



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

SCoJeC is incurring significant extra costs as a result of the war in Israel and Gaza, including producing expanded issues of this digest. Please help us maintain these resources by donating at

www.scojec.org/donate.html

Thank you very much for your support.



Israel

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We urge Israel to let humanitarian aid enter Gaza through all crossing points: UK statement at the UN Security Council

First, let me start by reaffirming the UK's commitment to the principles enshrined in UN Security Council resolution 2334 which serves as a clear reinforcement of international support for a two-state solution. The suffering we have seen on, and since, the horrific attacks of October 7, underlines the importance, more than ever, of a diplomatic solution to this conflict which guarantees the safety and security of both the Israeli and Palestinian people. We call for the immediate release of all the remaining hostages, including the return of those who have died in captivity, and we are appalled by reports of sexual violence and abuse. The UK stands firm in its condemnation of these heinous acts. The best way to get the hostages out is to get a deal done. We also urge Israel to let humanitarian aid enter Gaza through all crossing points immediately and guarantee deconfliction for aid convoys and other humanitarian work. We echo the Secretary General's tribute to UN workers who have tragically lost their lives in this conflict and we call upon Israel to ensure the protection of UN facilities and staff. The integrity of the UN and its ability to operate is paramount. It serves as a crucial lifeline for the many innocent civilians affected by this conflict.

Second, the UK remains deeply concerned by the indiscriminate firing of rockets towards Israeli population centres, as noted in the Secretary-General's report. This must stop. We also note with concern the continuing construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. We are clear: these settlements are illegal under international law. We reiterate our call on Israel to immediately and completely stop

all settlement activities. We condemn the human rights abuses and incitement of violence against Palestinian communities in the West Bank, where the UK has taken action, in the form of sanctions, against a number of those individuals and groups responsible. We are also deeply concerned by Israel's suspension of revenue transfers to the Palestinian Authority and the risks to correspondent banking relations. Such measures harm chances for peace, security and stability.

Finally, Mr President, as the UK has said throughout, a negotiated pause in the fighting that leads to a sustainable ceasefire, without a return to fighting, is the best way to secure the release of the hostages, enable a significant scaling up of much needed humanitarian aid and leads to a permanent settlement of this issue. There is now a deal on the table, endorsed by this Council in resolution 2735, to achieve those goals. The onus is on Hamas to accept it and end the suffering of the Palestinian people and the remaining hostages. We must then work towards a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution of Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security for both nations and the wider region.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/we-urge-israel-to-let-humanitarian-aid-enter-gaza-through-all-crossing-points-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

UNSCR 2334, referred to above, can be read at
[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2334\(2016\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2334(2016))

United Nations

Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Briefing to the Security Council on the Situation in the Middle East, Reporting on UNSCR 2334 (2016)

Before turning to my regular briefing, allow me to express my serious concerns about the risk of escalation in the region, particularly between Israel and Hezbollah along the Blue Line. I reiterate the Secretary-General's concerns that further military escalation will only guarantee more suffering, more devastation to communities in Lebanon and Israel, and more potentially catastrophic consequences for the region. ...

The ongoing hostilities in Gaza are further fueling regional instability. There must be an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and an immediate humanitarian ceasefire – there is a deal on the table and it should be agreed – and fast. ...

The devastating impact of the hostilities on the civilian population in Gaza, and the unprecedented humanitarian crisis remain deeply alarming. I have witnessed the deterioration of the security situation on each of my visits. Ongoing military operations and a near total breakdown of civil order have resulted in multiple reported incidents of theft of relief supplies and shootings that posed significant risks to the population and humanitarian workers. A shooting incident on 15 June that resulted in the killing of two Palestinians while an aid convoy was on the road prompted the cancellation of convoys to Kerem Shalom between 16 and 18 June to mitigate risks.

Effective mechanisms for humanitarian notification, safe conditions for humanitarian operations, and sufficient access to humanitarian needs remain sorely lacking and must be put in place without delay. ...

Hunger and food insecurity persist. While projections of imminent famine in the northern governates have been averted through an increase in food deliveries, food insecurity has worsened in the south. Nearly all of Gaza's population continues to face high levels of food insecurity, with nearly half a million people facing "catastrophic" insecurity. ...

