



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### The King's Speech

*col 7* **The King:** My Government's legislative programme will be mission led and based upon the principles of security, fairness and opportunity for all. ...

*col 8* My Government will seek to strengthen the border and make streets safer. A Bill will be introduced to modernise the asylum and immigration system, establishing a new Border Security Command and delivering enhanced counter terror powers to tackle organised immigration crime. Legislation will be brought forward to strengthen community policing, give the police greater powers to deal with anti social behaviour and strengthen support for victims.

Measures will be introduced to improve the safety and security of public venues and help keep the British public safe from terrorism. My Government will bring forward plans to halve violence against women and girls.

My Ministers will seek to raise educational standards and break down barriers to opportunity. ...

My Government will improve the National Health Service as a service for all, providing care on the basis of need regardless of the ability to pay. ...

*col 9* My Government will take steps to help rebuild trust and foster respect. ...

Legislation on race equality will be published in draft to enshrine the full right to equal pay in law.

My Government will strengthen its work with the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland so that the best outcomes possible are delivered for citizens across the United Kingdom. My Ministers will establish a new Council of the Nations and Regions to renew opportunities for the Prime Minister, heads of devolved governments and mayors of combined authorities to collaborate with each other. ...

Measures to modernise the constitution will be introduced including House of Lords reform to remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the Lords. ...

My Government will ensure a strong defence based on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's common values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. ...

My Government will continue to give its full support to Ukraine and its people ...

My Government will seek to reset the relationship with European partners ... My Ministers will seek a new security pact to strengthen cooperation on the mutual threats faced by the United Kingdom and the European Union.

My Government will play its part in trying to secure long term peace and security in the Middle East. It is committed to a two state solution with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-07-17/debates/CC6B5513-FCF7-4377-A9FA-4080C676DBEA/King%E2%80%99SSpeech>

## House of Commons Debate

### Debate on the Address

*col 52* **Rishi Sunak (Conservative):** ... I also welcome the visit of the right hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr Lammy) to the middle east. It is of fundamental importance to this country that, as we make real progress towards a two-state solution, our friend and ally Israel has a right to defend itself and to live in peace. ...

*col 57* **The Prime Minister (Keir Starmer):** ... this King's Speech picks up some of the important business not concluded in the last Session. ... We will also carry forward the Holocaust Memorial Bill so that we build that memorial next to this Parliament and ensure that every generation reaffirms our commitment to "never again". ...

*col 61* **Ed Davey (Liberal Democrat):** ... May I join others in paying tribute to the late Tony Lloyd ... I had the huge privilege of joining him on an all-party trip to Israel and Gaza, and one of his commitments was to peace in the middle east. He wanted justice for the Palestinians and a two-state solution, and let us all commit ourselves to that again. ...

*col 74* **John McDonnell (Labour):** ... Since January, I tried to mobilise the previous Government to accept, as other Governments across the world have been doing, seriously injured children from Gaza so that they could come here for treatment, but not one visa has been issued to a Palestinian child for that purpose. I have written to the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary, and I hope that our Government can welcome those children here so that they can receive the treatment they need, before hopefully they can be returned to a Palestinian state that we recognise and that lives in peace. ...

*col 107* **Karen Bradley (Conservative):** ... Finally, I will just comment on global issues and the middle east. I have seen at first-hand, through the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly, just how difficult these issues are to address. There are disruptors in the world who want to do us harm. They are making sure that the views around the world are the views that they want to see. We need to be incredibly careful and take that very seriously, because we need the hostages released, we need a ceasefire and humanitarian aid in, and we need to ensure that international law is observed. ...

*col 111* **Ruth Jones (Labour):** ... The war in Gaza has already cost 40,000 lives, and surely now is the time to do a number of things. First, we should demand a ceasefire with all the vigour we can bring to that. Secondly, we should end the supply of arms to Israel: it is our bombs, in part, that are being used to bomb Gaza and have taken the lives of 40,000 people. However, it is also a question of the withdrawal of the occupying forces. Surely peace can come if we do something about it. ...

