



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

## Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

## Home Affairs

*See also Commons written answer 168 “Muslim Brotherhood” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.*

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Business of the House

*col 791 Penny Mordaunt (Conservative):* ... It is a gift that every one of us in this place can raise issues in debates via amendments and other devices. As a Member and as Leader of the House, I will always defend that right, but it does not absolve us from thinking through the consequences of one course of action over another. The debate last night showed the House, including its two main parties and the bulk of Members, united in its support for Israel’s duty to protect her people, an end to suffering for all civilians and a long-term peaceful solution.

Since the vote last night, I know some Members have come under increased stress. No matter which way people voted, it will have been a considered decision. No matter whether people agree with them or not, it is their duty to exercise their own judgment. Today, all Members should think about what they can do to defuse such threats made against our colleagues in this place.

I thank Mr Speaker for his care in ensuring we can go about our business and do our duties. I thank the families of those held hostage by Hamas for their time coming into Parliament this week to talk to parliamentarians. I know I speak for all here when I say that we will do all in our power to bring them home. ...

*col 796 Michael Ellis (Conservative):* Can we have a debate on the failure of the Metropolitan police to investigate an openly terrorist-supporting Socialist Workers party pamphlet, which has been reported on in several newspapers, entitled “Palestine: Resistance, Revolution and the Struggle for Hamas”? It has been on sale during the protest marches every weekend in London, and it includes the line: “we unconditionally support Hamas when it is engaged in military or non-military struggles against Israel.”

This poison has been on sale for weeks, including, I am told, right outside this House, in Parliament Square. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the police should act under section 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000?

**Penny Mordaunt:** I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for raising this important matter—it is extremely disturbing to hear that. He will know that the police chiefs have our total backing in using the full extent of the law to crack down on any criminality, and what he describes sounds like it falls into that category. The police have powers to arrest those who belong to or glorify terrorist groups such as Hamas under the Terrorism Act 2000 and anyone who incites racial hatred under the Public Order Act 1986, and we support them in using those powers. I am afraid that the Socialist Workers are rentagobs who show up to all kinds of protests, spouting all kinds of hate, and deserve a closer look. ...

*col 798* **Christian Wakeford (Labour):** On 26 October in a point of order, I named Zaher Birawi and Muhammad Qassem Sawalha as Hamas operatives living in London. Since then, further Hamas operatives such as Majed Khalil al-Zeer and Ziad El Aloul have come to light as British nationals with links to Hamas, a terrorist organisation. Given the national security implications, can we have an urgent statement in Government time on what the Home Office is doing about Hamas operatives here in Britain?

**Penny Mordaunt:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising this matter, which I know is a concern for many Members across the House. We have given the police new and updated powers, and we will continue to look at what further support they can be given to tackle this appalling situation. There can be absolutely no tolerance for anyone who facilitates or supports terrorism—that is very clear, and I think that view is shared on all sides of this House, even if some Members sometimes find it hard to articulate it. ...

*col 799* **Tobias Ellwood (Conservative):** As we saw in yesterday's King's Speech debate, some views on the Gaza conflict are becoming dangerously oversimplified and binary—someone is either in favour of a ceasefire, or they are in favour of the war continuing. That is not just misleading, it is also provocative. Will the Government utilise a statement or hold a debate to confirm Britain's position on supporting a humanitarian pause—a position that was adopted by United Nations Security Council resolution 2712 last night?

**Penny Mordaunt:** I thank my right hon. Friend for raising that issue. He has great experience in this area. He is right, and I think the view was expressed well last night that in calling for a ceasefire, what people have been asking is for Israel to deviate from its duty to protect its citizens and defend itself. If Israel puts down its arms, it ceases to exist. That is the situation now, and only the end of Hamas, or whatever might try to take their place, and a long-term solution that guarantees peace, will enable it to do that. That is very important. We have a proud track record of protecting international humanitarian law and protecting citizens. We monitor closely what goes on not just with this situation but with others, including the attention to detail and care that Israel is taking in ensuring that it is the right side of that line. My right hon. Friend will know that on recent operations, the Israeli Defence Forces will have had humanitarian and medical professionals embedded in its forces to ensure that that happens. I repeat what I said at the start of this question: whatever hon. Members decide to do in this place, based on their conscience, they should be allowed to do it. We can all take care of each other in this place when hon. Members, inevitably and sadly, come under threat for doing so.

*col 800* **Afzal Khan (Labour):** November marks Islamophobia Awareness Month, which is a time for everyone committed to equality and anti-racism to reiterate their position on Islamophobia, and their dedication to stamping out that hate. It has now been five years since the all-party group on British Muslims published its definition of Islamophobia, which was backed by community groups, academics, political parties, trade unions, and many councils. It is four years since the Government committed to developing an official definition, and one year since they decided that tackling hatred against Muslims is not important and abandoned that plan. Given that Islamophobia is up by 600% since October,

will the Leader of the House urge the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to come to the House and give a statement on his work on tackling Islamophobia?

**Penny Mordaunt:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising that important point. I will certainly write to the Secretary of State, and to other Secretaries of State who will have an interest, to ensure that they have heard what he said. I recently visited Birmingham to show support to the Jewish community there in the wake of some of the attacks that they were having to endure. I was struck by the fact that the local Muslim community had come over to the Hebrew centre to show support, to condemn Hamas, and to stand with the Jewish community in the wake of those attacks. When I inquired why they had done that, they told me that as well as being the right thing to do, in the wake of 9/11, when the Muslim community had come under attack and been associated—wrongly—with those terrorist atrocities, the Jewish community came and stood between them and an angry mob, to protect them. What is often lost in the recent scenes we have seen is the decades of quiet work between different faith communities who all believe in the same God. ...

*col 801* **Bob Blackman (Conservative):** Yesterday, more than 60 Members of this House and the other place met under the auspices of the all-party Britain-Israel parliamentary group and witnessed the video of the true atrocities committed by Hamas on 7 October. Rarely have I seen Members of this House and the other place so silent and so horrified. In contrast, overnight the Israel Defence Forces have facilitated the media to enter the Al-Shifa Hospital, the Rantisi children's hospital and the Nasser Hospital, all of which have been demonstrated to be command and control centres and weapons centres. At the children's hospital, there is clear evidence that hostages were kept there by Hamas and have subsequently been moved. That is in direct contrast to what many people have seen in the media across the world from those people who support Hamas.

May we have a statement from the Government, probably from a Foreign Office Minister in this place, on exactly what is happening in terms of progress in liberating Gaza from Hamas and the attempts being made by the IDF to minimise civilian casualties as this terrible war continues?

