



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Written Answers

Jews: Safety

Oliver Dowden (Conservative) [1930] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure the safety of Jewish communities.

Diana Johnson: The Jewish Community Protective Security (JCPS) Grant provides protective security measures (such as security personnel services, CCTV and alarm systems) at synagogues, Jewish educational establishments and community sites. The JCPS Grant is managed on behalf of the Home Office by the Community Security Trust.

The Community Security Trust will receive funding of £18 million per year through the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant from 2024/25 to 2027/28.

We continue to work closely with CST on how best to respond to live incidents that affect the Jewish communities in the UK.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/1930>

Information about the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant, referred to above, can be read at

<https://cst.org.uk/security/government-grant>

Universities: Antisemitism

Oliver Dowden (Conservative) [1928] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps her Department is taking to tackle anti-Semitism on university campuses.

Janet Daby: As autonomous institutions, universities are responsible for tackling antisemitism on campus and should have processes in place to deal with unlawful abuse and harassment.

Universities, as well as Jewish groups and other stakeholders, have told us that the previous government's Freedom of Speech Act prevented them from taking effective action. The department is stopping further commencement of the Act, in order to consider the options, including its repeal.

The department will continue to work closely with Jewish groups, including the Union for Jewish Students and the University Jewish Chaplaincy, to understand their concerns and what further action is needed.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/1928>

Hinduism: Safety

Oliver Dowden (Conservative) [1931] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure the safety of Hindu communities.

Diana Johnson: We are committed to protecting the right of individuals to freely practise their religion and we will not tolerate anti-Hindu hatred in any form. Government and police regularly review potential threats to ensure that measures are taken to protect communities from terrorism and hate crime.

Additionally, Hindu communities can apply to the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme. The scheme provides physical protective security measures (such as CCTV, intruder alarms and secure perimeter fencing) to places of worship and associated faith community centres that are particularly vulnerable to religiously or racially motivated hate crime in England and Wales.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/1931>

Information about the Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

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

House of Lords Written Answer

Legal Systems: Islam

Lord Swire (Conservative) [HL394] To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure and enforce oversight and governance of (1) sharia courts, and (2) Muslim arbitration tribunals.

Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede: The Government has no plans to regulate religious dispute resolution processes (such as sharia courts) where all parties consent to those processes. This is consistent with Britain's long history of freedom of worship and religious tolerance, and the legal rights and remedies of the parties involved remain in place.

Decisions of such bodies are only enforceable if there is a valid arbitration agreement by which all parties have consented to the process, as provided under the terms of the Arbitration Act 1996 for any arbitration panel.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/hl394>

Home Office

Mosques to be offered new emergency security

The new rapid response process means mosques at risk of violent disorder can be offered additional security personnel, providing communities with vital support and reassurance. This will boost the work already being done by local police forces to protect these important places of worship.

Under the new process now in place, the police, local authorities and mosques can ask for rapid security to be deployed, protecting communities and allowing for a return to worship as quickly as possible. ...

Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper said: "Britain is a proud and tolerant country, and nobody

should make any excuses for the shameful actions of the hooligans, thugs and extremist groups who have been attacking police officers, looting local shops or attacking people based on the colour of their skin.

“In light of the disgraceful threats and attacks that local mosques have also faced in many communities, the government is providing rapid additional support through the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme, alongside the support from local police forces and we repeat that anyone involved in this disorder and violence will face the full force of the law.

“As a nation we will not tolerate criminal behaviour, dangerous extremism, and racist attacks that go against everything our country stands for.”

The Government has made clear that targeted attacks on Muslim communities will not be tolerated. All those involved in violent disorder, including attacks on the police, local communities, arson and looting should expect to face the full force of the law. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mosques-to-be-offered-new-emergency-security>

UK Parliament All-Party Group Against Antisemitism

Letter from APPG Chair Joani Reid MP to the BBC Director General

Dear Mr Davie,

I write in my capacity as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, with regards to increasing concerns over the BBC's treatment of its Jewish staff.

