



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

House of Commons Debate

Debate on the Address: Immigration and Home Affairs

col 562 **Mark Ferguson (Labour)** [Maiden Speech]: ... In our thriving Jewish community, who I am proud to represent, stands Gateshead's Talmudical college, the oldest yeshiva in the country, founded in 1929. I am told that it is the foundation upon which Gateshead gained its reputation as the Oxbridge of the Jewish world. ...

col 585 **Nesil Caliskan (Labour)**: ... I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor, the right hon. Dame Margaret Hodge ... Dame Margaret has become known not only for her tenaciousness, but for her warmth. ... Dame Margaret was always fiercely brave in standing up for what she thought was right, regardless of political party.

As I prepared for my maiden speech, I thought about some of the parallels between Margaret's family and my own. Margaret's family were Jewish, escaping Nazi-occupied Europe, and Margaret herself fled Egypt for the United Kingdom in 1948 in fear of persecution. My grandparents, Osman and Neriman Tango, are of Turkish Cypriot Muslim background. They escaped violence in Cyprus, arriving in London on Christmas eve in 1972. My mum, Alev, was born in Cyprus in 1967 and was cared for in a United Nations tent. The three of them sought safety in the melting pot that is London's east end. They spoke no English, they had no qualifications and no money, but they were safe. ...

col 614 **Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour)**: ... I will focus the majority of my remarks on the dreadful legislative legacy on civil liberties left behind by the previous Government. If we take simply the broad heading of our liberties, the previous Government curbed the right to protest, to free assembly, to freedom of speech, to organise in trade unions and to freedom from covert operations by the state. The right to vote has been suppressed. Religious freedom was attacked through the demonisation of Muslims and Muslim communities. We cannot possibly pose as champions of freedom and democracy while these stains remain on our statute book. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-23/debates/C133D2F0-7130-4DE8-BA4D-6E04AD0F5703/ImmigrationAndHomeAffairs>

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)

Convictions of Anjem Choudary and Khaled Hussein

Following a six-week trial at Woolwich Crown Court, Anjem Choudary, 57, of east London, was today found guilty of directing a terrorist organisation, membership of a proscribed organisation and encouraging support for a terrorist organisation.

Khaleed Hussein, 29, of Edmonton, Canada, was also found guilty of membership of a proscribed organisation.

Bethan David, Head of the CPS Counter Terrorism Division, said: "It is clear that both men were members of Al-Muhajiroun and both men had a radical mindset.

"Anjem Choudary was responsible for directing an international terrorist organisation and Hussain provided him support.

"This organisation has been banned in the UK since 2010 because of the danger it poses. Such extremist views are a threat to our society, and I am pleased the jury found him guilty of his crimes."

"The CPS will always seek to prosecute those who support and encourage terrorism."

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-statement-convictions-anjem-choudary-and-khaled-hussein>

TOP

Israel

House of Commons Debate

Debate on the Address: Immigration and Home Affairs

col 552 Zarah Sultana (Labour): ... As we debate here in Westminster, raining down hell on Gaza is Israel's fleet of F-35 fighter jets—planes described by their manufacturer as the most lethal fighter jet in the world. Israel has armed those jets with 2,000 lb bombs with a lethal radius of 365 m—the equivalent of 58 football pitches. A recent UN report identified the bombs as having been used in emblematic cases of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on Gaza—attacks that clearly violate international law. I raise this because every F-35 fighter jet is made in part here in Britain, in a deal estimated to be worth £368 million.

col 553 That is just one example of Israel's use of British-made arms in its assault on Gaza, which has killed more than 38,000 people—disproportionately women and children. The legal threshold for these sales to be banned has clearly been met, so they should be banned. There is a clear risk that British-made weapons might be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian law, hence why, in February, UN experts called on these sales to end immediately. Other countries—Spain, Canada and the Netherlands to name just a few—have suspended sales. Previous British Governments suspended sales after far fewer Israeli assaults: Margaret Thatcher in 1982, Tony Blair in 2002, Gordon Brown in 2009 and David Cameron in 2014.