*col 802* **Penny Mordaunt:** I thank my hon. Friend for raising this important point. He is correct that it is now clear that hospitals and other civilian places have been used by Hamas. That is not news: a 2015 report by Amnesty International alleges that the Shifa Hospital has served as a Hamas interrogation and torture centre for some time. To reassure the House, Members will know that the Israel Defence Forces are doing a huge amount and taking great care with regard to civilian lives, as they do the very difficult job of clearing these areas out and trying to destroy Hamas and their network. The IDF transferred incubators, baby food and additional medical supplies to hospital compounds, and on Sunday they opened up additional humanitarian corridors from various hospitals for civilians and patients to evacuate—on foot if they could, or via ambulance—to the south.

The Israeli-operated humanitarian corridors have reportedly been used by approximately a quarter of a million Palestinians. Today, I understand that Israel is facilitating the provision of fuel to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency to enable the delivery of aid into Gaza. Its job is made harder by the operations of Hamas—I think that, in terms of getting people out, a third of the names on the list provided by Hamas to Egypt and Israel were known Hamas terrorists, leading to delays in civilians getting the medical attention they require. This is an incredibly difficult situation, and I urge all hon. Members to be kept informed and up to date about what is happening on the ground. ...

*col 807* **Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... In an October attack in Tunisia, a non-functioning synagogue was set on fire and seriously damaged during a protest. Police did not stop the attack. Various attacks in the Russian North Caucasus have left local Jewish communities

afraid for their safety. There has been no word, or no response, from the Russian Government on those attacks. Will the Leader of the House join me in condemning the rising tide of antisemitism resulting from the Israel-Hamas war, and will she ask the relevant Minister from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to call for proper governmental responses to antisemitism in the regions that I have mentioned?

**Penny Mordaunt:** ... I will make sure that the new Foreign Secretary has heard what the hon. Gentleman says and understands his keen interest in this area. It is incumbent on all of us to recognise and tackle antisemitism, which has been around for a long time but is now on the rise. We need to combat it, and we need to ensure that communities, wherever they are in the UK or around the world, feel able to go about their business in safety and security, and feel able to wear symbols of their faith without fear as they live their daily lives. It is our first duty to ensure that, particularly in the United Kingdom ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-11-16/debates/32DA81E3-3292-4F08-9DD8-1C9CF1D40CB2/BusinessOfTheHouse>

*The Point of Order referred to above can be read at*

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-10-26/debates/22ECC056-E236-41BA-95D5-84411C5098FF/PointsOfOrder#contribution-CB1E5C76-FB16-4EDC-B4C1-B16D4B6EE1A3>

*The UN Security Council resolution referred to above can be read at*

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2712\(2023\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2712(2023))

*The Amnesty International report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/MDE2116432015ENGLISH.pdf>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Community Assets and Religious Buildings: Security

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [1570] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department has taken to provide additional resources to police forces to support target hardening measures at (a) community spaces and (b) places of worship.

**Tom Tugendhat:** This Government is committed to making our streets and communities safer.

On 31 January, the Government confirmed a total police funding settlement of up to £17.2 billion in 2023/24, an increase of up to £313.8 million when compared to 2022/23. As part of this, funding for Counter Terrorism Policing was set at over £1 billion and covers a range of activity, including in relation to protective security.

In addition, the Police and Crime Commissioners have been allocated £42 million through the latest fifth round of the Safer Streets Fund to support interventions that will make our streets safer. This includes funding for target hardening measures in public spaces – such as CCTV, street lighting and alley-gating – as well as improved home security measures for properties at risk of (repeat) burglary.

There are also freely available resources to local forces, along with local authorities and businesses, through the ProtectUK platform and from the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA).

On top of this police funding, the Home Office is providing up to £46 million to protect faith communities in 2023/24. This includes £18 million through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, £24.5 million through the new Protective Security for Mosques scheme and a scheme for Muslim faith schools, and £3.5 million for the places of worship of other (non-Muslim and non-Jewish) faiths.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/1570>

*The Protect UK website, referred to above, can be read at*

<https://www.protectuk.police.uk/>

The website of the National Protective Security Authority, referred to above, can be read at <https://www.npsa.gov.uk/>

Information about the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant can be read at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-ramps-up-security-measures-to-protect-jewish-communities>

and

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

Information about the Protective Security Mosques and Places of Worship Schemes referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

Information about the scheme for Muslim faith schools, referred to above, is not available online.

### **Antisemitism**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [1571] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of recent statistics from Community Security Trust on the levels of antisemitism incidents since 7 October 2023; and what steps he is taking to help protect the safety of the Jewish community.

**Tom Tugendhat:** The Government utterly condemns the abhorrent spike in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hate crime that has been seen as a result of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict.

This Government is committed to protecting the right of individuals to freely practise their religion at their chosen place of worship, and to making our streets and communities safer. The Government and police regularly review potential threats to ensure that everything is done to protect communities from hate crime.

Earlier this year, the Home Secretary established the Jewish Community Crime, Policing and Security Taskforce. This group brings together Government, law enforcement and the UK Jewish community (represented by the Community Security Trust (CST)) to discuss issues of safety and security concern to the community, and what can be done to ensure instances of antisemitism are comprehensively investigated and prosecuted.

We are continuing to support the police to ensure they have the resources and tools required to tackle any incidents relating to the ongoing conflict. Where people incite racial or religious hatred or where people's conduct is threatening, abusive or disorderly and causes harassment, alarm or distress to others, we expect the police to take action to ensure perpetrators can be brought to justice.

In March 2023, the Home Secretary announced the continuation of the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant (JCPSG) and increased funding for 2023/24 by £1 million, to a total of £15 million. The JCPSG provides protective security measures (such as guarding, CCTV and alarm systems) at Jewish schools and other Jewish community sites. The Grant is managed on behalf of the Home Office by CST.

In response to the conflict and reports of increased incidents of antisemitism in the UK, the Prime Minister has announced additional funding of £3 million for CST to provide additional security at Jewish schools, synagogues and other Jewish Community sites. This brings the total funding for CST in FY2023/24 to £18 million. We continue to work closely with CST on how best to respond to live incidents that affect the Jewish communities in the UK.

More broadly, the Government continues to fund True Vision, an online hate crime



reporting portal, designed so that victims of hate crime do not have to visit a police station to report. We also continue to fund the National Online Hate Crime Hub, a central capability designed to support individual local police forces in dealing with online hate crime. The Hub provides expert advice to police forces to support them in investigating these offences.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/1571>

The CST statistics referred to above can be read in the variously dated “Antisemitic Incidents Updates” at

<https://cst.org.uk/>

The announcements referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-ramps-up-security-measures-to-protect-jewish-communities>

and

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

The True Vision website, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.report-it.org.uk/>

### **Universities: Antisemitism**

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [1334] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on which universities have not ratified the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism.