Last week, over 200 Jewish employees at the BBC, including staff, contractors, suppliers and contributors across the television and film industries, co-signed a letter outlining their concerns about BBC operations and content.¹

Many Jewish employees have come forward publicly, for the first time since October 7th, to share their experiences including feeling 'marginalised' and being 'treated differently to other groups'.² It is clear that Jewish staff have felt continuously dismissed by the corporation, with many citing instances of the institution failing to take forward and act on their complaints and suggesting that collectively these incidents indicate a repeated pattern and point to a potentially wider institutional problem.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism has repeatedly questioned elements of the BBC's conduct. Former group chair Andrew Percy raised multiple complaints, including questions about antisemitism training that remain unanswered – I would go so far as to say the BBC has deliberately obfuscated on this matter. Lord Mann, the Government's antisemitism adviser, has met with you and reports that no action was taken on any of his recommendations.

As one of the largest and most influential disseminators of news and information to communities across the world, the BBC has a duty of care towards all staff members to ensure that it cultivates an environment free from abuse, prejudice, intolerance or discrimination. “[t]he concerns of Jewish colleagues are clearly not being listened to or treated with the level of severity and urgency that is required.

Together with my fellow APPG officers, I would be grateful to meet with you urgently to discuss these

growing concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Joani Reid MP

Chair

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crg4yvl4nnxo>

² <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/furious-jewish-staff-say-bbcs-handling-of-antisemitism-echoes-the-huw-edwards-scandal-um2jb7ky>

<https://x.com/appgaa/status/1820411736538685856?s=48>

Downing Street

Prime Minister's statement

I utterly condemn the far-right thuggery we have seen this weekend.
Be in no doubt: those who have participated in this violence will face the full force of the law.
The police will be making arrests.
Individuals will be held on remand.
Charges will follow. And convictions will follow. ...
This is not protest. It is organised, violent thuggery.
And it has no place on our street or online. ...
And all right-minded people should be condemning this sort of violence.
People in this country have a right to be safe.
And yet, we've seen Muslim communities targeted.
Attacks on Mosques.
Other minority communities singled out.
Nazi salutes in the street.
Attacks on the police.
Wanton violence alongside racist rhetoric.
So, no, I won't shy away from calling this what it is:
Far-right thuggery.
To those who feel targeted because of the colour of your skin ...
Or your faith ...
I know how frightening this must be.
I want you to know this violent mob do not represent our country.
And we will bring them to justice. ...

To read the full statement see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-4-august-2024>

Community Security Trust (CST)

CST's statement on the violent disorders seen after the devastating tragedy in Southport

CST utterly condemns the violent disorder seen in several towns and cities today that have followed the devastating tragedy in Southport earlier this week.

The targeting of Muslims and other minorities is appalling and the violence directed at police officers is disgraceful. Nothing can ever justify this type of behaviour and we fully support the police, government and our partners in other communities in their response to these divisive protests. Our thoughts are with the officers and communities affected.

https://x.com/CST_UK/status/1819843837528809753

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Holocaust

Spoliation Advisory Panel

Newsletter, August 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66abad47a3c2a28abb50dbd8/NERC_Newsletter_UK_AUGUST2024_FINAL_accessible_version.pdf

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House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: International Law

Clive Lewis (Labour) [1956] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is using the same system for (a) collating and (b) reviewing evidence on Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law during the conflict in Gaza as was used by the previous Government.

Hamish Falconer: As the Foreign Secretary has made clear, he is not able to look back on advice made available to previous Government Ministers. That review process is underway. It is complex and requires careful consideration. The Foreign Secretary has committed to being transparent when making decisions on International Humanitarian Law assessments.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/1956>

Israel: Arms Trade

Clive Lewis (Labour) [1955] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his policy on arms transfers to Israel will use the principle of atrocity prevention.

Hamish Falconer: The Foreign Secretary's advice on arms sales follows the Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, (SELC) including an assessment of commitment to IHL Compliance (SELC 2c) using a methodology that the Court of Appeal has accepted in judicial reviews. It draws on open-source evidence, intelligence, accounts of diplomatic and ministerial engagements, and correspondence with Israel.

That review process is underway. It is complex and requires careful consideration.

The Government will make public its decision as soon as that process is complete.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/1955>

The Strategic Export Licensing Criteria, referred to above, can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-12-08/hcws449>

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Chris Law (SNP) [1507] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential implications for his policies of the Knesset's decision not to recognise a Palestinian state.

