



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

Home Affairs

Cabinet Office

A letter from the Cabinet Secretary to all Government Ministers on the Private Members' Bill to enable assisted dying

From the Cabinet Secretary All Government Ministers ...

Kim Leadbeater MP has said that she will seek to introduce a Private Members' Bill to enable assisted dying.

As is long-standing convention for such issues of conscience, the Prime Minister has decided to set aside collective responsibility on the merits of this bill and any others covering the same subject matter. That means that ministers can vote, or not, however they wish.

The Government will therefore remain neutral on the passage of the Bill and on the matter of assisted dying. At the despatch box, ministers should reiterate that this is a question for Parliament, on which the official Government position is to remain neutral. Outside of Parliament, all ministers should take the same approach in all forms of media, including social media. Though ministers need not resile from previously stated views when directly asked about them, they should exercise discretion and should not take part in the public debate. ...

To read the full letter see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-secretary-letter-to-uk-government-ministers>

Law Commission

Law Commission considers changes to update centuries-old burial laws

Old graves could be reused, and closed burial grounds could be reopened to help manage the shortage of burial space, under [proposals made today](#) by the Law Commission. The proposals form part of a consultation to bring the law on burial and cremation, which in parts is over 170 years old, up to date. ...

Burial space is running out across England and Wales, with the situation worse in some

urban areas. Grave reuse has long been seen as a solution to this problem. But currently only some burial grounds are permitted to reuse graves. For example, grave reuse is already permitted in London local authority cemeteries and a handful of other cemeteries which have obtained their own Acts of Parliament permitting it. The Law Commission's proposals would enable any burial ground to reuse graves, but only following consultation with the public and approval of the burial ground operator's plans by Government.

There would also be safeguards for each individual grave. Where it is currently permitted, graves can only be considered for reuse when the last burial was made at least 75 years ago. The Commission is consulting on whether a new law should use that period, or a different one such as 100 years. If the family of the deceased person objects, no reuse can happen for another 25 years.

The law around burial and cremation is also complicated and out of date. It has evolved over the years, with a patchwork of different laws which apply to different burial grounds depending on who operates them (eg Church of England, local authorities, private owners, etc). Some of these laws date back to the mid-19th Century and are unsuitable for the modern world. Gaps in the law mean that, for example, there are no rules on the minimum depth at which bodies should be buried in private cemeteries. ...

Alex Davies-Jones, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice said, "The Government is supportive of the Law Commission's work ... We await with interest the Law Commission's recommendations, in due course, on the most appropriate framework to provide modern, consistent regulation for burial and cremation."

The consultation addresses a wide range of other issues including:

Closed churchyards: There are numerous Church of England churchyards and other burial grounds across the country which were closed by law in the Victorian era. The Commission proposes reforms to allow them to be reopened ...

Uncollected ashes: Funeral directors estimate that they hold hundreds of thousands of sets of ashes which have not been collected by families after cremation – and which they have no legal right to bury or scatter. The Commission's proposals would enable them to be returned to crematoria, where they can be scattered or buried, once reasonable attempts had been made to contact the family of the deceased person.

Siting of crematoria: Currently crematoria have to be constructed at least 200 yards away from any homes and 50 yards from a public highway. The consultation asks whether that rule should remain in place. ...

Burials on private land: The law permits people to bury bodies on their own land, but there is no means of ensuring that information about their location is passed to a new owner. Proposals by the Commission would make it a criminal offence not to do so.

To read the full press release see

<https://lawcom.gov.uk/law-commission-considers-changes-to-update-centuries-old-burial-laws/>

CAMERA

BBC Coverage of the Israel-Hamas war: A comprehensive analysis of BBC News output of the first eleven months of the conflict

<https://camera-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/BBC-ISRAEL-GAZA-BIAS-06b.pdf>

TOP

Israel

See also the CAMERA report “BBC Coverage of the Israel-Hamas war” that is included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Lords Library

Letter from Lord Collins of Highbury to Baroness Helic regarding HMG’s policy on transferring Gazan children to the UK for specialist medical treatment, as discussed during the debate on Children: Impact of International Conflict

https://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2024-0626/Lord_Collins_to_Baroness_Helic-Gaza.pdf

A transcript of the debate referred to above can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2024-09-12/debates/E7D9561D-F49F-43DD-825B-1BB731141957/ChildrenImpactOfInternationalConflict>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

G7 Leaders’ Statement on recent developments in the Middle East: 3 October 2024

We, the Leaders of the G7, express deep concern over the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and condemn in the strongest terms Iran’s direct military attack against Israel, which constitutes a serious threat to regional stability.

We unequivocally reiterate our commitment to the security of Israel. Iran’s seriously destabilizing actions throughout the Middle East through terrorist proxies and armed groups—including the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas— as well as Iran-aligned militia groups in Iraq, must stop. Yesterday we discussed coordinated efforts and actions to avoid escalation in the area.