**Robert Halfon:** As of 13 October 2023, the Office for Students’ (OfS) list of higher education providers that have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism stands at 245 providers in England. This includes the vast majority of universities. The OfS’s list of providers is based on publicly available information and confirmation of adoption from providers. The latest list can be accessed at:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-wellbeing-and-protection/prevent-and-address-harassment-and-sexual-misconduct/tackling-antisemitism/>

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-10/1334>

### **Universities: Antisemitism and Islamophobia**

**Dan Jarvis (Labour)** [1569] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of provisions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of (a) Jewish and (b) Muslim students on university campuses.

**Robert Halfon:** It has been deeply concerning to see the rises both in antisemitism and in Islamophobia since the 7 October terrorist attacks against Israel. Universities should be welcoming and inclusive environments. Higher education providers have a responsibility to take a zero-tolerance approach to any form of racial or religious harassment. They have clear responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 to adopt robust policies and procedures that enable them to investigate and swiftly address reports of racism.

Given the particularly severe impact on Jewish students, the Secretary of State and I wrote to all schools, colleges and universities, urging them to respond swiftly to hate-related incidents and actively reassure Jewish students that that they can study without fear of harassment or intimidation. On 5 November we published a five-point plan detailing further action to protect Jewish students in higher education, the details of the plan can be found here:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/11/05/how-were-protecting-jewish-students-on-university-campuses/>

The department continues to engage both with Jewish and with Muslim groups, including the Union of Jewish Students and Tell MAMA, and actively monitors incidents affecting both communities. The department also welcomes the guidance produced by Universities UK, which focuses on tackling Islamophobia:

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/tackling-islamophobia-and-anti-muslim>

The department has reminded providers of their obligations under the Prevent duty, where they should be working to prevent people from being drawn into or supporting terrorism. Department officials have assessed evidence of antisemitism and racial hatred linked to incidents at English universities. There is an online "Reporting Extremism" form where members of the public can raise concerns to the Department directly. Where concerns arise, officials have reached out to relevant universities to understand what actions they have taken, including reporting issues to the police where appropriate.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/1569>

*The letter referred to above can be read at*

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

*The reporting form referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>

### **Demonstrations: Flags**

**Matt Vickers (Conservative)** [975] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with police forces on preventing the use of flags of extremist organisations at protests.

**Chris Philp:** The management of protests is an operational matter for the police, who are independent of government.

The Home Office remains in regular contact with the police to ensure that they are fully supported in tackling unlawful behaviour at protests.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-08/975>

### **BBC: Political Impartiality**

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [1337] To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has had recent discussions with the Director General of the BBC on impartiality in its coverage of the Israel and Gaza conflict.

**John Whittingdale:** The BBC has a duty to provide accurate and impartial news and information. That is particularly important when it comes to coverage of highly sensitive events. The BBC's accuracy and impartiality is critical to viewer trust.

The events in Israel since 7 October are terrorist acts committed by a terrorist organisation, proscribed in the United Kingdom since 2021 and designated as such by many other governments and international organisations.

The BBC is editorially and operationally independent and decisions around its editorial policies and guidelines are therefore a matter for the BBC.

However, calling these acts what they are, and accurately labelling the perpetrators, helps audiences to understand what has happened, is happening and its context.

That is why the Secretary of State has communicated with the BBC, and with the public, her disappointment that the BBC has refused to describe Hamas as terrorists, or the atrocities it has carried out as terrorism. The Secretary of State made that point to the BBC on multiple occasions since the terrorist attacks on 7 October.

As the external independent regulator of the BBC, Ofcom is responsible for ensuring BBC coverage is duly impartial and accurate under the Broadcasting Code and BBC Charter. Ofcom has been clear that responsibility lies with the BBC to decide

the vocabulary it uses to describe unfolding events. The Broadcasting Code does not prevent broadcasters referring to terrorist organisations, nor does it prevent them referring to Hamas as terrorists.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-10/1337>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Family Hubs: Religion and Voluntary Organisations

**The Lord Bishop of Durham** [HL27] To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are offering to local authorities to help them partner with (1) voluntary, and (2) faith, organisations in the implementation of Family Hubs.

**Baroness Barran:** The department recognises the importance of both voluntary organisations and faith group partners to the family hub model. Both have a vital role in supporting families to improve the reach and impact of the family hub offer, particularly for those seldom heard parents and families. The department has set the expectation in its family hubs guidance that local authorities partner with voluntary and faith organisations as part of their family hub model. Family hubs bring together resources, expertise, and assets to provide an integrated offer to support families and respond to the needs of the community. The family hubs guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-hubs-and-start-for-life-programme-local-authority-guide>

All local authorities who are part of the Family Hubs Start for Life programme have the support of a Regional Delivery Lead and a Regional Delivery Expert Advisor to work with them on the transformation of family support services to family hubs.

All local authorities have received funding to allow their family support services to transition to the family hub model. This could include the co-location of services for families in family hubs, making it easier for families to access services. Family hubs should also connect families to the relevant voluntary and faith sector support provided in their communities. In the developed family hub model, there should be a strategy to grow and support voluntary and faith sector organisations to work towards shared outcomes in the family hub network.

The department's delivery partner, the National Centre for Family Hubs, is working with all local authorities across England, spreading best practice through conferences, events, online modules and case studies. The National Centre will publish a toolkit module, as well as offering coaching and/or one to one support on how to engage with and make high quality partnerships with voluntary and faith organisations. The department welcomes the continued participation and contribution of faith sector organisations to these channels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/hl27>

## CST

### Antisemitic Incidents – 15 November Update

In the 40 days inclusive between the Hamas terror attack on Israel (Saturday 7 October) and Wednesday 15 November, CST recorded at least 1324 antisemitic incidents across the UK. ... For comparison, CST recorded 217 antisemitic incidents over the same 40 days in 2022. This means that we have seen an increase in anti-Jewish hate acts of 510% this year compared to the same period last year. ...