Hamish Falconer: The UK's position remains the same, we are committed to recognising a Palestinian state as a key step in the path to a two-state solution. Palestinian statehood is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people. It is not in the gift of any neighbour and is also essential to the long-term security of Israel. We will recognise a Palestinian State as a contribution to a peace process to deliver a two-state solution, with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-24/1507>

Gaza: Israel

Sarah Owen (Labour) [1807] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his oral statement of 19 July 2024 on Israel and Gaza, Official Report, column 301, what his planned timetable is for (a) the completion of his Department's comprehensive review of Israel's compliance with international humanitarian law and (b) updating the House when that process is complete.

Hamish Falconer: As soon as the Foreign Secretary came into office, he

commissioned new advice on Israel's compliance with International Humanitarian Law, in the context of the war. This is an important and complex process, requiring detailed analysis of evidence, and close co-operation with other Government Departments, and is being undertaken urgently. The Foreign Secretary's decision, and the Government's decision on the related issue of arms exports, will be made public when the process is complete.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-25/1807>

The statement 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: Finance

Oliver Dowden (Conservative) [1926] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his oral statement on 19 July 2024, Official Report, column 300 on Israel and Gaza, what assurances his Department received that the UN Relief and Works Agency has no links to Hamas in Gaza prior to resuming funding for that agency.

Hamish Falconer: UNRWA plays a critical role in Gaza and the wider region, providing essential services, including healthcare and education, to Palestinian refugees.

Following the independent review by Catherine Colonna, UNRWA set out an action plan with detailed management reforms including stronger independent oversight, better detection systems, improved screening procedures, mandatory training for staff on humanitarian principles and more proactive donor engagement. We are now confident that UNRWA is taking action to ensure it meets the highest standards of neutrality, staff vetting and transparency.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-07-26/1926>

The statement 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>

The Colonna Review, referred to above, can be read at

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf

Information about the UNRWA action plan referred to above can be read at

<https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/unrwa-preliminary-response-final-report-independent-review-mechanisms-and>

Downing Street

Prime Minister's meeting with the Sultan of Oman: 6 August 2024

The Prime Minister welcomed the Sultan of Oman, His Majesty Haitham bin Tarik al Said, to Downing Street ...

Turning to the situation in the Middle East, the Prime Minister emphasised the clear and urgent the need for de-escalation and urged all parties in the region to exercise restraint. On Gaza, The Prime Minister reiterated the need for a ceasefire, the return of hostages and an immediate increase in the volume of humanitarian aid reaching civilians. Both agreed on the need for a two-state solution through a peace process. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-the-sultan-of-oman-6-august-2024>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Situation in the Middle East: G7 foreign ministers' statement

We, the G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the EU, express our deep concern at the heightened level of tension in the Middle East which threatens to ignite a broader conflict in the region.

We urge all involved parties once again to refrain from perpetuating the current destructive cycle of retaliatory violence, to lower tensions and engage constructively toward de-escalation. No country or nation stands to gain from a further escalation in the Middle East.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g7-foreign-ministers-statement-on-the-situation-in-the-middle-east>

David Lammy The UK is deeply concerned at the risk of escalation between Israel, Lebanese Hizballah and Iran, and the consequences this would have in the region. I discussed the situation with Jordan's Foreign Minister @AymanHsafadi today. We agreed on the urgent need for restraint on all sides and to re-focus efforts on getting a ceasefire in place in Gaza. The UK is clear on the need to get hostages out and aid in.

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1820523990089142783>

Hamish Falconer Qatar plays a vital role in negotiating a deal to bring the conflict in Gaza to an end and securing the release of all being held hostage by Hamas. Today I met with @Dr_AI_Khulaifi to discuss the worsening situation in the Middle East and the need for an immediate ceasefire. [plus photo]