Today, the Palestinian people face death and destruction on a scale unlike anything they have faced before, but British-made arms are still being licensed to Israel and used to kill innocent people. Again, I say to our new Government: it is time for us to uphold international law and end arms sales to Israel. ...

col 559 Bob Blackman (Conservative): ... The hon. Member for Coventry South (Zarah Sultana) ... raised the issue of what is going on in Gaza right now. I noticed that she made no mention of the hostages who are still held by the terrorists and the need for them to be returned. Once that happens, the weight of the world can lead to a cessation of hostilities and, indeed, a peaceful resolution in the middle east. ...

Sammy Wilson (DUP): Did the hon. Gentleman also note that there was no mention at all of the cynical way in which Hamas have used civilians as human shields? They have used their schools, hospitals and homes. They are guilty of causing many of the civilian deaths that have occurred, because they have cynically used their own people. ...

col 560 **Bob Blackman:** ... The reality is that on 7 October, the Jewish people suffered the worst atrocity since the Holocaust. We must remember that that is what happened, but we must also recognise the deprivation that the Palestinians in Gaza are suffering at this point in time. I am sure that the new Government will seek to ensure that justice is brought to all, and that the terrorists are not allowed to thrive or gain. ...

col 614 **Bell Ribeiro-Addy (Labour):** ... I was also pleased to support the amendment in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry South (Zarah Sultana) to end the supply of arms to Israel and uphold international law. The Government have called for a ceasefire and we need to back that up with action. ...

col 620 **Helena Dolimore (Labour Co-op):** ... We are at a time in history when more children are growing up in conflict than ever before. Rightly, much focus has been devoted recently to the appalling events in Israel and Palestine—there, too, it is children bearing the brunt of war. We must redouble our efforts to bring about peaceful solutions to all these conflicts, and must remember that all the global issues we face, from climate change to migration, can only be solved by working across borders with our international allies and through strong, multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-23/debates/C133D2F0-7130-4DE8-BA4D-6E04AD0F5703/ImmigrationAndHomeAffairs>

The amendment (amendment (c)) referred to above can be read at

<https://commonsbusiness.parliament.uk/Document/88259/Html>

House of Lords Ministerial Statement and Q&A

NATO and European Political Community Meetings

[The Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons](#) was read in the Lords.

col 421 **Lord True (Conservative):** ... We live in a world of hatred running rife, murderous bloody war, the ambition to annihilate whole nations and, as the Statement said so eloquently, actions so heinous that they target women and children, and even glory in it. Against that, what we say may seem trivial, but it cannot help to create the right climate to call a political opponent such as Mr Trump a would-be dictator, a neo-Nazi or even Hitler. I think the people who invaded Normandy in 1944 and liberated Belsen and Auschwitz knew what a racist and a Nazi really was. ...

col 422 Finally, the Prime Minister spoke about the situation in the Middle East. We all want to see progress towards a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace, prosperity and security. However, as we make progress towards that goal, our friend and ally Israel must have the right to defend itself against the threat it is facing, demonstrated by the drone strike on Tel Aviv at the end of last week by the Iranian-allied Houthi rebels. ...

col 423 **Lord Newby (Liberal Democrat):** ... the situation in Gaza goes from bad to worse. We obviously welcome the Government's commitment to an immediate ceasefire and their practical decision to resume support to UNRWA, but we believe they should go further now by ending arms exports to Israel and recognising a Palestinian state. On the ICJ opinion, we are pleased to hear the Prime Minister's reiteration of UK support for the work of the court. I therefore hope that the Government will respect all its judgments. We must not get ourselves into the position of supporting the work of the court only when it delivers politically convenient opinions. ...

col 425 **The Lord Privy Seal (Baroness Smith of Basildon):** ... As we have said so many times, it is absolutely right that Israel has the right to defend itself. How it does so is also very important—as long as it acts within international law. After the appalling attacks on 7 October, it was shocking and upsetting to hear that news coming through around the world. The way forward has to be a ceasefire; it is hard to see any way of getting all the hostages released unless there is a ceasefire. We want all the hostages to return home to their families. Anyone who met the families of those hostages when they visited your Lordships' House will know of their deep despair, as well as their courage, as they wait for their family members to come home. ...