The 1324 antisemitic incidents recorded over this forty-day period fall into the following categories:



- 64 Assaults
- 92 Damage & Desecration to Jewish property
- 120 direct Threats
- 1045 Abusive Behaviour, including verbal abuse, graffiti on non-Jewish property, hate mail and online abuse
- 3 instances of mass-produced antisemitic Literature

CST has recorded 730 antisemitic incidents in Greater London; 262 in Greater Manchester; 44 in Hertfordshire; 36 in West Yorkshire; 26 in Scotland; 23 in Thames Valley; 19 in the West Midlands; 14 in Nottinghamshire; 14 in Sussex; 13 in Merseyside; and the remaining 143 incidents were spread across 32 different police regions around the UK. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/11/15/antisemitic-incidents-15-november-update>

TOP

## Israel

**See also Commons oral answers “Business of the House”, and written answers 1337 “BBC: Political Impartiality”, 1334 “Universities: Antisemitism”, 1571 “Antisemitism”, and 1569 “Universities: Antisemitism and Islamophobia” that are included in the Home Affairs section above, and Commons written answer 168 “Muslim Brotherhood” that is included in the Foreign Affairs section below.**

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Israel Defense Forces: British Nationals Abroad

**Kenny MacAskill (Alba)** [1760] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will ask his Israeli counterpart how many (a) UK citizens and (b) dual nationals are members of the Israeli Defence Force.

**James Heapey:** British dual nationals have the right to serve in the legitimately recognised armed forces of the country of their other nationality. We do not track the number of dual nationals that choose to take up this right, or UK citizens who travel against FCDO advice to enlist in the Israeli Defence Force.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/1760>

### Cyprus and Israel: Military Bases

**Kenny MacAskill (Alba)** [1736] To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether there are Israeli military personnel deployed on the British Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus.

**James Heapey:** No.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-13/1736>

### Israel: British Nationals Abroad

**Andrew Rosindell (Conservative)** [1064] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the number of British nationals that have requested consular assistance from the (a) British Embassy in Tel Aviv and (b) British Consulate General in Jerusalem since 7 October 2023.

**David Rutley:** We do not comment on the specific numbers of British citizens within Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) in order to protect ongoing operations in what is a fast-moving situation. The safety of all British nationals

continues to be our utmost priority and we are doing everything we can to support all British nationals in Israel and the OPTs and are working closely with Israeli counterparts and international partners.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-09/1064>

### **British Nationals Abroad: Gaza**

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [756] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to interview UK nationals returning from Gaza in the context of border checks.

**Robert Jenrick:** In the UK, the Immigration Rules require all arriving passengers to establish their eligibility for admission. To maintain a safe and secure border, a passenger's passport or national identity card is checked electronically and visually. We are confident that extra checks take place when necessary.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-08/756>

### **Gaza: Civilians**

**Geraint Davies (Independent)** [1288] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his Department's policy is on the evacuation from Gaza of (a) British citizens, (b) family members of British citizens and (c) people with UK visas who do not have (i) British citizenship and (ii) British family members.

**David Rutley:** We are focused on the safe evacuation of British Nationals from Gaza as quickly as possible, and over 150 British Nationals have left via the Rafah Border Crossing. 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. We are not commenting on exact numbers of British citizens within Gaza in order to protect ongoing operations. In conversations with their counterparts, the Prime Minister and former Foreign Secretary have reinforced the importance of ensuring that all foreign nationals are able to evacuate Gaza safely, as well as ensuring that humanitarian aid urgently reaches those who need it most in Gaza. We are continuing to raise this at the highest levels.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-10/1288>

### **Refugees: Palestinians**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [851] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support family reunions for Palestinians in the UK who have relatives in Gaza.

**Robert Jenrick:** The UK Government is monitoring the situation in Israel and Gaza closely to ensure that it is able to respond appropriately.

British citizens and those with settled status in the UK, together with their foreign national dependants may come to the UK provided that they have valid travel documents, and existing permission to enter or remain in the UK; or are non-visa nationals. They must also pass appropriate security checks.

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/2023-11-08/851>

### Visas: Israel and Palestinians

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [853] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will lift visa fees for (a) Palestinian and (b) Israeli family reunions.

**Robert Jenrick:** Applicants outside of the UK wishing to apply to join or accompany a British national; or a person present and settled in the UK, with a view to residing in the UK, may apply for a fee waiver if they consider they cannot afford the fee.

There is no fee attached to applications submitted under Appendix Family Reunion to the immigration rules.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-08/853>

### Visas: Palestinians

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [850] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of creating medical visas for people unable to access healthcare in Gaza.

**Robert Jenrick:** There are no plans to change the rules around medical treatment for visitors.

Since Hamas' terrorist attack against Israel on 7 October the UK has committed £30 million in additional aid. The aid will respond to critical food, water, healthcare, shelter and protection needs for those affected by this crisis.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-08/850>

### Gaza: International Assistance

**Andrew Western (Labour)** [1281] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to appoint a Special Coordinator for international aid to Gaza.

**David Rutley:** The UK is committed to easing the desperate and deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Gaza, while standing alongside the people of Israel against the terrorist group Hamas and supporting Israel's right to defend itself. Our support includes a £30m humanitarian aid package as well as intensive diplomatic efforts led by the Prime Minister, the former Foreign Secretary and the Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, to prevent regional escalation. At present, humanitarian access into Gaza is limited to the Rafah check point from Egypt. Between 1 and 2 November, Lord Ahmad visited the region where he advocated for immediate humanitarian pauses to help aid reach Gaza and for British nationals to leave Gaza. He also stressed the importance of preventing regional escalation and outlined steps towards a political resolution which provides justice and security to both Israelis and Palestinians.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-09/1281>

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

### Gaza: Israel

**Dan Carden (Labour)** [420] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help protect UN workers in Gaza.

**Dan Carden (Labour)** [421] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help protect journalists in Gaza.

**Dan Carden (Labour)** [422] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to help protect (a) medical and (b) humanitarian workers in Gaza.

**David Rutley:** The safety of humanitarian personnel, healthcare workers and journalists in Gaza is critical to enable aid to reach those who need it most. We strongly condemn all forms of violence and incitement to violence directed towards

humanitarian personnel, healthcare workers and journalists and we have been consistently clear that everything must be done to protect lives. The Prime Minister and former Foreign Secretary have raised directly with their regional counterparts that it is vital that all possible measures are taken to uphold International Humanitarian Law.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/420>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/421>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/422>

*The following three questions all received the same answer*

#### **Gaza: Humanitarian Aid**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [854]** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps is he taking to support the humanitarian effort in Gaza.

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [855]** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for the Royal Navy to support the humanitarian response in Gaza.

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [856]** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Armed Forces have the capability to supply Gaza with desalinated water.

**James Heapey:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) is coordinating the UK's humanitarian response to deliver lifesaving assistance through trusted partners, including the UN, to the people who need it in Gaza.