<https://x.com/HFalconerMP/status/1820463971381698882>

Scottish Parliament Motion

Katy Clark (Labour) [S6M-13988] Child Hunger and Malnutrition in Gaza – That the Parliament recognises what it considers to be the urgent need for the international community to take action to address the reported scale of acute child hunger and malnutrition in the Gaza Strip; notes the finding by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) that more than 50,000 children require treatment for acute malnutrition in Gaza; expresses concern at reports that hospitals across Gaza are considered to be at breaking point due to supply shortages and patient influxes; notes that UNICEF reports that an estimated 3,000 children in southern Gaza have been cut off from accessing treatment for malnutrition; understands that treatment for acute malnutrition usually necessitates between six and eight weeks of uninterrupted care, and that only two of the three stabilisations centres in Gaza that are able to provide this care are still functioning; believes that efforts to distribute food and medical aid to assist these children have been constrained by the ongoing fighting, and have been hampered by the limited number of trucks that are allowed access to Gaza and what it considers to be the high risk to aid workers in distributing them; condemns reported attacks on aid workers; notes reports that Israel's ground and air campaign has killed more than 39,000 people since 7 October 2023, and that 70% of these have been women or children; welcomes the UK Government's decision to restore funding to UNRWA to spend on food, emergency shelter and other basic services, and urges the UK Government to engage in diplomatic action towards securing a sustainable and durable ceasefire, and to double efforts to ensure that what it considers to be vital supplies reach the Gaza Strip.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-13988>

United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services

Note to correspondents – on the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) investigation of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has completed its investigation into 19 area staff members of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), regarding allegations of their involvement in the armed attacks of 7 October 2023 in southern Israel.

OIOS made findings in relation to each of the 19 UNRWA staff members alleged to have been involved in the attacks.

In one case, no evidence was obtained by OIOS to support the allegations of the staff member's involvement, while in nine other cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS was insufficient to support the staff members' involvement. With respect to these ten cases, appropriate measures will be taken in due course, in conformity with UNRWA Regulations and Rules.

In respect of the remaining nine cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS indicated that the UNRWA staff members may have been involved in the armed attacks of 7 October 2023. The employment of these individuals will be terminated in the interests of the Agency.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2024-08-05/note-correspondents-%E2%80%93-the-un-office-of-internal-oversight-services-%28oios%29-investigation-of-the-un-relief-and-works-agency-for-palestine-refugees-the-near-east>

The OIOS report of the investigation referred to above is not currently available online.

United Nations

Nine UNRWA staff to be fired for potential role in 7 October attacks on Israel

The development follows the conclusion of an investigation by the UN Office of Oversight Services (OIOS), launched earlier this year after Israel alleged that several UNRWA personnel took part in the brutal assault on its territory in which some 1,200 people were killed and another 250 were taken to Gaza as hostages.

However, OIOS was not able to independently authenticate information used by Israel to support the allegations. ...

OIOS is the highest investigative body in the UN system and its reports are confidential but can be made available to Member States upon request.

Investigators made findings in relation to 19 UNRWA staff alleged to have been involved in the attacks, UN Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq told journalists in New York.

"In one case, no evidence was obtained by OIOS to support the allegations of the staff member's involvement, while in nine other cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS was insufficient to support the staff members' involvement," he said.

Regarding these 10 cases, he said that appropriate measures will be taken in due course, in conformity with UNRWA Regulations and Rules.

With respect to the remaining nine cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS indicated that the UNRWA staff members may have been involved in the 7 October attacks. ...

Asked about the extent of the staff members' alleged involvement, Mr. Haq responded that he did not have specific information about the specific allegations.

He said the OIOS investigation involved visits to Israel for discussions with officials and to see and review information held by authorities there.

The investigators also travelled to Amman, Jordan, to obtain and review relevant information held by UNRWA, including on its staff and operations.

They also reviewed information and communications technology data, such as email

records and information on agency vehicles, in addition to information from various other sources, including that released to the media and other public sources, and communications with several Member States.

“However, one thing I'd like to point out is that since information used by Israeli officials to support the allegations have remained in Israeli custody, OIOS was not able to independently authenticate most of the information provided to it,” ...

Mr. Haq was asked about the Secretary-General's views regarding the OIOS findings.

The UN chief “believes that it is important that we go through this very carefully, given the fact that any involvement in these attacks would constitute a major betrayal of trust,” he said.

“Obviously, there were actions that were taken for the benefit of the agency that were very swift and very decisive in terms of dealing with the individuals who had been named at first, and now it's good to have all of the information available,” he added.