*col 129* **Jim Shannon (DUP):** ... I also put in a plea for peace in the middle east to be an aim of the Government. I would gently highlight that calling for a ceasefire when hostages remain in unimaginably cruel captivity, and without ensuring that Hamas terrorists can never inflict that kind of savage damage again, must surely be premature. There is a solution, and it can be found; I know that is the desire of all our constituents, as well as our friends in Israel and on both sides of the Gaza strip. I believe that the Government must

consider maintaining the previous Government's procedural challenge to the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories. It is important that the ICC retains its proper role within the law and exercises jurisdiction based on its own statutes and in accordance with the principle of complementarity.

col 130 As long as I have been in Parliament, there has always been a plea from both sides of the Chamber for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to be condemned and made illegal. Those pleas came from the Opposition side when the Labour party was in opposition. Now that Labour is in government, I hope those pleas will be answered. The IRGC is the world's most powerful terrorist group, committed to the conversion or murder of Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and others it considers to be infidels, and for 40 years it has pursued its repugnant goals through violence on a global scale. It is time for it to be proscribed, and I ask for that to happen as soon as humanly possible. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-17/debates/E49310A5-9111-4957-905D-5471B0019D80/DebateOnTheAddress>

## Cabinet Office

**UK Covid-19 Inquiry: Module 1 Report – The resilience and preparedness of the United Kingdom**

<https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/18095012/UK-Covid-19-Inquiry-Module-1-Full-Report.pdf>

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## Holocaust

**See also the Commons Debate on the Address that is included in the Home Affairs section above.**

## Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

### **Significant step forward for the UK's National Holocaust Memorial**

... The government has re-introduced the Holocaust Memorial Bill into Parliament in a move that cements its support for delivering the UK's National Holocaust Memorial.

The Bill will now begin its final stage on the road to Royal Assent following strong cross-party support in the House of Commons.

The passage of the Bill will update historic legislation that currently limits building on the intended site of Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster. This will allow for planning permission to be sought and for works on the Memorial to begin.

The Victoria Tower Gardens site would position the Memorial next to the Houses of Parliament, serving not only as a powerful tribute to the victims of the Holocaust but as a reminder of the importance of democracy and the dangers of allowing hate and intolerance to prevail.

Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner said: The evil and brutality of the Holocaust is a stark reminder of what can happen when hatred and intolerance go unchallenged. We must make sure those who died are never forgotten.

This Bill will mean future generations continue to learn lessons from the past and help to build a more unified, tolerant future.

The cross-party unity on this shows the importance of this Bill and I encourage Peers to continue this unified front during the debate. ...

Karen Pollock CBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust: We are very grateful to the government for re-introducing the Holocaust Memorial Bill. With the Holocaust fading further into history and survivors becoming fewer and frailer, the need for progress on building the memorial and learning centre next to Parliament has never been more urgent.

With antisemitism surging in the UK and around the world, we must be more determined than ever to show exactly where this pernicious hate can and did lead. ...

The plans for the Memorial and Learning Centre have been welcomed by many in the Jewish Community who echo the importance of truthful and accurate Holocaust remembrance.

Chief Rabbi, Sir Ephraim Mirvis says: With the passage of time and the tidal wave of polarisation, scapegoating and hatred that seems to be sweeping the world, the urgent moral duty to preserve the lessons of the Holocaust could not be greater.

This recommitment by our new government to creating a permanent Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, on a most suitable site, sends a timely message, not only about our national undertaking to remembering this dark period of our history but, more importantly, about the kind of future we want to create together.

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/significant-step-forward-for-the-uks-national-holocaust-memorial>

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## Israel

**See also the King's Speech, and the Commons Debate on the Address that are included in the Home Affairs section above.**

### UK Parliament Early Day Motions

**Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [11] Peace in Israel and Gaza** – That this House expresses its devastation at the complete humanitarian disaster in Gaza with tens of thousands of innocent Palestinians killed, millions displaced and thousands of homes destroyed; urges Hamas to unconditionally and immediately release the hostages taken following the deplorable attacks on 7 October 2023; notes the unacceptable illegal settler violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories left unchecked by the Israeli Government; welcomes any sanctions by the Government against extremist Israeli settlers who have committed human rights abuses against Palestinian communities in the West Bank; further urges the Government to sanction all violent settlers and their connected entities; calls on the Government to uphold international law and the judgments of international courts under all circumstances; further notes that the only path to regional security is a two-state solution based on 1967 borders with Hamas not in power; condemns Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's repeated assertions that there is no future for a Palestinian state; urges the Government to immediately recognise the state of Palestine; and further urges the Government to call for an immediate bilateral ceasefire in Gaza, which will allow an end to the humanitarian devastation, get the hostages out and provide an opportunity for a political process leading to a two-state solution, providing security and dignity for all peoples in Palestine and Israel.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62324>