The Ministry of Defence has provided military support when needed to facilitate the FCDO's response. As of 13 November, three RAF flights have delivered a total of 51 tonnes of aid to Egypt. The shipments contained lifesaving items, including water purification equipment.

Royal Navy assets are in the region, and have the ability to support the humanitarian effort when the opportunity arises. We continue to monitor the situation and consider what further assistance Defence could contribute to the UK and international efforts to ease the humanitarian crisis.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-08/854>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-08/855>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-08/856>

#### **Gaza: Humanitarian Aid**

**Andrew Western (Labour) [1280]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing his Department's humanitarian funding to Gaza.

**David Rutley:** The UK remains committed to respond to the humanitarian situation in Gaza including both parties to respect International Humanitarian Law and minimise the impact on civilian casualties. Since 7 October, the UK Government has announced an additional £30 million of humanitarian aid to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and sent more than 51 tonnes of emergency relief. This funding will support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and other trusted partners to respond to critical food, water, health, shelter and protection needs in Gaza. The UK is continuously assessing needs and advocating for access routes to be established into Gaza, for sufficient levels of humanitarian assistance to flow into Gaza and for humanitarian pauses to allow aid to be distributed within Gaza.

There is a robust framework in place for allocating Official Development Assistance (ODA), in accordance with UK strategic priorities against a challenging financial

climate. Data on ODA spend in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is available on DevTracker and also in our Country Development Partnership Summary <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/countries/PS>

More than 80% of our ODA spend this year of UK support will be used to meet humanitarian need, or to provide vital health, education, and protection services for Palestinian Refugees.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-09/1280>

### **Hamas: Israel**

**Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op)** [1171] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts at the UN on the potential merits of calling for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas conflict.

**David Rutley:** The UK has consistently called for humanitarian pauses to create the space to ensure that there is unhindered humanitarian access for aid to be delivered and hostages to be released. Four hour pauses in northern Gaza are an important first step. Since the Hamas terrorist attacks on 7 October, the Prime Minister, former Foreign Secretary and Lord (Tariq) Ahmad as Minister of State for the Middle East, have spoken with counterparts from over 20 countries as part of extensive diplomatic efforts to sustain the prospect of peace and stability in the Middle East. As the Prime Minister has said, there is no scenario where Hamas can be allowed to control Gaza again. They are not partners for peace.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-09/1171>

### **West Bank**

**Emma Hardy (Labour)** [404] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the situation in the occupied West Bank territories; and whether he has had discussions with his regional counterparts on (a) supporting, (b) strengthening and (c) reforming the Palestinian Authority.

**David Rutley:** The Prime Minister, former Foreign Secretary and the Minister for the Middle East have engaged with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and partners across the Middle East on the conflict and have urged Israel to take meaningful action to support the Palestinian Authority. Our position is clear: Israel must not take action which would further undermine security and stability in the West Bank. The UK also recognises the importance of building the capability of Palestinian Institutions and we do provide significant technical assistance support on areas such as public financial management and security sector. Our support to the Palestinian Authority is extremely important in helping to lay the groundwork for a future Palestinian state and a lasting solution to the conflict in the region. Our policy on the Middle East Peace Process also remains clear: we support a negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees. We believe that negotiations will only succeed when they are conducted between Israelis and Palestinians, supported by the international community.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/404>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Andrew Western (Labour)** [1279] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with his Israeli counterpart on the military detention of Palestinian children.



**David Rutley:** Our focus right now is getting humanitarian aid into Gaza. The most recent assessment of the United Nations is that the entire population of Gaza, some 2.2 million people, need access to safe drinking water and food. Since 7 October, the UK Government has announced an additional £30 million of humanitarian funding and sent more than 51 tonnes of emergency relief for civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). This funding will support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and other trusted partners to respond to critical food, water, health, shelter and protection needs in Gaza. The Foreign Secretary will continue to engage regularly and closely with his Israeli counterparts to press for humanitarian access to ensure the delivery of aid in the volume needed. The UK position is also clear: all sides must abide by their international obligations and all sides must respect International Humanitarian Law. Both the Prime Minister and the former Foreign Secretary have, in their discussions with Israeli counterparts, emphasised the importance of taking all possible measures to protect civilians.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-09/1279>

## House of Commons Library Briefing

### **2023 Israel-Hamas conflict: UK and international response**

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

## Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

### **Middle East Minister visits Bahrain and Qatar for talks on crisis in Israel and Gaza**

Minister of State for the Middle East Lord Ahmad is travelling to Bahrain and Qatar for high-level talks on the crisis in Israel and Gaza. ...

He will set out the UK's commitment to securing sustained humanitarian pauses to allow the flow of significantly more life-saving aid into Gaza and to preventing the crisis from spreading across the region.

He will stress the UK's position that Israel has a right to defend itself but their actions must comply with international humanitarian law, and discuss ways to bring about long-term regional stability and a viable two-state solution. ...

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, United Nations and the Commonwealth said: Together with our partners in the Middle East, the UK is working to increase the amount of aid getting into Gaza and prevent the crisis from spreading across the West Bank and the wider region. This includes the conditions to allow for safe, unhindered and sustainable access of humanitarian aid.

I will also be discussing the prospects of a renewed effort towards delivering on the reality of a two-state solution which delivers peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/middle-east-minister-visits-bahrain-and-qatar-for-talks-on-crisis-in-israel-and-gaza>

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### **New initiatives for regional peace: Lord Ahmad statement at the IISS Manama Dialogue 2023**

... it is natural, given the scale of the attack that occurred on Israel on the 7th of October, the scale of the suffering of innocent Palestinian civilians in the weeks since – that we are still seeing today – that our focus is on this region; on Gaza; on the Occupied Palestinian

Territories; and the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.

This ongoing conflict is not only a disaster for the region, it is a disaster for all of us: it is a disaster for our common humanity.

The people of Gaza were already living under desperate conditions prior to this conflict; but now they are suffering more, without adequate food, water and access to the most basic of services we all take for granted, and in constant fear of their own lives; they deserve better from all of us ...

It is also a disaster for the region and the world because conflict stokes division. It has led to alarming spikes of anti-Semitism; of Islamophobia; and yes, that has impacted my own country, the United Kingdom.

And therefore, if we do not work together, collectively, collaboratively, this conflict will spread. ...

Let me be clear, the UK has been very clear on this: that Israel had the right to defend itself against Hamas, against the act of terrorism that took place on the 7th of October.

Hamas, let us not forget, acted erroneously in the name of religion I follow, that many of you follow in this room, but has nothing to do with religion.