col 427 **Lord Bellingham (Conservative):** My Lords, the Leader of the House mentioned the restoration of funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency. Obviously, she and the Government will be aware of the level of infiltration by Hamas of that organisation. A number of its staff took part in the appalling evil of 7 October. A number of its schools have funded the storage of weapons. Furthermore, Hamas has been using tunnels under its headquarters for terrorism purposes. Can she assure the House that this organisation really has turned a new leaf and sorted out these problems, and has been properly investigated? Can we really be 100% sure that UK taxpayers' money will not be used to fund terror and spread hatred?

Baroness Smith of Basildon: ... I reiterate, and will do so, I am sure, on many occasions, that we utterly condemn Hamas—not just for the attacks on 7 October but for its terrorism and the way in which it behaves. That is an unequivocal attack on Hamas. On the allegations that were raised, there was an independent report from the UN, and we are reassured after that report that UNRWA is ensuring that it meets the highest standards of neutrality and strengthens its procedures, including on vetting, so that there is no contact. That does not for one moment take away from the seriousness of the allegations made. I will also say to the noble Lord that the experience that UNRWA has, its logistical capacity, knowledge and infrastructure are the best way of getting aid to where it is desperately needed—I know that he feels the same about the aid issue. Other countries have felt the same, and the EU and Japan have reinstated funding. I am in no way condoning anything that Hamas does—the noble Lord can be reassured on that—but we need to get aid in and have had assurances via the UN and that report.

col 429 **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Labour):** ... I welcome ... reference to the restoration of funding to UNRWA and the unequivocal position on the ECHR. Those are important principles, and I refer also to where the Statement says in relation to the Middle East “we call on all sides to recommit to stability, peace, normalisation”.

That applies both to Israel and to Gaza. It is vital. Can my noble friend the Minister indicate whether discussions have taken place within NATO and the European Political Community about a reconstruction fund for those areas similar to what we had in Northern Ireland in terms of the International Fund for Ireland?

Baroness Smith of Basildon: I am not sure whether my noble friend means a reconstruction fund in terms of Ukraine or wider. In terms of Ukraine, of course, there has been a discussion about how we use the frozen Russian assets and sanctions. ...

col 430 **Baroness Foster of Oxtou (Conservative):** My Lords, I echo the comments made by my noble friend regarding UNRWA, because we know that it has been a corrupt organisation and that there were members who were involved in the attacks on 7 October. My point is about the £84 million that the noble Baroness said government was going to give in aid to Africa and the Middle East, which sounds very promising. Can the Leader of the House please give us details of what those projects are going to be? Can she also tell us who will be responsible for the oversight of them ...

Baroness Smith of Basildon: I do not have full details of all the programmes yet

... However, work will be around the issues that drive those people to leave their countries. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-07-23/debates/9D11784B-9E44-4F67-AE3E-FA292ED2A5A4/NATOAndEuropeanPoliticalCommunityMeetings>

The ICJ Opinion referred to above by Lord Newby can be read at

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.pdf>

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [202] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will (a) take policy steps and (b) bring forward legislative proposals to recognise the Palestinian state.

Hamish Falconer: Palestinian statehood is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people. During the Foreign Secretary's visit to Israel and the OPTs on 14 July, he reiterated our commitment to recognising a Palestinian state at a time that is most conducive to the peace process, with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/202>

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Paula Barker (Labour) [526] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will have discussions with his Israeli counterpart on the potential UK recognition of a Palestinian state.

Hamish Falconer: During the Foreign Secretary's visit on 14 July to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories he emphasised the need for a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution in meetings with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Katz.