**Richard Burgon (Labour) [14] International Criminal Court, Gaza and the Rule of Law** – That this House rejects attempts by the previous Government to undermine the

International Criminal Court's (ICC) right to seek an arrest warrant against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for war crimes, following the decision by the ICC Chief Prosecutor to issue applications for arrest warrants for a number of Israeli and Hamas leaders in May 2024; opposes the decision by the previous Government to challenge the ICC's jurisdiction over Israeli actions in Gaza; notes that the ICC has a well-established jurisdiction over Israeli actions in Palestine; believes that the UK, as an ICC member committed to a rules-based international order, should protect the Court's independence and reject any efforts to impede or interfere with its work, or to intimidate or retaliate against its officials; further believes that attempts to hinder the ICC's work not only risk undermining accountability for war crimes in Gaza but also weaken the wider rule of law and international justice as a whole; calls on the UK Government to do all it can to support the International Criminal Court in its efforts to ensure accountability and justice for the victims of war crimes; and further calls on the UK Government to immediately drop the challenge made by the previous Government regarding arrest warrants and the ICC's jurisdiction over Israeli actions in Gaza.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62330>

## Department for Business and Trade

### **Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet; Israel**

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66952855ce1fd0da7b592577/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2024-07-18.pdf>

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

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66952ddaab418ab05559259d/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2024-07-18.pdf>

## United Nations

### **Humanitarian Situation in Gaza 'a Moral Stain on Us All', Secretary-General Tells Security Council, Stressing International Law Must Be Respected by All**

... Last December, the hostilities in Gaza and Israel — that have created appalling human suffering, physical destruction, and collective trauma — led to my exceptional invocation of Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations. Seven months later, the war rages on. Over 38,000 Palestinians have been reported killed according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza — with some 87,000 injured and thousands missing — many of whom are women and children. Over 1,500 Israelis and foreign nationals have been reported killed according to Israeli sources — with more than 7,000 injured and 125 hostages still held in Gaza.

The humanitarian support system in Gaza is close to total collapse. There is a complete breakdown of public order. And the spectre of further regional spillover is increasing by the day, as exchanges of fire across the Blue Line between Hizbullah and Israel continue. Nothing can justify the horrific acts of terror committed by Hamas and other armed groups in Israel on 7 October 2023. And nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.

In recent weeks, Israeli military operations and fighting intensified across Gaza. Rockets continue to be launched by Palestinian armed groups from Gaza towards Israeli population centres. Rafah is in ruins — and the Rafah crossing remains closed, further hampering humanitarian operations. Almost 2 million people have been displaced — nearly the entire population of Gaza — and many of them multiple times. Nowhere in Gaza is safe.

Meanwhile, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification partnership reports that

almost half a million people face catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Communicable diseases are on the rise. Chokeholds on the fuel-supply have severely reduced access to water, sanitation, hygiene and health services. ...

The parties must fundamentally and urgently change their conduct ... The humanitarian notification system and other coordination mechanisms are not effective, resulting in delayed and aborted aid missions and the exposure of humanitarians to mortal risk. The UN still does not have the necessary security equipment in Gaza to manage the extreme risks that our personnel face. ...

We need consistent access through all crossing points and better access to those in need, wherever they are. It is long past time for a safe enabling environment for effective humanitarian operations in Gaza, in line with international humanitarian law.

As much of the world's attention is focused on Gaza, the occupied West Bank — including East Jerusalem — faces perilous conditions. High levels of violence persist — including by Israeli security forces, settlers and Palestinian armed groups.

Between 7 October 2023 and 17 July 2024, 557 Palestinians — including 138 children — were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem; the vast majority were killed in the context of Israeli security operations, including during subsequent exchanges with Palestinian armed groups; these include 540 killed by Israeli forces, 10 by Israeli settlers and 7 where it remains unknown whether the perpetrators were Israeli forces or settlers. During the same period, 22 Israelis, including 9 members of Israeli forces, were killed by Palestinians in Israel and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, Israeli measures are undermining the Palestinian Authority, crippling the Palestinian economy and driving instability. ...