A dangerous cycle of attacks and retaliation risks fuelling uncontrollable escalation in the Middle East, which is in no one’s interest. Therefore, we call on all regional players to act responsibly and with restraint. We encourage all parties to engage constructively to de-escalate the current tensions. International humanitarian law must be respected.

On the eve of the tragic anniversary of Hamas’ attacks on October 7, 2023, we condemn once again in the strongest possible terms such unjustified acts of deliberate violence and stand with the families of the victims and the hostages taken by Hamas.

We also reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the unconditional release of all hostages, a significant and sustained increase in the flow of humanitarian assistance, and an end to the conflict. We fully endorse the efforts by the US, Qatar and Egypt to reach such a comprehensive deal, in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2735. The situation in Gaza is catastrophic, and tens of thousands of innocent lives have been lost. We reiterate the absolute need for the civilian population to be protected and that there must be full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, as a matter of absolute priority. We will continue working to set the conditions for a durable peace, leading to a two State solution, where Israel and Palestine coexist side-by-side in peace, with security for both.

We are also deeply concerned about the situation in Lebanon. We recall the need for a cessation of hostilities as soon as possible to create space for a diplomatic solution along the Blue Line, consistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701. This is the only path to durably de-escalate tensions, stabilize the Israel-Lebanon border, fully restore the sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability of Lebanon, and return displaced citizens to their homes with safety and security on both sides. We urge all actors to protect civilian populations. We are committed to providing humanitarian assistance to address the urgent

needs of civilians in Lebanon.

We also express our deep condolences to the families of the civilian victims in Israel, Gaza and Lebanon.

We underscore the importance of the United Nations in resolving armed conflict and mitigating the humanitarian impact in the Middle East. In this regard, we acknowledge the role of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to restore peace and security. We are committed to reinforce our support to the mission, pursuant to applicable UN resolutions.

We will continue to be in close contact with all actors to this end.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g7-leaders-statement-on-recent-developments-in-the-middle-east-3-october-2024>

Peace, not war, is the courageous option: UK statement at the UN Security Council

... The events this week are gravely concerning. Yesterday the Iranian regime launched over 200 ballistic missiles at Israel. We categorically condemn this act of aggression, which escalates an already dangerous situation. As my Prime Minister said yesterday, Israel has our full support in exercising its right to defend itself against Iranian aggression.

President, we are deeply concerned about the prospect of further escalation in Lebanon and across the region.

We have been clear: All our efforts now must be on stopping this cycle of violence. Iran and its allies across the region must exercise restraint and step away from the brink.

We have been clear: my Foreign Secretary has consistently called for a ceasefire in Lebanon, by Lebanese Hizballah and Israel, and the implementation of a political plan in line with UNSCR 1701.

We have been clear: in Gaza, we need an immediate ceasefire and the release of the hostages. My Foreign Secretary has urged both Israel and Hamas to agree the ceasefire deal on the table. To choose peace and bring this chaos to an end.

Peace, not war, is the courageous option. It is also the best option to secure stability and security for Israelis, Palestinians, Lebanese and the wider region.

President, my Prime Minister has been working urgently to gather support for a political solution to this crisis. Only a ceasefire in Lebanon and Gaza would create the space to agree a political plan, consistent with UNSCR 1701, that allows for the sustainable return of displaced Israeli and Lebanese civilians to their homes.

Innocent civilians in Israel and in Lebanon have been displaced from their homes for too long already. The only way they will return is through a sustainable peace across the Blue Line. The conflict in Lebanon is causing devastating consequences for civilians, especially for women and children, and draws us closer to a wider regional conflict.

President, we cannot let Lebanon become another Gaza. With mounting civilian casualties and hundreds of thousands of displaced people, all parties must do everything possible to protect civilians and fully respect international humanitarian law.

A widening of the conflict is in no-one's interest. The actions taken now will impact a generation. I call on all actors to step back from the brink and find a political resolution.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/peace-not-war-is-the-courageous-option-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

UK commits additional £10 million of aid to Lebanon

... The funding comes as the [UK continues to urge all British nationals to leave the country](#) as soon as possible, and for an immediate ceasefire between Lebanese Hizballah and Israel. A ceasefire would provide the space necessary to find a political solution in line with Resolution 1701 and enable civilians on both sides to return to their homes.

The aid package responds to serious concerns over a widespread lack of shelter, and reduced access to clean water, hygiene and healthcare. It will be delivered through trusted humanitarian organisations, who have a long-established presence delivering aid within Lebanon.

The announcement follows the £5 million humanitarian package delivered through UNICEF to support access to clean water and sanitation, health, and nutrition supplies.

The UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which the UK is the largest donor to, this week also allocated £7.6 million to respond to the urgent conflict-related needs and displacement in Lebanon.

Anneliese Dodds, Minister of State for Development and Minister of State for Women and Equalities, said: The human cost of the conflict in Lebanon is clear for all to see. This additional funding from the UK will help to address the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, providing relief for people displaced by the continuing violence.

This lifesaving aid is vital, but not a long-term solution. The only way to truly address the growing humanitarian crisis is an immediate ceasefire adhered to by both sides. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-bolsters-support-to-lebanon>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

David Lammy Reports that Israeli strikes have hit health facilities and support personnel in Lebanon are deeply disturbing. All parties must comply with international humanitarian law. Our priority is an immediate ceasefire on both sides so Israeli and Lebanese civilians can return home.

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1842630072882417683>

UK charters flight to leave Lebanon on Sunday as conflict escalates

More than 250 British nationals have left Lebanon on flights chartered by UK Government. Any remaining British nationals who want to leave are urged to register immediately, or to use commercial routes. ...

Foreign Secretary David Lammy said: The situation in Lebanon remains volatile, so I am glad that we have helped the many people who have heeded our advice to leave the country immediately.

With demand falling, and the security situation deteriorating, there is no guarantee other options to leave quickly will become available. ...

The FCDO urges everyone to continue to follow the relevant travel advice, exercise caution, and monitor media in Lebanon for developments.

The safety of British nationals is the top priority and around 700 troops and Foreign Office and Home Office staff, including Border Force officers, have been deployed to Cyprus for contingency planning.

The UK continues to call for a ceasefire between Lebanese Hizballah and Israel. A ceasefire would provide the space necessary to find a political solution that enables civilians on both sides to return to their homes in safety.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-charters-flight-to-leave-lebanon-on-sunday-as-conflict-escalates>

UK charters more flights to help British nationals to leave Lebanon

... Foreign Secretary David Lammy said: Recent events have demonstrated the volatility of the situation in Lebanon.

The safety of British nationals in Lebanon continues to be our number one priority. ...

Yesterday (2 October) [Defence Secretary John Healey MP travelled to Cyprus](#) to meet and thank military personnel who are deployed as part of contingency planning to support British nationals in Lebanon. ...

The Defence Secretary also held a call with his Israeli counterpart Yoav Gallant to express the UK's condemnation of the Iranian attack and call for de-escalation and a ceasefire in Lebanon. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-charters-more-flights-to-help-british-nationals-to-leave-lebanon>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Middle East (Ceasefire)

Patrick Harvie (Green): The world's failure to address Israel's impunity, to protect civilians or to prevent war crimes has made the escalation of violence in the middle east inevitable. Through devolved funding decisions, the Scottish Government has a role to play here. There have been far too many deaths: there were the brutal killings that occurred on 7 October 2023; genocide has been inflicted on the people of Gaza; we have seen the bombardment and invasion of Lebanon; and now the world faces the imminent threat of full-scale regional war. We need an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and de-escalation in the wider region. However, the Prime Minister continues to provide arms and political support to Israel regardless of the consequences.

Given that devolved funding decisions are involved, what is the First Minister's response to the crisis? Will he join the Scottish Greens in calling for de-escalation and for the United Kingdom Government to end its complicity in the war crimes that are being inflicted on Palestinians and others?

The First Minister (John Swinney): I share the deep concern that Patrick Harvie has expressed to Parliament about the situation in the middle east. The calls that my predecessor and I have made for a ceasefire in Gaza—which we have done for some considerable time, dating back to late October last year—have highlighted the danger of escalation of the conflict, which is exactly what is now happening. If there had been intervention to deliver a ceasefire a long time ago, we could have avoided being on the very dangerous course that we are now on.

I reiterate my call for there to be an immediate ceasefire and for all parties of good will to exercise their influence and responsibility to ensure that that is brought about and that there is de-escalation of the conflict in the middle east. All of this, of course, goes back to the atrocities that were committed by Hamas in early October 2023. All hostages should be returned, a ceasefire should be applied to resolve the issues, and a two-state solution should be developed to ensure that Palestinians can live in safety in their own sovereign, independent nation.

Mr Harvie raises with me issues of devolved responsibility. He and I had an exchange about that on 30 May 2024. This morning, I reread that exchange to

satisfy myself that all steps that we can take within our legal responsibility are being taken, to ensure that the concerns that Mr Harvie puts to me are properly pursued.

Patrick Harvie: There is a responsibility on all Governments to act in the face of so much violence and destruction, and I welcome the fact that the First Minister has repeated his calls for a ceasefire and de-escalation and for statehood for Palestine, and I hope that he continues to oppose the sale of arms to Israel.