Palestinian statehood is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people. The UK is committed to recognising a Palestinian state at a time that is most conducive to the peace process, with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/526>

Israel: Palestinians

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [100] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take diplomatic steps at the UN General Assembly to help de-escalate the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

Hamish Falconer: The Government is determined to do all we can to help bring the conflict in Gaza to an end and make progress towards long-term peace and security in the Middle East, including through the auspices of the UN. We are pushing for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the upholding of international law and protection of civilians, and unfettered humanitarian access to enable a rapid increase of aid into Gaza.

We want a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution: a safe, secure Israel alongside a viable, sovereign Palestinian state.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/100>

Gaza: Ceasefires and Hostage Taking

Andrew Pakes (Labour Co-op) [397] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps his Department plans to

take to help (a) secure an immediate ceasefire and (b) the release of hostages in Gaza.

Hamish Falconer: This Government is determined to do all we can to help bring the conflict in Gaza to an end and make progress towards long-term peace and security in the Middle East. We are pushing for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the protection of civilians and unfettered humanitarian access to enable a rapid increase of aid into Gaza. We want a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution: a safe, secure Israel alongside a viable, sovereign Palestinian state.

The Foreign Secretary discussed these issues with Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Herzog, PM Mustafa and others during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 14-15 July. He also met with the families of those murdered and taken hostage by Hamas and assured them that the UK will continue to push for an immediate release of all hostages.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/397>

Gaza: Ceasefires

Claire Hanna (SDLP) [201] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to help negotiate a ceasefire in Israel and Gaza.

Hamish Falconer: This Government is determined to do all we can to help bring the conflict in Gaza to an end and make progress towards long-term peace and security in the Middle East. We are pushing for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the upholding of international law and protection of civilians, and unfettered humanitarian access to enable a rapid increase of aid into Gaza.

During the Foreign Secretary's visit to Israel and the OPTs on 14-15 July he met with Prime Minister Netanyahu, President Herzog, and Prime Minister Mustafa amongst others. The Prime Minister also spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas of the Palestinian Authority on Sunday 7 July. The Foreign Secretary has also discussed the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including the need for an immediate ceasefire, with regional and international partners.

We want a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution: a safe, secure Israel alongside a viable, sovereign Palestinian state.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/201>

UNRWA: Finance

Laurence Turner (Labour) [756] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will resume funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency.

Hamish Falconer: As the Foreign Secretary announced on 19 July, UNRWA is absolutely central to humanitarian efforts on Gaza. It also plays a critical role in the wider region in providing essential services, including healthcare and education, to Palestinian refugees. The UK is committed to supporting UNRWA's lifesaving work, and will resume funding, releasing £21 million new funding for its work in Gaza and the region.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-18/756>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-19/debates/CEEB9B68-0D16-45BD-85E3-AA2F02F415DE/IsraelAndGaza#contribution-7C03A336-9D74-412B-AB60-6625EC6B7641>

UNRWA

Tim Roca (Labour) [445] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to meet with United Nations Relief and Works

Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) officials.

Hamish Falconer: The Foreign Secretary called UNRWA Commissioner General Lazzarini on 19 July to discuss the reinstatement of UK funding. Development Minister Anneliese Dodds also met with Lazzarini following the announcement on 19 July. They discussed how the UK's £21 million of new funding will support UNRWA's lifesaving work in Gaza and the provision of basic services in the region. We also condemned the killing of almost 200 UNRWA workers in the conflict. The Foreign Secretary also spoke with UNRWA Gaza Director Scott Anderson on 15 July during his visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They discussed the above, and the need for the protection of civilians in Gaza.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/445>

Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

Andrew Pakes (Labour Co-op) [396] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the security of UK-funded humanitarian projects in Gaza.

Hamish Falconer: UK funding is delivered mainly through trusted international partners on the ground. Humanitarian actors can only operate effectively if they have access to the whole of Gaza and it is safe for them to work there.

That is why we are calling for unfettered access for humanitarian organisations alongside an immediate ceasefire, the protection of civilians, the release of all hostages and a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/396>

Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op) [99] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the amount of (a) food, (b) medical and (c) other humanitarian aid that is able to enter Gaza.