Hamas do not believe in peace. The horrific atrocities against many nationalities – not just Israelis – also took the lives of the Jewish community in Israel, but there were a number of other faiths, including Muslims, as well.

Therefore Hamas poses an immediate threat to many, indeed to us all. It itself has insisted it will repeat such atrocities, and, of course, an ultimate aim of ending the state of Israel.

Therefore it's our collective interest that the kind of abhorrent events we saw on the 7th of October, the terrorism we see around the world – indeed the United Kingdom itself has been impacted by indiscriminate terrorism – that we work collectively to ensure these events do not happen.

But the UK has equally been clear that in defending such a right, Israel must – Israel must – respect international humanitarian law, and take every possible step to minimise harm to civilians. Israel is a country, is a nation, with obligations to international law.

This also includes respecting the sanctity of hospitals, so that doctors – who do an incredible job as we are seeing for ourselves – can continue to care for the ill; the injured; the sick.

And the situation in much of Gaza now – particularly in hospitals as well, such as al-Shifa, where, tragically, young innocent children, babies have died as the result of lack of electricity – has become acute.

Too many people; too many innocent children; too many babies; too many lives lost. Every life matters, irrespective of Israeli or Palestine; Jewish, Muslim or Christian. Every life matters; humanity matters.

And that is why the UK, led by the Prime Minister, has been engaged widely, with our friends and allies, and partners in this region ...

We have more than doubled our support to the people of Gaza, committing over £30million. And we continue to support through NGOs as well. ...

We believe that land-borders present the best option for getting support where it is most needed, and we have been urging the Israeli government to allow for more access – not just through Rafah, but to open up the Kerem Shalom crossing as well.

We have consistently called for those spaces to be created for the delivery of unhindered and sustainable humanitarian aid through pauses. ...

The four-hour pauses we have seen in northern Gaza are a first, but initial step only; we need longer corridors, time across all of Gaza, if we are to deliver what is needed. ...

The UK believes that lasting peace can only be achieved through that two-state solution. Not as a vision, but as a reality. ...

We need a real pathway: a pathway to peace; a pathway which is real: to restore hope in the future for all the peoples of the region ...

I end my comments with a quote; a quote many of you in this room will recognise – I know

your Royal Highness, you will recognise it; Secretary General, you will recognise it. In 1994, the words were: "There is only one radical means of sanctifying human lives. Not armoured plating, not tanks, not planes, or concrete fortifications. The real radical solution is peace." The words of Yitzhak Rabin.

**To read the full statement see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/new-initiatives-for-regional-peace-lord-ahmad-statement-at-the-iiss-manama-dialogue-2023>

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### **A humanitarian response to this crisis in Gaza is vital: UK statement at the UN General Assembly**

... it is impossible to comprehend the pain and loss that civilians are enduring in this conflict. Too many civilians are losing their lives and the protection of civilians and alleviating suffering is the top priority for the UK.

This is why we strongly welcomed the passage of the Security Council's humanitarian resolution this week. This calls for a humanitarian pause for a period of days for long enough to get lifesaving aid to those who need it. This will establish a safer environment for humanitarians, and support urgent efforts to secure the immediate and safe release of all hostages.

We must now turn these words into action.

The UK is committed to the urgent implementation of this resolution, in particular in three areas.

Firstly, we are working with our partners to provide and to get lifesaving items into Gaza. This includes food, water, medical supplies and crucially, fuel. The priority must be for Israel to allow sufficient fuel into Gaza so that humanitarian operations can run unimpeded and so hospitals and desalination plants can operate.

Secondly, we are supporting efforts to scale up the response. We are urging, and I urge again here today, that the priority must be improved land access, including at Kerem Shalom, as well as scaled-up access at Rafah, so aid can reach the levels needed.

Third, we remain clear that both sides must comply with international humanitarian law and take every possible step to minimise harm to civilians. That includes respecting the sanctity of hospitals so that healthcare professionals can care for the sick and injured.

President, a humanitarian response to this crisis is vital. But our responsibility does not end there. We will redouble our efforts, with our partners, to create a new political horizon to deliver on the promise of peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians, and make the two-state solution a reality. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-humanitarian-response-to-this-crisis-in-gaza-is-vital-uk-statement-at-the-un-general-assembly>

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**Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office** "I spoke to Israeli Foreign Minister @EliCoh1 yesterday and shared my condolences for the Israeli civilians killed in Hamas' brutal October 7th terror attack. We discussed the situation in Gaza and the need for humanitarian pauses. We are committed to preventing wider regional instability." Foreign Secretary @David\_Cameron.

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1725806267803824455>

**Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office** "I spoke to Dr Riad Malki, Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister, yesterday. During the call I outlined the work the UK is doing to address the acute humanitarian situation in Gaza. I also emphasised the UK's support

for the Palestinian Authority and a two-state solution." Foreign Secretary @David\_Cameron.

<https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1725941621198381320>

**Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon** Shocked at the devastating attack on a @UNRWA school in Gaza. The UK continues to press for the protection of civilians, in line with international humanitarian law. Too many innocent civilians are dying.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1726206369164877945>

**Lord (Tariq)Ahmad of Wimbledon** Deeply concerned by the incident near the Jordanian Field Hospital in Gaza. The UK recognises the vital work of medics from Jordan & elsewhere. All Hospitals must be allowed to operate safely & treat the sick & injured. It is important that the sanctity of hospitals is respected.

<https://twitter.com/tariqahmadbt/status/1725499266167181579>

## Department for Business and Trade

**Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel**

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6554d89f544aea000dfb2dcf/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-11-17.pdf>

**Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories**

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6554db40544aea0019fb2dc3/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2023-11-17.pdf>

## European Union

**What the EU stands for on Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Le Grand Continent - Prior to his trip to the Middle East, the EU High Representative Josep Borrell published an article in the Grand Continent on what the EU proposes regarding the dramatic humanitarian crisis currently happening in Gaza and to put an end to the vicious cycle of violence.**

... The appalling terrorist attack by Hamas, which we immediately condemned in the strongest possible terms, reignited a cycle of violence that escalated into a humanitarian tragedy in Gaza. ...

Faced with the war against Ukraine, Europe demonstrated unity and quickly lived up to its responsibility. ...

The two conflicts are very different in their causes and actors. However, they are also interconnected. Mainly because we are suspected of applying double standards regarding international law between Ukraine and Israel-Palestine, particularly from countries of the so-called Global South. By our words and deeds, we need to prove this accusation false. ...

The war in Gaza is the outcome of a collective political and moral failure, for which the Israeli and Palestinian people are paying a high price. This price will continue to increase if we fail to act. ...