Recent developments are driving a stake through the heart of any prospect for a two-State solution. The geography of the occupied West Bank is steadily being altered through Israeli administrative and legal steps. The seizure of large land parcels in strategic areas and changes to planning, land management and governance are expected to significantly accelerate settlement-expansion. ...

If left unaddressed, these measures risk causing irreparable damage. ... All settlement activity must cease immediately. Israeli settlements are a flagrant violation of international law and a key obstacle to peace. The violence must end, and the perpetrators of the violence must be swiftly brought to justice. Israel must ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population.

The United Nations is sparing no effort to deliver humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza and to secure the release of all hostages held by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups. Those being held hostage have been suffering along with their families for far too long. We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. ...

We must refocus on finding a political solution that will end the occupation and resolve the conflict in line with international law, and relevant United Nations resolutions. Ensuring that governance is restored in Gaza under a single, legitimate Palestinian Government is essential to that effort.

Support to the Palestinian Authority is critical. Its institutions must be strengthened so that it is prepared to govern and lead recovery and reconstruction efforts in Gaza.

All those with influence must take the urgent steps needed to enable the parties to re-engage on the long-delayed political path towards ending the occupation and resolving the conflict. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22310.doc.htm>

**'This Terrible War Must End', Secretary-General's Chef de Cabinet Urges Security Council, amid Growing Calls for Immediate Ceasefire to End Bloodshed in Gaza Delegates Warn Israel's Continuous Attacks in Strip, Settlement Expansion in West Bank, Regional Spillover Threatening Prospect for Two-State Solution**

The Security Council today heard growing calls for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, as speakers reiterated their concern about the ongoing war's unspeakable toll on civilians and the dwindling prospect for a two-State solution for Israel and Palestine. ...

**Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine**, noting that trees are often planted by those who know they will never sit in its shade, said the international law-based order is similar: it was put in place by those who endured the worst tragedies, tree by tree, to provide shade to future generations. "Israel has uprooted every one of those trees in Gaza," he said, noting that it has killed those most entitled to protection — civilians, including children, humanitarians, doctors and journalists. Its own soldiers do not hesitate to share recordings of their crimes with the world. "What is happening in Gaza will go down as the most documented genocide in history," he said, adding that Israel has also manufactured a humanitarian catastrophe with famine at its core, wielding starvation, dehydration and the spread of diseases as the ultimate weapons. "Two million people, who were subjected to a 17-year old blockade are now confronted with a hermetic siege, dying of hunger and disease, while food and medicine are available only meters away," he said.

Rejecting Israel's use of security as a pretext for killing Palestinians, he said security cannot be achieved through injustice. Starting with the Nakba of 1948, which attempted to uproot an entire people, he pointed out, successive Israeli Governments have tried to get rid of the Palestinian problem through occupation, invasion and blockading. They managed to avoid the only solution possible: freedom for the Palestinian people and peace for all. "There is a reason Israel behaves this way," he said, adding that everything in its history has convinced the country it will get away with it. ...

Although "there is more convergence on the Palestine question than on any other matter on the international agenda", he said, "one isolated, fanatic Government" is rejecting this consensus and attacking the international law-based order, accusing its representatives of terrorism and antisemitism. ...

**The representative of Israel** said that "Iran has been obsessed with killing Jews everywhere" and is exporting its bloodshed and destruction to all corners of the region. However, instead of focusing on the cause, the Council focuses on the symptom of the situation in the Middle East, he observed, adding that the true reason for the devastation and bloodshed is "never to be named". Practising such "wilful blindness", this Council regularly ignores the issue, preferring to focus on Israel. ... Despite chanting "death to Israel", Iran's leaders still receive the red-carpet treatment at the Council, he said, noting that, recently, that country launched over 350 missiles and drones at Israel. "It has taken its annihilationist obsession against Israel to a whole new level," with a digital countdown clock in Tehran showing how many days remain until the destruction of Israel by the year 2040. "Where is the outrage?", he asked, warning that Iran is weeks from having enough enriched uranium to develop a nuclear bomb.

"If we reach a situation of full-scale war in Lebanon, it is only because Hizbullah has shot thousands of rockets at Israeli civilians with Iran's support and funding," he asserted, urging the Council to take immediate action. ...