Referring to the Gaza war, Mr. Haq also underlined the importance of remembering that a “huge number” of UNRWA staff have been taking enormous risks for months, keeping hundreds of thousands of people alive, whether in shelters or by providing food and services.

“And we want to make sure that the reputation of our UNRWA staff, our dedicated staff, including about 200 people who have lost their lives since 7 October, is fully recognized and that UNRWA gets the support that it needs,” he said.

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1152841>

The OIOS report of the investigation referred to above is not currently available online.

UNRWA

Investigation completed: allegations on UNRWA staff participation in the 7 October attacks: Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner-General

“I acknowledge the completion of the investigation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) into the serious allegations that 19 area UNRWA staff members in Gaza were involved in the abhorrent attacks of 7 October on southern Israel.

“The allegations were brought to the Agency's attention in January. In close consultation with the United Nations Secretary-General (SG), I immediately terminated the contracts of the staff in question, in the interest of the Agency, while the SG tasked OIOS to launch an investigation. Additional allegations were brought to our attention in March and April and the concerned staff were added to the OIOS investigation.

“The OIOS investigation's outcomes are the following:

“In one case, no evidence was obtained by OIOS to support the allegations of the staff member's involvement. That staff member has rejoined the Agency.

“In nine other cases, the evidence obtained by OIOS was insufficient to support the staff members' involvement and the OIOS investigation of them is now closed.

“For the remaining nine cases, the evidence – if authenticated and corroborated – could indicate that the UNRWA staff members may have been involved in the attacks of 7 October.

“I have decided that in the case of these remaining nine staff members, they cannot work for UNRWA. All contracts of these staff members will be terminated in the interest of the Agency.

“The Agency's priority is to continue lifesaving and critical services for Palestine Refugees in Gaza and across the region, especially in the face of the ongoing war, the instability and risk of regional escalation.

“UNRWA is committed to continue upholding the fundamental principles and values of the

United Nations, including the humanitarian principle of neutrality, and to ensure that all its staff abide by the Agency's policy on outside and political activities.

"In April, an independent Agency-wide review by three reputable research centres under the leadership of former French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna concluded that UNRWA 'possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities'. The Agency has started implementing the recommendations of the review" and is fully committed to them.

"Finally, I reiterate UNRWA's condemnation of the 7 October attack in the strongest possible terms. I call – once again – for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages and their safe return to their families."

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/investigation-completed-allegations-unrwa-staff-participation-7-october>

The OIOS report of the investigation referred to above is not currently available online.

The Colonna Review, referred to above, can be read at

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2024/04/unrwa_independent_review_on_neutrality.pdf

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UN Human Rights Chief on risk of wider conflict in the Middle East

I am deeply worried about the rising risk of a wider conflict in the Middle East and plead with all parties, along with those States with influence, to act urgently to de-escalate what has become a very precarious situation.

Human rights - first and foremost the protection of civilians - must be the top priority.

Already, over the past 10 months, civilians - mostly women and children - have endured unbearable pain and suffering as result of the bombs and guns.

Everything, and I mean everything, must be done to avoid this situation spiralling further into an abyss that will only have even more terrible consequences for civilians.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/08/un-human-rights-chief-risk-wider-conflict-middle-east>

Expert denounces killing of two more journalists in Gaza and demands full accountability

An independent human rights expert today condemned the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Ismail Al-Ghoul and cameraman Rami Al-Rifi in Gaza on 1 August 2024.

"I strongly denounce the deliberate targeting by Israel of two journalists in Gaza, which adds to an already appalling toll of reporters and media workers killed in this war," said Irene Khan, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression.

"Like many journalists killed in Gaza, Al-Ghoul was wearing a clearly marked press jacket when an Israeli drone missile hit the vehicle. Israel's military confirmed Al-Ghoul's death and accused him of being a Hamas operative.

"The Israeli military seems to be making accusations without any substantive evidence as a licence to kill journalists, which is in total contravention of international humanitarian law," Khan said.

The expert noted that journalists enjoy protection as civilians under international humanitarian law and that their deliberate targeting is a war crime. According to international humanitarian law, journalists only lose their civilian status if they take direct part in hostilities. Israel has not provided concrete evidence in this, or other cases.