Hamish Falconer: The UK is committed to getting humanitarian aid to the people in Gaza who desperately need it. The Foreign Secretary announced on 19 July that we will restart funding to UNRWA, releasing £21 million for Gaza and the region. We have also announced an additional £5.5 million to UK NGO UK-Med so they can continue their work in Gaza saving lives and delivering emergency medical care to those most in need.

During the Foreign Secretary's visit to Israel on 14-15 July he made clear to Prime Minister Netanyahu and other interlocutors that Israel must meet its commitment to "flood Gaza with aid".

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/99>

The announcements referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-19/debates/CEEB9B68-0D16-45BD-85E3-AA2F02F415DE/IsraelAndGaza#contribution-7C03A336-9D74-412B-AB60-6625EC6B7641>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-calls-for-immediate-ceasefire-in-gaza-on-first-visit-to-the-middle-east>

Gaza: Humanitarian Situation

Paula Barker (Labour) [525] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for his policies of the famine in Gaza.

Hamish Falconer: The people of Gaza face a humanitarian catastrophe. There is a high risk of famine across Gaza and more than 4 in every 5 people have been forced to flee their homes. During the Foreign Secretary's visit to Israel on 14-15

July he made clear to Prime Minister Netanyahu and other interlocutors that Israel must meet its commitment to "flood Gaza with aid". To further help those in need, the Foreign Secretary announced on 19 July that the UK will restart funding to UNRWA, and provide £21 million to support lifesaving work, including the provision of emergency food.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/525>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-07-19/debates/CEEB9B68-0D16-45BD-85E3-AA2F02F415DE/IsraelAndGaza#contribution-7C03A336-9D74-412B-AB60-6625EC6B7641>

Israeli Settlements

Paula Barker (Labour) [527] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with his Israel counterparts on illegal settlements in the West Bank.

Hamish Falconer: The UK's position on settlements is clear. They are illegal under international law, present an obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution. The Foreign Secretary raised this with Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Herzog during his visit to Israel and the OPTs on 14-15 July.

He stressed the UK's ambition and commitment to play its full diplomatic role in securing a ceasefire deal and creating the space for a credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution. Central to lasting peace and stability is an end to expanding illegal Israeli settlements and rising settler violence in the West Bank.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-17/527>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) [58] **UK arms exports to Israel** – That this House notes with deep concern possible breaches of International Humanitarian Law by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; expresses its concern that UK arms supplied to Israel may have been used to commit breaches of International Humanitarian Law; resolves to improve parliamentary scrutiny of the UK's control of arms exports; urges the UK Government to introduce a presumption of denial for arms exports to governments listed as human rights priorities in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's annual human rights report; therefore calls on the UK Government to cease the export of UK arms to Israel; recognises that the Palestinian Authority and Hamas are listed within the Occupied Palestinian Territories section of the 2022 FCDO human rights report; further calls on the UK Government to use all political and diplomatic powers to halt arms supplied to Hamas from Iran and other actors that are hostile to Israel; further urges the UK Government to take steps to secure an immediate bilateral ceasefire in Israel and Gaza to put an end to the humanitarian devastation in Gaza, get the hostages home and create space to secure a two-state solution; and believes that only two-states and a lasting peace can deliver the security and dignity that Israelis and Palestinians need and deserve.

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/62372>

Downing Street

PM meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan

... The Prime Minister updated the King on his Government's decision to lift the pause on

funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency, adding that he remained deeply concerned by the trajectory of the Israel-Gaza conflict.

Securing a ceasefire and ensuring the acceleration of aid into Gaza was the immediate priority, the leaders agreed. They also discussed the need to restore hope and the viability of peace on both sides.