**Sergey V. Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Council President for July** ... said that the "colonial and mandate-based past of the Middle East and North Africa remains a burden on the countries of the region" — a situation "made worse by the West's new geopolitical experiments". ... Stressing, however, that the most critical and urgent issue today is the Palestinian one, he recalled the Council's adopted resolutions and observed that "the ongoing bloodshed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory only reaffirms that all of these decisions have remained on paper". He also

pointed out that 10 months of conflict in Gaza “have yielded twice as many civilian casualties as 10 years of the conflict in Ukraine”. ...

**Wolfgang Amadeus Brühlhart, Special Envoy on the Middle East and North Africa of Switzerland**, emphasized that the lack of implementation of the four Council resolutions on the situation since 7 October 2023 is “unacceptable” and urged intensified efforts to break the spiral of violence and return to “the principles of humanity that have been flouted for too long in this conflict”. He also called for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate, unconditional release of the hostages ... Safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access must be provided through all possible crossing points throughout the Gaza Strip. A ceasefire in Gaza will make a major contribution to regional de-escalation. But, that is “not enough”, he said, calling for a return to the path of peace and respect for international law in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. To this end, Israel must refrain from measures to introduce demographic and administrative changes in the occupied territory. ...

**The representative of the United States**, spotlighting the efforts of her country, Qatar, Egypt and other partners to bring about an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages and a surge aid to Palestinians in need, said “there has been progress”. The Council must keep pressure on Hamas to accept the deal and begin implementing it without delay, she said, adding that Israel must take additional immediate steps to eliminate barriers to the delivery of aid at scale. ... “We must not forget about the situation in the West Bank,” she added, noting the uptick in deadly violence against Palestinian civilians by violent extremist settlers. Recalling her country’s latest round of designations naming three Israeli individuals and five entities connected to violence in the West Bank, she also expressed concern about Israel’s recent announcement expanding settlements. ...

**The representative of China** said that the situation in Gaza deteriorates as “the red lines of international law and international humanitarian law have been breached time and again”. The international community must promote a ceasefire to save lives and “alleviate the ongoing disaster without delay”, he stressed ... Israel must immediately cease all military operations in Gaza and stop the collective punishment of its people ...

**The representative of the United Kingdom** said that Keir Starmer, her country’s new Prime Minister, set out the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire, immediate release of all hostages and a surge in humanitarian aid into Gaza. ... She then called on Israel to protect civilians, allow unfettered aid into Gaza and ensure the UN and humanitarian actors have the access and equipment necessary to safely get aid to those in need. She rejected Israel’s declarations of 2,357 hectares of land in the West Bank as “State lands” — the largest such action since the Oslo Accords. ...

**The representative of Japan**, highlighting the killing of at least 90 people in the air strike on a so-called “safe zone” and the destruction of UNRWA headquarters, said “these are just two notable examples of the many horrors happening regularly on the ground”. Calling on Hamas to stop using civilians as human shields, he expressed concern about the nearly 2 million internally displaced Palestinians, many displaced multiple times, with little to no access to food, water, medicine and other basics. ...

**The representative of France** ...expressing solidarity with the Israeli people and outrage regarding the Israeli strikes on Al-Mawasi camp and an UNRWA school ... said that country must uphold international law. Settlement activity must come to an end, he stressed, adding that settlers must be held accountable. Reaffirming support for a political solution, he also expressed concern about the ongoing clashes between Israel and Lebanon, and called for restraint from both parties. ...

**Ali Bagheri, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran**, said that over the past 285 days, the Israeli regime has been committing extensive international crimes in Gaza. In this deadly campaign of brutality and terror, about 20 people are killed or injured every hour. Israel has destroyed over 80 per cent of residential areas and all infrastructure, including hospitals, mosques, churches, educational centres and historical sites in Gaza. Further, it has weaponized starvation as a means of war by blocking aid routes. ...



Israel continues its brutal crimes against Palestine with full impunity.

Recently, “Israel’s warmongering leaders have been under the illusion that expanding the war to Lebanon can save them from the quagmire of Gaza”, he said, noting that this is a dangerous miscalculation that threatens to spiral an already chaotic situation out of control. ...