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority's fiscal situation remains very precarious amidst broader economic and security concerns across the occupied West Bank. Announcements by Israel's Finance Minister that he intends to continue blocking the transfer of all clearance revenues to the PA, and to take measures that would end correspondent

banking relations between Israeli and Palestinian banks at the end of this month threaten to plunge the Palestinian fiscal situation into an even greater crisis, potentially upending the entire Palestinian financial system.

I take note of the recent appointment by the Head of the Israeli military's Civil Administration of a civilian deputy and the delegation of authority to that position for oversight of many areas of land management and development, planning, and day-to-day life in Area C of the occupied West Bank. That the appointment and delegation of authority is expected to expedite Israeli settlement expansion and regularization under Israeli law of illegal outposts is concerning and undermines the prospects for a two-State solution. ...

I once again strongly condemn the horrific armed attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Israel on 7 October 2023 and the continued holding of hostages in Gaza. Nothing can justify these acts of terror. All remaining hostages must be released immediately and unconditionally. The use of human shields and the firing of indiscriminate rockets towards Israeli population centers are violations of international humanitarian law and must cease completely.

The scope of death and destruction in Gaza has been catastrophic and horrifying. Israel's use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas has destroyed entire neighborhoods and damaged hospitals and other civilian infrastructure, schools, mosques, and United Nations premises. I unequivocally condemn the killing and maiming of civilians in Gaza, including women and children.

The protection of civilians is paramount in any armed conflict. International humanitarian law applies to all parties to a conflict at all times.

The impact of the ongoing hostilities on the humanitarian situation in Gaza is deeply concerning. The life-threatening conditions facing the more than 1.7 million internally displaced people in Gaza, where nowhere is safe, must be addressed immediately.

The level of essential goods, including humanitarian assistance, that has been allowed into Gaza continues to fall short of meeting the needs of the population. While it is positive that Israel has opened additional entry points for humanitarian aid, others have been closed, and it is imperative that all necessary access points be opened, and made operational, and humanitarian access be sustained. All parties must protect humanitarian workers at all times. Attacks on humanitarian aid workers and facilities are unacceptable, must cease immediately and should all be investigated. ...

I remain deeply troubled by continued Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. I reiterate that all Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and are in flagrant violation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. ...

The escalating violence and tensions in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are deeply worrying. Intensified armed exchanges between Palestinians and Israeli security forces alongside lethal attacks by Palestinians against Israelis and by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, have also exacerbated tensions and led to exceedingly high levels of casualties and detentions. All perpetrators of violence must be held accountable and swiftly brought to justice. I urge Israel to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population.

I reiterate that security forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable to protect life.

I am encouraged by the PA's reform plan. The United Nations will continue to support the PA to implement critical reforms and urges the international community to provide immediate support to address the PA's financial challenges, strengthen its governance capacity and prepare it to reassume its responsibilities in Gaza. ...

Palestinians and Israelis can no longer wait to establish a viable political horizon. Efforts to address security and humanitarian challenges that ignore or sidestep fundamental political questions are doomed to fail. All stakeholders must urgently take steps that will

lead towards a two-State reality. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://unsco.unmissions.org/security-council-briefing-situation-middle-east-reporting-unscr-2334-delivered-un-special-7>

UNSCR 2334, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2334\(2016\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2334(2016))

Ongoing Hostilities in Gaza Fuelling Regional Instability, Special Coordinator Warns Security Council, Underling Need for Viable Political Horizon

... [See above](#) to read *Tor Wennesland's briefing to the Security Council*.

The representative of the United States said that — while the world's eyes are rightfully on Gaza — “we cannot ignore the situation in the West Bank”. Voicing concern over the significant uptick in deadly violence against Palestinian civilians by settlers, she said that 2023 saw the highest number of Palestinians killed in the West Bank since 2005. Washington, D.C. — determined to use all tools at its disposal to expose and promote accountability for those who threaten peace, security and stability in the West Bank — has sanctioned numerous extremist settlers and their organizations who committed violence there. ... With much of Gaza's population facing catastrophic levels of hunger, the situation is at risk of worsening rapidly, especially with sustained disruption in aid flows. “Palestinian women, children and men are suffering every single day,” she stated, noting the need to press Israel to create better conditions to facilitate aid delivery in Gaza. ...

