated it has the military capacity to implement such criminal intentions. ...

“The international community has an obligation to prevent atrocity crimes, including genocide, and should immediately consider all diplomatic, political and economic measures to that end,” the experts said. ...

In the short-term, the experts reiterated their call to Israel and Hamas to implement an immediate ceasefire, and:

1. Allow unimpeded delivery of desperately needed humanitarian aid to the people in Gaza;
2. Ensure the unconditional, safe and secure release of the hostages taken by Hamas;
3. Ensure that Palestinians arbitrarily detained by Israel are released immediately;
4. Open humanitarian corridors toward the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Israel ...

They also recommended:

5. The deployment of an international protective presence in the occupied Palestinian territory under the supervision of the UN;
6. Collaboration of all parties with the Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court ...
7. Implement an arms embargo on all warring parties;
8. Address the underlying causes of the conflict by ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory. ...

“We remind Member States that what is at stake is not only the fate of Israelis and Palestinians, but a serious conflagration of the conflict in the region, leading to more human rights violations and suffering of innocent civilians,” they said.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/gaza-un-experts-call-international-community-prevent-genocide-against>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Oral Answer

Prime Minister’s Questions

David Davis (Conservative): In view of the events of the last six weeks, can the Prime Minister tell the House why the Government have not proscribed the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps?

The Prime Minister: This Government continue to take strong action against Iran while people in the UK and around the world are under threat from the regime. We

have sanctioned more than 350 Iranian individuals and entities, including the IRGC in its entirety. The National Security Act 2023 implements new measures to protect the British public, including new offences for espionage and foreign interference. While the Government keep the list of proscribed organisations under review, it is, as Members will be aware, a long-standing convention that we do not comment on whether a specific organisation is being considered for proscription.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-15/debates/6CECE414-DF89-4647-96C6-7C6F1050FC2E/Engagements#contribution-0ACD2BA0-3252-4D97-BD71-0C9693B7265F>

House of Commons Written Answers

Antisemitism

Nicola Richards (Conservative) [1271] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the European Union on rising levels of anti-Semitism.

Leo Docherty: Antisemitism has no place in our or any society. The UK Government is committed to international cooperation to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust. Lord Pickles, the UK's Special Envoy for post-Holocaust issues, visited Warsaw in October to engage with civil society, historical institutions and the Jewish community on post-Holocaust issues. The UK Government has engaged closely with counterparts in the EU institutions and Member States following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October, including as part of a meeting between the Prime Minister and Commission President von der Leyen on 2 November.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-09/1271>

Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief

George Eustice (Conservative) [150] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to establish the role of the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief on a permanent basis.

Andrew Mitchell: The Government is committed to the role of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for FoRB and has had three Special Envoys to date.

The current Special Envoy, Fiona Bruce MP, is a passionate advocate for FoRB, and this year was re-elected to serve a second term as the Chair of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance, a network of 42 countries committed to protecting and promoting FoRB.

Defending FoRB for all is a longstanding priority for the UK Government. We shall continue to stand up for the rights of all individuals, and use our position at the UN Human Rights Council, and on the UN Security Council, to ensure violations and abuses of FoRB are highlighted and addressed.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/150>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

European Union agency for fundamental Rights (FRA)

Anti-Muslim hatred database now updated

The anti-Muslim hatred database will assist countries addressing the issue through the

collection of relevant data and evidence.

The database underpins efforts by FRA, and others across the EU, to gather the much-needed data that supports the development of lasting antiracism solutions. Consistent and coherent data collection across the EU, covering the experiences of all groups and communities that fall victim to various expressions of racism, forms the basis of effective policy responses.

This database provides information on international, European and national case law relating to anti-Muslim hatred. This includes the courts' reasoning, findings and considerations, as well as key facts for each case.

It covers incidents related to violence, property offences, incitement to violence or hatred, other forms of hate speech, discrimination and harassment.

In addition, the database has UN human rights body decisions, reports, and findings from human rights and equality bodies and organisations. Users can also access related research, reports, studies, data and statistics. ...

To read the full press release and access the database see

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2023/anti-muslim-hatred-database-now-updated>

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Recognizing and recording bias motives essential to counter hate crime and restore victims' trust, OSCE human rights office says

Launching its annual Hate Crime Report on today's International Day for Tolerance, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) emphasized the importance of identifying the underlying bias motives of hate crimes in order to diminish the impact on victims and assist their recovery.

"Hate crimes are especially harmful because they target victims simply for being who they are," said Matteo Mecacci, ODIHR Director. "Greater efforts are needed by the authorities to acknowledge the underlying bias and prosecute hate crimes accordingly. In this way, they are also publicly recognizing the impact of such crimes on victims and increasing their confidence in the criminal justice system."

When hate crimes are investigated and prosecuted as such, victims and their communities receive a clear message that their efforts to report hate-motivated attacks are not in vain and that the criminal justice system will provide redress for the harm caused. Without effective prosecution and investigation of hate crime cases, targeted groups are left to address the impact of hate on the community, undermining trust in the authorities and, as a result, potentially causing wider social instability.

While ODIHR's new hate crime report indicates increased efforts by police to record hate crimes, it also identifies ongoing challenges in effectively prosecuting and sentencing them as bias-motivated crimes. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/558006>

2022 Hate Crime Data

<https://hatecrime.osce.org/hate-crime-data?year=2022>

TOP

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>

**** The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) and Persons Subject to Immigration Control (Housing Authority Accommodation and Homelessness) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/1142/note/made>

**** The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2023**

<https://senedd.wales/media/3gegvezxn/sub-ld16131-e.pdf>

amendment as made

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2023/1211/contents/made>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

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

Scottish Parliament

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

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 tomorrow**

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 tomorrow**

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>

**** Super-complaints: eligible entity criteria and procedural requirements** (closing date 11 January 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/super-complaints-eligible-entity-criteria-and-procedural-requirements>

**** Strategic Equality Plan 2024 to 2028: proposed principles of approach and objectives [Welsh Government]** (closing date 12 February 2024)

<https://www.gov.wales/strategic-equality-plan-2024-2028-proposed-principles-approach-and-objectives>

TOP

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