**Abdallah Bou Habib, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of Lebanon**, warned of the danger of the war expanding into his country, citing dozens of statements by senior Israeli officials threatening to burn his nation and “blow it back to the Stone Age”. ...

**Abdullah Ali A. Al-Yahya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait**, said Gaza has turned into a bleak landscape of destruction, with 40,000 deaths, mostly women and children. The total number of victims under the rubble is unknown, he added. “Israel has turned schools into battlefields and hospitals into landscapes of pain and powerlessness,” he said. Despite the efforts to bring an end to these attacks, Israel continues to cut lives short without any distinction. “These operations have no military objectives, but aim to systematically destroy and terrorize Palestinians,” he asserted, adding that the Israeli authorities are committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. ...

**The representative of Iraq, speaking for the Arab Group**, condemned Israeli aggression and crimes against humanity in Gaza, including the record killing of children, journalists and humanitarian workers. Emphasizing that Israel has destroyed homes and eradicated entire families, he noted that it has deliberately targeted hospitals, schools, universities, churches and mosques, as well as UN facilities. Israel also prevented international journalists from entering Gaza to cover the horrors, in addition to setting obstacles to the delivery of water, food and medicine. ...

Also condemning the settlements and the settler violence against Palestinians, alterations to the status quo of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the defamation campaign against UNRWA, he said the Palestine question is central to the Arab world. Israel can never enjoy peace if Palestinian people do not have an independent State. ...

**The representative of Qatar**, associating herself with the Arab Group, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Non-Aligned Movement, said almost 130,000 civilians have been killed and injured in Gaza and 2 million people displaced due to targeted starvation and indiscriminate shelling of homes, hospitals and schools. Accordingly, she called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire that would ensure the exchange of prisoners of hostages, the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to pave the way to a serious peace process and a just political settlement. ...

**The representative of Egypt** observed: “Here we meet again as the war is raging on in Gaza.” Israel’s illegal aggression against the Gaza Strip has caused unprecedented death, displacement and destruction — “but the deterioration does not stop here”, he said, underlining the serious risk of regional escalation. Detailing the destruction of educational facilities, rampant food insecurity and the Israeli Government’s moves to annex further territory in the West Bank, he asked aloud if Israel expects “that the Arab peoples will continue to silently watch this ongoing massacre without doing anything”. ...

**The representative of Jordan**, condemning the genocide and killing of around 40,000 Palestinians, asked: “What are we doing” in the face of this unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe? Highlighting Israel’s disregard for United Nations principles and resolutions, he said that, last week, the Israeli occupation blatantly targeted and bombed internally displaced persons’ camps. The international community must hold Israel accountable and respond to these violations of the Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians. ...

**The representative of the United Arab Emirates** ... underscored that “the killing and destruction witnessed in Gaza during the past 10 months violate all legal boundaries and constitute a humanitarian disaster”. ... Furthermore, Israel’s attacks and restrictions on the movement of humanitarian aid have brought the health system to almost complete

paralysis with severe shortages in fuel and medical supplies, with a famine crisis looming. However, the psychological effects of the war are no less severe than its physical effects, he stressed, adding that “the horrific scenes of this war will remain in the conscience of the peoples in this region and around the world for many decades”. ...

**The representative of South Africa** ... underscored that “the question of peace in the Middle East will not be resolved unless the question of Palestine is resolved.” ... the world is witnessing the blatant disregard for international human rights law and international humanitarian law by parties to the conflict in Gaza. “We are appalled by the continuing violence against Palestinians, the shocking targeted attacks on schools and medical facilities sheltering Palestinians,” he stated. Palestinians have endured decades of discrimination, which has escalated in the current war and genocide against them. ...

**The representative of Syria**, noting Israel’s “genocidal war” on Gaza and repeated aggression against Syria and Lebanon, asked what would push the Council to take further steps. He also asked why Western countries remained silent as Israel committed crimes against humanity before the eyes of the entire world. ... Spotlighting a “flagrant aerial attack” by Israel on an inhabited building in Damascus on 14 July, he said: “Such aggressive acts portend the spread of war in the entire region — and the world — if Israel is not contained and held accountable for its crimes.” ...