Turning to the bilateral relationship, the leaders discussed the strong and long-standing security partnership between the UK and Jordan, as well as the opportunities to further technology, energy and education ties.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-king-abdullah-ii-of-jordan-23-july-2024>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Hamish Falconer MP Pleased to meet the Israeli Ambassador to the UK @TzipiHotovely. I stressed the need for an immediate ceasefire, our commitment to seeing all hostages released & increase aid. Only a two state solution can bring lasting peace for both sides. We will continue this dialogue. [plus photo]

<https://x.com/Hamish4Lincs/status/1816084824890700116>

Hamish Falconer MP Great to meet the Head of the Palestinian Mission to the UK @hzomlot. I underlined the UK's support for a two state solution, an immediate ceasefire in Gaza with an increase in aid and the release of all hostages, as well as the crucial role of a reformed Palestinian Authority.

<https://x.com/Hamish4Lincs/status/1816083353667301734>

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

United Nations

Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General

... *Question:* ... Yesterday, I think, 14 Palestinian factions, they gathered in Beijing and signed what they called the Declaration of Beijing. Has the Secretary-General followed this news? And what is the comment from the Secretary-General?

Spokesman: Yes, he has, of course, followed these developments. He very much welcomes the signing of the Beijing Declaration by the Palestinian factions. I think this is an important step towards furthering Palestinian unity. The Secretary-General encourages all factions to overcome their differences through dialogue and urges them to follow up on the commitments that were made in Beijing and the declaration they signed on to. We've seen this before, we've talked about it before, and I think all steps towards unity are to be welcomed and encouraged. Palestinian unity, as we've said many a time, is crucial for peace and security and for advancing the aspirations of the Palestinian people for self-determination and for a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State. I would also add, of course, that the Secretary-General appreciates the efforts made by the People's Republic of China, as well as efforts of other countries involved in facilitating the process. We remain committed to working with all stakeholders

towards a comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the vision of two States, living side by side in peace and security with secure, recognized borders on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, in line with UN resolutions and international law. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/db240723.doc.htm>

Palestinian Rights Committee Bureau Welcomes International Court of Justice's Landmark Advisory Opinion, Calls for Rapid Action by International Community

... The Committee Bureau welcomes the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 19 July on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, determining that Israel's long occupation of the Palestinian territory [Occupied Palestinian Territory] since 1967 is unlawful and that Israel must end it as rapidly as possible. This landmark Advisory Opinion is an important milestone in the Palestinian people's long struggle for justice.

In the Advisory Opinion, the Court, inter alia, urges Israel to cease immediately all new settlement activities, evacuate all settlers, and make reparation for the damage caused to all the natural or legal persons concerned in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Bureau underscores the imperative of respect for these calls and compliance by Israel with its international legal obligations.

To uphold the international legal system and safeguard peace and security, the Bureau also calls on all States to follow the Court's advice by not recognizing the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as legal and refraining any support that would sustain this situation. Protecting Palestinian land rights and its contiguity is essential for realizing Palestinian rights. For Member States yet to act, promptly recognizing the State of Palestine is a crucial step.

The world's highest UN judicial body determined that the unlawful occupation must end, affirming the long-standing views of the overwhelming majority of Member States, the Palestinian people, UN Special Rapporteurs and experts, scholars, civil society organizations and a legal study commissioned by the Committee, and holding Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for decades of well-documented human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law.

The Court's Advisory Opinion comes at a time when the war in Gaza is inflicting Palestinians unimaginable human loss and hardship, while heightened settler violence, systematic displacement and dispossession continue in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, underscoring the urgent need for international action to halt and reverse the occupation in all its manifestations. The occupation violates and impedes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and threatens the viability of a two-State solution as enshrined in UN resolutions.

Urgent and concerted international action must follow the Court's Advisory Opinion. The Bureau calls on the General Assembly, which requested the Advisory Opinion, and the Security Council to urgently consider the specific measures needed to end this unlawful occupation as fast as possible. The Committee stands ready to implement the mandate of the General Assembly in this endeavour.

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/gapal1470.doc.htm>

The ICJ Opinion referred to above can be read at

<https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/186/186-20240719-adv-01-00-en.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

Independent review into civil unrest in Leicester 2022 (closing date 5 August 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/independent-review-into-civil-unrest-in-leicester-2022/independent-review-into-civil-unrest-in-leicester-2022>

£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/

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<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>

TOP