The representative of the Russian Federation said that — amid ongoing Israeli operations in Gaza — over 37,500 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children. The statistics on the West Bank are also appalling, with 600 Palestinians killed, while new Israeli settlements continue to be erected and residents are being evicted from their homes. Moreover, it is “horrifically cynical” that Palestinians are being forced to demolish their homes not to pay costly levies to the Israeli construction workers. The magnitude of violence by the radical Israeli settlers and complete impunity are shocking: in response to the killing of a 14-year-old Israeli boy from Malachi Hashalom — and despite the fact the alleged criminal was swiftly detained — “angry mobs of settlers” burned down 37 villages, killed 4 and wounded 91 Palestinians. He added that this lawlessness was perpetrated in full sight of law enforcement. There is only one solution to this vicious cycle of violence — “to root out the culture of impunity and the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory”. Warning that Israel “is going forth full steam ahead” with its offensive on Rafah, he demanded that it halt the operation. ...

The representative of Switzerland, stressing that Israeli settlements are illegal under international humanitarian law, said recurrent announcements by Israeli leaders and measures to expand them contribute to the escalation and must be stopped. Voicing concern about recent Israeli decisions to transfer the management of settlers' civil affairs in the West Bank to the Israeli civil administration, he said Israel must refrain from taking measures that would introduce permanent changes, in particular demographic and administrative changes, in the occupied territory. ...

The representative of France, demanding an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages, also expressed opposition to the operation under way in Rafah ... “As the situation in Gaza continues to deteriorate, Israeli settlement activity is accelerating in the West Bank,” he noted. Condemning such activity, he underscored: “We will never recognize the illegal annexation of territory, nor the legal recognition of illegal settlements.” He also condemned settler violence, stating that France will impose new sanctions against perpetrators. ...

The representative of the United Kingdom called for the immediate release of all remaining hostages, including the return of those who have died in captivity. “The best way to get the hostages out is to get a deal done,” she stated, also urging Israel to let humanitarian aid enter Gaza through all crossing points and guarantee deconfliction for aid convoys and other humanitarian work. Condemning the firing of indiscriminate rockets towards Israeli population centres, she further called on Israel to immediately stop all settlement activities — noting the United Kingdom has levied sanctions on individuals and groups responsible for human rights abuses against Palestinian communities in the West Bank. ... [\[click here to read this speech in full\]](#)

The Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine said that the Secretary-General's latest report ... tells of dispossession and displacement, of colonial settlement and annexation, of the mass killing and maiming of civilians and of attacks on the UN and its personnel. “It is the story of Israel’s continued attempt to destroy Palestine and its people, and the world’s failure to put an end to it,” he said. “Let me say this in the clearest way I can — no arms to kill us, no money to colonize us, no trade to rob us,” he stressed, calling on every State to ensure that its Government, entities, companies and citizens no longer contribute to Israeli crimes against Palestinians. Israel openly declares that it will further settle the West Bank, continue assaulting the sanctity of holy sites and withhold Palestinian tax revenue. “That is the arrogance of fundamentalists, of colonizers,” he observed.

“We are a nation of prisoners,” he went on to say, pointing out that four times more Palestinians have died in Israeli detention in the last eight months than the number of prisoners who died in the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in 20 years. ...

The representative of Israel said that, since the 7 October 2023 massacre, 120 Israeli hostages — including 16 women — are still being held captive in harsh conditions, exposed to mental, physical and sexual abuse. “Why is this Council not focused on the dire humanitarian situation of the hostages?”, he asked, pointing to Hamas’ refusal to release the hostages through diplomacy. The recent rescue operation by the Israel Defense Forces, which brought four hostages home, was an example of how this can be achieved. “We will continue until the last remaining hostage is returned and we will not stop until Hamas’ military and governing capabilities are dismantled,” he declared. Turning to the humanitarian situation in Gaza, he said that 682,000 tons of humanitarian aid — including food, water and medical supplies — were delivered to the Strip. The problem remains the distribution of aid by the UN, as nearly all its requests for the coordination of humanitarian convoys have been approved, and the daily pauses in operations against terrorists continue to enable the distribution of aid.