**Sven Koopmans, European Union Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process**, speaking in its capacity as observer, said there must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, immediate release of all hostages and an immediate substantial increase in the flow of humanitarian assistance. “How can anyone condition the effective delivery of food to hungry people and medical support to the wounded and pregnant, on the outcome of a political negotiation? How can anyone hold innocent civilians hostage for nine months in a war?”, he asked. Such realities are an affront to humanity and international law, he said, also underscoring that the services UNRWA provides in Gaza and across the region are essential. ...

He added: “We must all condemn terrorism in Israel and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by all perpetrators, regardless of where they come from, who they are, what their ethnicity, their passport or their status is.” He also expressed concern about attempts to change the religious equilibrium of the holy city of Jerusalem. Expressing support for the Palestinian Authority as it undertakes the necessary reforms, he said Israel must stop actions weakening it. A regional war would be a catastrophe for all, he said, adding that the Union will strengthen the Lebanese armed forces and UNIFIL. Nobody who rejects the two-State solution has offered a credible alternative. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15767.doc.htm>

## Human Rights Watch

### **October 7 Crimes Against Humanity, War Crimes by Hamas-led Groups: Armed Groups Holding Hostages Should Free Them Immediately**

Hamas’ military wing – the Qassam Brigades – and at least four other Palestinian armed groups committed numerous war crimes and crimes against humanity against civilians during the October 7, 2023 assault on southern Israel, Human Rights Watch said in a report released today. Governments with influence over the armed groups should press for the urgent release of civilian hostages, an ongoing war crime, and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

The 236-page report, “‘I Can’t Erase All the Blood from My Mind’: Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Assault on Israel,” documents several dozen cases of serious violations of [international humanitarian law](#) by Palestinian armed groups at nearly all the civilian attack sites on October 7. These include the war crimes and crimes against humanity of

murder, hostage-taking, and other grave offenses. Human Rights Watch also examined the role of various armed groups and their coordination before and during the attacks. ... “Human Rights Watch research found that the Hamas-led assault on October 7 was designed to kill civilians and take as many people as possible hostage,” said Ida Sawyer, crisis and conflict director at Human Rights Watch. “The October 7 atrocities should spur a global call to action for an end to all abuses against civilians in Israel and Palestine.” ... Between October 2023 and June 2024, Human Rights Watch interviewed 144 people including 94 Israeli and other nationals who witnessed the October 7 assault, victims’ family members, first responders, and medical experts. Researchers also [verified and analyzed](#) over 280 photographs and videos taken during the assault and posted on social media or shared directly with Human Rights Watch. ...

The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, the Palestinian movement that has governed the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip since 2007, led the assault. Human Rights Watch confirmed the participation of four other Palestinian armed groups ...

The armed groups committed numerous violations of the laws of war that amount to war crimes, including attacks targeting civilians and civilian objects; willful killing of people in custody; cruel and other inhumane treatment; crimes involving sexual and gender-based violence; hostage-taking; mutilation and despoiling bodies; use of human shields; and pillage and looting.

The widespread attack was directed against a civilian population. Killing civilians and taking hostages were central aims of the planned attack, not an afterthought, a plan gone awry, or isolated acts. ...

Within days of the attacks, Israeli authorities [cut off essential services](#) to Gaza’s population and [blocked](#) the [entry](#) of all but a trickle of fuel and [humanitarian aid](#), amounting to collective punishment – which is a war crime – exacerbating the impact of Israel’s more than 17-year illegal closure of Gaza and its crimes of [apartheid and persecution](#) against Palestinians. ...

More than 37,900 Palestinians, most of them civilians, were killed between October 7 and July 1, according to the [Ministry of Health in Gaza](#). Israeli forces have reduced large parts of Gaza to rubble and left the vast majority of Gaza’s population [displaced](#) and in harm’s way. ...

“Atrocities do not justify atrocities,” Sawyer said. “To stop the endless cycle of abuses in Israel and Palestine, it’s critical to address root causes and hold violators of grave crimes to account. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/17/october-7-crimes-against-humanity-war-crimes-hamas-led-groups>

**“I Can’t Erase All the Blood from My Mind”: Palestinian Armed Groups’ October 7 Assault on Israel**

[https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2024/07/israel\\_palestine0724web\\_2.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/07/israel_palestine0724web_2.pdf)

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## **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>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

### **£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/](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/](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>

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission Strategic Plan 2025-2028** (closing date 3 October 2024)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/our-strategic-plan-consultation-2025-2028>

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