The substance of the Israeli-Palestinian question is a national problem: that of two peoples who have the right to exist on the same land. There is therefore a need to share this land. Thirty years ago, with the Oslo Accords, we had an agreement on how to share it. But it has not been implemented. Meanwhile, in both camps, the forces of denial grew continuously under the hubris of some and the desperation of others.

Violence has increased. The figures are appalling, and not just in the latest terrifying attack

by Hamas against Israel and the Israeli response. Already before 7 October, the number of dead and wounded was much too high.

The illegal settlement in the West Bank and violence against Palestinians have been increasing with impunity – and it has become even more brutal after 7 October.

Thirty years ago, there were 270,000 settlers in the West Bank. Now there are more than 700,000. And the Palestinian territory has been divided into an archipelago of unconnected areas, making it much more difficult to implement the two-state solution requested by the international community for 76 years.

Last year, in the West Bank, 154 Palestinians were killed and 20 Israelis. This year, the number is already up to almost 400 Palestinians and about 30 Israelis. ...

Because of the Abraham Accords, many believed that the Israeli-Palestinian issue could be circumvented even as the situation on the ground continued to deteriorate.

This illusion has contributed to the fire of hatred. On the Israeli side, by extremist forces in the West Bank determined to put an end to the Palestinian question through submission or exile. On the Palestinian side, by Islamist extremists who want to destroy Israel and threaten the West.

The barbarism of Hamas against Israeli civilians on 7 October was absolutely unjustifiable and inexcusable. This was an attack like no other, and it provoked in Israel profound shock and existential fears. But as Barack Obama said, “how Israel prosecutes this fight against Hamas matters”. ...

The military strategy of Israel has to abide by international law, including the law that seeks to avoid, to every extent possible, the death and suffering of civilians. Cutting off water, food, electricity and fuel to an entire besieged civilian population is not acceptable. The scale of the bombing is also extremely concerning. ...

We need to ensure that a flow of humanitarian aid in quantities that meet the needs of the civilian population, including fuel, enters Gaza each day. There is already a shortage of food and the situation is especially dire in Gaza’s hospitals. ...

Once the humanitarian situation is consolidated, it will be necessary to move from humanitarian aid to politics. ...

At the Foreign Affairs Council of 13 November, I proposed to the ministers a set of principles that should guide the EU’s actions on Gaza. Principles we need to pursue in collaboration with our regional and international partners.

They can be summarised in three Yes’s and three No’s.

No to the forced displacement of the Palestinian people. There cannot be an expulsion of Palestinians into other countries.

No to the amputation of the territory of Gaza or its reoccupation by Israel. There must not be a reduction of Gaza’s territory, permanent control of Gaza by the Israeli Defence Force, nor a return of Hamas to govern Gaza.

No to the dissociation of Gaza from the overall Palestinian issue. Our objective must be the resolution to the Palestinian issue as a whole.

Yes to the installation of an interim Palestinian authority in Gaza, under terms of reference and legitimacy defined by a unanimous and unambiguous resolution of the UN Security Council and guaranteed by it. We can think of a renewable resolution that encourages the two sides to reach an agreement, first for Gaza but then also for the West Bank.

Yes to a stronger involvement of Arab states if they agree, trusted by both the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority. Currently Arab states are not ready to discuss the day after the war. Yet, to achieve a lasting solution we need their commitment, which cannot be only financial. They must be certain that their involvement will not be an end in itself, but a step on a clear path towards a Palestinian state.

Finally, yes to a greater involvement of the European Union in the region.

We must help build a full sovereign Palestinian state, capable of restoring the dignity of the Palestinians and of making peace with Israel and help guarantee the security of both, Israel and Palestine. ...



We Europeans, not only out of self-interest, but also out of our moral and political responsibility, have to reinforce our commitment to achieving peace between Israel and Palestine. A significant part of the EU's future global role, and in particular our relations with many countries of the so-called Global South, will depend on our commitment to help solve this conflict.

**To read the full article see**

[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/what-eu-stands-gaza-and-israeli-palestinian-conflict\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/what-eu-stands-gaza-and-israeli-palestinian-conflict_en)

*A summary of the Foreign Affairs Council referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2023/11/13/>

## United Nations

### **Bureau of General Assembly Palestinian Rights Committee Welcomes Security Council Resolution 2712 (2023) Demanding Compliance with International Law in Gaza**

The Bureau welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 2712 (2023) concerning the crisis facing the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and its demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians.

The Bureau urges respect for this demand and for the implementation of resolution 2712 (2023) in its entirety, including the call for “urgent and extended humanitarian pauses and corridors for a sufficient number of days throughout the Gaza Strip to enable, consistent with international humanitarian law, the full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners”.

The Bureau remains extremely concerned at the ongoing attacks on civilian areas and infrastructure, including UN premises, hospitals, schools and places of worship where civilians are taking refuge. In line with international humanitarian law, these sites must be protected at all times.

Humanitarian pauses are not a solution to the collective suffering imposed on the Palestinian civilian population of the Gaza Strip. They will not stop the killing of civilians witnessed for the past 40 days. While welcoming the adoption of the resolution, the Bureau reiterates its calls for an immediate and durable ceasefire and for Israel, the occupying Power, to stop and reverse the forcible transfer of civilians, lift the full siege of the Gaza Strip and allow a regular and steady flow of humanitarian supplies, at the scale that meets the enormous needs.

The Bureau also calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all Israeli hostages in Gaza and all Palestinians who are arbitrarily detained in Israel.

Fulfilling the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and their legitimate aspirations for an independent State, is paramount to achieve a just and lasting peace in accordance with international law and on the basis of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

<https://press.un.org/en/2023/gapal1457.doc.htm>

**Resolution 2712 (2023): The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question** (adopted 15 November 2023)

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2712\(2023\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2712(2023))

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **“Protection of civilians is absolutely top priority” - Türk briefs UN General Assembly on Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel**

A conflagration of violence has been unleashed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – both in Gaza and the West Bank – as well as in Israel.

In such a situation the protection of civilians is an absolutely top priority. The killing of civilians must not become acceptable collateral damage. It must not become a deliberate weapon of war. Not in a refugee camp. Not in a kibbutz. And not in a hospital. Not anywhere. ...

The people of Gaza, who for years have seen their rights comprehensively restricted, are enduring bombardment by the Israeli Security Forces of an intensity rarely experienced in this century, together with ongoing urban warfare.

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 Palestinian 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 a fact that many civilians are unable to comply with the Israeli forces' instructions to move elsewhere in the face of imminent bombardment. ...