The Special Rapporteur was dismayed by attacks against Al Jazeera, including the deliberate killing of its journalists in Gaza, the total ban on the outlet in Israel, and the

vicious smear campaign against the broadcaster.

“Israel’s targeting of Al Jazeera is an assault on media freedom in blatant disregard of international human rights and humanitarian law,” she said.

The expert was also gravely concerned that none of the cases of journalists killed in the occupied Palestinian Territory has ever been transparently investigated, nor suspected perpetrators brought to justice by Israeli authorities.

“I call again on Israeli authorities to initiate prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into this and other killings, and adopt all necessary measures to protect journalists in the occupied Palestinian Territory in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law,” Khan said.

“Given Israel’s failure to heed earlier calls for accountability, I urge the International Criminal Court to move swiftly to prosecute the killings of journalists in Gaza as a war crime and call on the international community to urgently consider the use of international mechanisms to investigate crimes against journalists in Gaza,” the Special Rapporteur said.

The expert is in contact with the Government of Israel on this matter.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/expert-denounces-killing-two-more-journalists-gaza-and-demands-full>

Israel’s escalating use of torture against Palestinians in custody a preventable crime against humanity: UN experts

Reports of alleged torture and sexual violence in Israel’s Sde Teiman prison are grossly illegal and revolting, but they only represent the tip of the iceberg, independent human rights experts warned today.

“Israel’s widespread and systemic abuse of Palestinians in detention and arbitrary arrest practices over decades, coupled with the absence of any restraints by the Israeli State since 7 October 2023, paint a shocking picture enabled by absolute impunity,” the experts said.

Around 9,500 Palestinians, including hundreds of children and women, are currently imprisoned—around one-third without charge or trial. Another unknown number are arbitrarily being held in detention facilities and ad hoc camps following a wave of arrest and abduction campaigns across Palestinian territory that targeted men, women and children particularly following 7 October.

The experts received substantiated reports of widespread abuse, torture, sexual assault and rape, amid atrocious inhumane conditions, with at least 53 Palestinians apparently dying as a result in 10 months.

Countless testimonies by men and women speak of detainees in cage-like enclosures, tied to beds blindfolded and in diapers, stripped naked, deprived of adequate healthcare, food, water and sleep, electrocutions including on their genitals, blackmail and cigarette burns. In addition, victims spoke of loud music played until their ears bled, attacks by dogs, waterboarding, suspension from ceilings and severe sexual and gender-based violence.

“Allegations of gang-rape of a Palestinian detainee, now shockingly supported by voices in the Israeli political establishment and society, provide irrefutable evidence that the moral compass is lost,” the experts said. In February 2024, a number of experts also [expressed](#) grave concern regarding the reports of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence committed against Palestinian women and girls in Israeli detention.

The Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territory [investigated](#) Israel’s detention practices in 2023 and called on UN Member States to intervene and the International Criminal Court to promptly investigate what appeared to be a consolidated crime against humanity. The experts regret this call was not heeded.

“Torture practices are irredeemably unlawful and constitute international crimes, yet form

part of the modus operandi of Israel’s notorious detention and torture system,” they warned. “These practices are intended to punish Palestinians for resisting occupation and seek to destroy them individually and collectively.”

“Israel’s genocidal destruction in Gaza, which is spreading across the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, serves as the backdrop to its abusive detention programme today,” the experts said.

“Most Palestinian detainees are de facto hostages of an unlawful occupation,” they said, referring to the [July 2024 Advisory Opinion](#) from the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territory. They called for oversight and accountability over all Israeli practices and policies in the territory.

“Decrying the silence by Member States following the emergence of testimonies and reports of alleged maltreatment and torture, the experts called for pressure on Israel with a view to implementing a cogent system of access, monitoring and protection of Palestinian detainees. The Human Rights Council, in particular, must urgently demand the deployment of special procedures mandate holders and the Commission of Inquiry to facilities holding Palestinians, they said.

“What is required now is nothing short of an independent, international presence of human rights observers. They must become the world’s eyes in light of Israel’s brazen failure to prevent and address the heinous rights violations against prisoners and detainees,” the experts said.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/israels-escalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3741>

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

**** closes in 5 days**

£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>

**** closes in 10 days**

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/

**** closes in 10 days**

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>

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