Yet, Hamas continues to attack aid convoys, stealing food and supplies for terrorist combatants while disrupting the delivery of aid, he continued. On 14 June, Hamas fired five projectiles towards Israel from a humanitarian aid area in central Gaza, he said, adding that the group is “entirely to blame for this conflict as it launched an unprovoked brutal invasion into Israel — a sovereign country — murdered innocent civilians and took hundreds of hostages”. Additionally, “more and more weapons of the Hamas terrorists are being discovered inside UN facilities, universities, civilian homes, mosques and other civilian sites,” he observed, urging the Council to exert relentless pressure on the terrorists. He further cautioned that, over the past months, Hizbullah in Lebanon has increased its attacks on Israel, firing thousands of rockets and sending suicide drones, and underscored that his country “will not allow the terror organization to continue attacking its territory and citizens”.

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15743.doc.htm>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Special Committee on Israeli practices in occupied territories concludes field mission

A UN Special Committee appointed by the General Assembly to investigate Israeli practices in Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, said it was horrified by violations against Palestinians in Israeli custody and levels of impunity for Israeli soldiers engaged in dehumanising, cruel and humiliating behaviour towards Palestinians, including women and children.

“Security personnel publicly and shamelessly share photos on social media platforms that violate the privacy and intimate sphere of Palestinian women, aimed at mocking, shaming and humiliating them,” the Special Committee said in an end of mission statement ...

“Multiple stakeholders reported a stark increase in sexual harassment, sexual abuse, the threat of rape, and rape itself, including with foreign objects, against men, women, and even children, and intimidation through the use of dogs by Israeli security forces,” ...

The Committee expressed concern about the impact of Israeli forces destroying the health care system systematically and comprehensively in Gaza, forcing women to give birth in dire conditions. ...

The Special Committee was briefed that Palestinians being held in prisons and detention centres, including thousands of detainees from Gaza, have little to no access to family, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), or legal and procedural safeguards guaranteed under international law.

“The steep rise in cases of abuse filed against Israeli security officers, indicates that a systematic scheme of inhumane treatment is being executed as State policy to deprive Palestinians of their liberty,” it said.

Condemning the horrific war crimes that took place on 7 October 2023, the Committee also held equal condemnation for the Israeli State reaction. “The violent assault on Gaza has been indiscriminate, disproportionate, and callous in nature, cutting off life essential resources, in order to subjugate, dehumanise and collectively punish the Palestinian civilian population,” ...

“Israel must end its assault on the international rules-based system,” the Committee stressed. “We call on all States and businesses providing assistance to prolong the occupation to cease these activities or risk being complicit in serious international human rights, humanitarian and criminal law violations, including possible genocide.”

The Committee expressed regret that Israel did not respond to its request for consultations or provide access to Israel, the occupied Palestinian territory or the occupied Syrian Golan.

“Israel’s persistent refusal to hold credible dialogue with the UN Committee illustrates its unwillingness to be held accountable for the actions and policies it pursues in the occupied Palestinian territory,” the Special Committee said.

“The occupation of Palestine, and the apartheid system of injustice that serves it, cannot continue if there is to ever be a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians,” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/06/un-special-committee-israeli-practices-occupied-territories-concludes-field>

End-of-Mission Statement of the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/palestine/statements/2024-06-25-EOM-Statement-SP-Committee.pdf>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Scottish Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

Review of the RSHE statutory guidance (closing date 11 July 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/rshe-team/review-of-the-rshe-statutory-guidance/>

Petitioning against the Holocaust Memorial Bill (closing date 17 July 2024)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/8481/petitioning-against-the-holocaust-memorial-bill/>

House of Lords: Guidance on the right to be heard

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/55634/documents/4871>

House of Lords: Guidance on submitting your petition

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/55632/documents/4869>

£20k registration threshold for charities in Northern Ireland (closing date 11 August 2024)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-ps20k-registration-threshold-charities-northern-ireland>

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill (closing date 16 August 2024)

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-bill/consult_view/

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill: Financial Memorandum (closing date 16 August 2024)

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/finance/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland/consult_view/

Gaps in Equality Legislation [Northern Ireland] (closing date 6 September 2024)

<https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/committee-for-the-executive-office/gaps-in-equality-legislation-inquiry>

TOP