The current Israeli proposal for a so-called 'safe zone' is untenable: the zone is neither safe nor feasible for the number of people in need. I refer you to yesterday's [statement](#) by the Inter Agency Standing Committee: civilians must be protected throughout Gaza, wherever they are.

I also join my humanitarian colleagues in our alarm about the imminent total depletion of fuel supplies. Already, this is leading to the collapse of water, sewage and crucial healthcare services, and could end the trickle of humanitarian assistance that Israel has to date permitted to enter Gaza. Massive outbreaks of infectious disease seem inevitable, and WFP warns that civilians "are facing the immediate possibility of starvation".

International humanitarian law is clear.

All parties must, at all times, distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives.

Attacks directed at civilians or protected civilian objects – such as hospitals – are prohibited.

Indiscriminate attacks – for example, the use by Palestinian armed groups of indiscriminate projectiles aimed at southern Israel – are prohibited.

Attacks where the likelihood of civilian death, and damage to protected objects, is disproportionate to the probable military advantage – as constantly risked by Israel's use of explosive weapons with wide-area effect in densely populated areas – are 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.

No-one is above the law. Breaches of international humanitarian law – even war crimes – committed by one party do not, ever, absolve the other from compliance with the principles of the law of war and their human rights obligations. ...

In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, I am deeply concerned about the intensification of violence and severe discrimination against Palestinians. I am alarmed by the rise in killings of Palestinians by Israeli security forces and by settlers; displacement of Palestinian communities due to settler violence; a sharp increase in seemingly arbitrary arrests and detention; and the ill-treatment of Palestinians in detention. ...

There must be a ceasefire on humanitarian and human rights grounds, and an end to the fighting – not only to deliver urgently needed food and provide meaningful humanitarian assistance, but also to create space for a path out of this horror.

Rapid and unimpeded humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza, in line with humanitarian principles, including life-saving fuel, and at the magnitude required, must be facilitated – including through crossings from Israel.

International humanitarian and human rights law must be respected, immediately and fully. There must be an end to grave human rights violations, notably against children.

All hostages must be released.

All forms of collective punishment must cease.

The Israeli authorities must take immediate steps to ensure that the security forces comply with their obligations as an occupying power to protect Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, including from violence by settlers. Investigations into violations must be carried out without delay; the current widespread impunity for such violations must stop. ...

A vortex of hate speech and disinformation is fuelling dehumanisation, and blocking the search for an enduring solution. I am very concerned about the risk of further grave violations, even potentially amounting to atrocity crimes, in light of recent statements by some in leadership positions.

What kind of societies will emerge from this crisis? Only extremism can win a war in which so many children are killed. And the endpoint of extremism is even greater despair, and more bloodshed.

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

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 transcript see***

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/11/protection-civilians-absolutely-top-priority-turk-briefs-un-general>

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### **Israel must stop using water as a weapon of war: UN expert**

Israel must allow clean water and fuel into Gaza to activate the water supply network and desalination plants in the besieged enclave before it is too late, a UN expert warned today. "Every hour that passes with Israel preventing the provision of safe drinking water in the Gaza strip, in brazen breach of international law, puts Gazans at risk of dying of thirst and diseases related to the lack of safe drinking water," said Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. ...

"I want to remind Israel that consciously preventing supplies needed for safe water from entering the Gaza Strip violates both international humanitarian and human rights law," Arrojo-Agudo said. "The impact on public health and hygiene will be unimaginable and could result in more civilian deaths than the already colossal death toll from the bombardment of Gaza," he said.

The expert warned that as usual, children will be the first affected by the water and sanitation crisis – particularly those under five years old – and women.

"These frequently invisible casualties of war are preventable, and Israel must prevent them," he said. "Israel must stop using water as a weapon of war."

"Under Article 7 of the Rome Statute, intentionally depriving the civilian population of conditions of life, calculated to bring about their destruction, is an act of extermination and classified as a crime against humanity," Arrojo-Agudo warned. ...

"People are already suffering from dehydration and waterborne diseases due to salinated and polluted water consumption from unsafe sources," Arrojo-Agudo said. "Coupled with

the massive displacement of thousands of people in recent days, this is the perfect scenario for an epidemic that will only punish innocents, once again.” ...

“The deaths of children from thirst and disease are less visible and more silent than those caused by bombs, but are equally or more lethal,” Arrojo-Agudo said, urging the international community to ensure Israel meets its obligations under international law.

“The fate of Palestinians in Gaza is in Israel's hands,” the expert said.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/israel-must-stop-using-water-weapon-war-un-expert>

## UNRWA

**The Gaza Strip: UNRWA finally receives fuel; much more is needed for humanitarian operations – UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini**

“Following long weeks of delay, the Israeli Authorities approved only half of the daily minimum requirements of fuel for humanitarian operations in Gaza.

“This is far from enough to cover the needs for desalination plants, sewage pumps, hospitals, water pumps in shelters, aid trucks, ambulances, bakeries and communications networks to work without interruption. ...

“Humanitarian organisations should not be forced to make tough decisions between competing lifesaving activities. Community tensions in a once close-knitted society are likely to increase, making it even more difficult for UNRWA and other organisations to operate in environment of un precedented humanitarian crisis.

“We call for adequate, regular, and unconditional delivery of fuel to maintain all our critical lifesaving activities in the Gaza Strip. ...

**To read the full statement see**

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/gaza-strip-unrwa-finally-receives-fuel-much-more-needed-humanitarian>

TOP

## Foreign Affairs

**See also Commons oral answers “Business of the House” that are included in the Home Affairs section above.**

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Muslim Brotherhood

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [168] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress has been made to further detail and quantify the role, motivations and aims of the Muslim Brotherhood, since the publication of the Sir Jenkins Review.

**David Rutley:** In December 2015, the Government laid the main findings of an internal review commissioned to improve understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood before both Houses. The review was written by Sir John Jenkins of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Sir Charles Farr of the Home Office, and involved wide consultation, including with Muslim Brotherhood representatives in the UK and overseas, and substantial research. We stand by the main findings of the review, but continue to keep the Muslim Brotherhood and its activities under review, working across the range of relevant government departments and drawing on our

network of posts in the region.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-11-07/168>

The complete Muslim Brotherhood Review referred to above has not been made public.

The main findings can be read at

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a8076bfe5274a2e8ab504ab/53163\\_Muslim\\_Brotherhood\\_Review\\_-\\_PRINT.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a8076bfe5274a2e8ab504ab/53163_Muslim_Brotherhood_Review_-_PRINT.pdf)

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>

#### **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 in 5 days**

**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