However, the Greens have repeatedly raised the Scottish Government's track record in giving grants to the companies that are producing those weapons and are profiting from the killings. Tens of thousands of people have been killed, yet companies that are arming Israel have received hundreds of thousands of pounds from Scottish Enterprise. The First Minister has repeatedly defended that by saying that his Government does not fund the manufacture of munitions, but that is not the point. The Government is funding the companies that profit from those atrocities. Will the First Minister finally send a clear signal today by immediately banning those companies from receiving grants and support from the Scottish Government?

The First Minister: I understand why Patrick Harvie put that question to me, and I understand the basis and substance of his point.

What I said back on 30 May 2024 was: "we have to have a legal basis for saying, for matters that are not related to the Israel-Gaza conflict, that we are not providing a grant." [Official Report, 30 May 2024; c 18.]

That is the key legal test that the Government must satisfy. Whatever else is happening in the world, the Government has to act within the law, and, under my leadership, it will do so, because I believe fundamentally in the rule of law in all circumstances—it would help if many other people believed in the rule of law as well with regard to resolving some of these issues.

I do not in any way dismiss the points that Patrick Harvie put to me, but I simply say that I have to act within the law, and that, as I have assured him, I will explore once again whether there are any actions that we can take that will properly address our legal responsibilities and the moral and ethical issues that he fairly put to me this afternoon, and I will keep the matter under review.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-03-10-2024?meeting=16031&iob=136899#orscontributions_M2892E315P804C2618496

The May 30 exchange referred to above can be read at

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-30-05-2024?meeting=15896&iob=135695#orscontributions_M2892E315P804C2594197

Scottish Parliament Motion

Jackson Carlaw (Conservative) [S6M-14780] Anniversary of 7 October Attacks – That the Parliament recognises that 7 October 2024 marks the one-year anniversary of the group Hamas, which is officially designated as a terrorist organisation by the UK, USA and the EU, launching a brutal attack against Israel by land, air and sea; understands that what it considers as the 7 October pogrom caused the deaths of approximately 1,200 civilians in Israel and that the attack by Hamas resulted in the murder of more Jewish people than on any other single day since the horrors of the Holocaust; believes that, in the same manner as every other nation-state, Israel has a right to self-defence and to protect its people from acts of aggression, but acknowledges that innocent people who live in Gaza have endured a period of incredible challenge and immense suffering in the past year; considers that the passing of every civilian who died on 7 October, or over the course of the previous 12 months, and irrespective of whether the individual was Israeli or

Palestinian, is a tragedy, and that all innocent people whose lives have been lost in the conflict should be mourned; understands that, on 7 October 2023, the proscribed terrorist group Hamas also brutally took 200 civilians in Israel over to Gaza as hostages; notes that 117 people who were forcibly removed from Israel are no longer in captivity, but understands that a total of 97 hostages, with a third sadly believed to have died, are still in Gaza; calls for the release of all hostages who are still in Gaza and for the remains of those who have died to be returned home, and further calls for an immediate, full and complete ceasefire to hostilities in Gaza and for a UN peace plan, as agreed by the Security Council in June 2024, to be enacted.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-14780>

Welsh Senedd Statement of Opinion

Rhun ap Iorwerth (Plaid Cymru) [OPIN-2024-0434] Conflict in the Middle East – This Senedd:

1. Notes that a year has passed since Hamas's attack on Israel, and that Israel's military response has resulted in 12 months of suffering and 40,000 civilian deaths in Gaza contrary to international law.
2. Continues to support calls for an immediate ceasefire and release of all hostages.
3. Regrets the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and Iran's missile assault, and calls on all parties to halt hostilities.
4. Calls on the Welsh Government to put the case to the UK Government and on the international stage for a full arms embargo, provision of humanitarian aid, de-escalation, and a lasting peace through diplomacy.

<https://record.senedd.wales/StatementOfOpinion/434>

Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)

Comment on the Middle East

"We condemn Iran's latest escalation in the Middle East as an unacceptable act directed at civilian targets.

"This is a further war crime in the region following the criminal Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the genocide it has conducted against tens of thousands of Palestinians over the past year including thousands and thousands of children.

"Our government and the US have failed to exert any meaningful restraint on Israel and thus bear major responsibility for the various escalations we have seen since.

"Our government rightly sanctions Iran and refuses to sell it weapons. Far from entering into this war, the UK should be extending at least the same measures against Israel."

<https://www.stuc.org.uk/news/news/stuc-comment-on-the-middle-east/>

United Nations

Secretary-General's message to mark one year since the attacks of 7 October 2023

Today marks one year since the horrific events of October 7th when Hamas launched a large-scale terror attack in Israel killing over 1,250 Israelis and foreign nationals, including children and women.

More than 250 people were abducted and taken to Gaza, including many women and children.

The October 7th attack scarred souls – and on this day we remember all those who were brutally killed and suffered unspeakable violence – including sexual violence – as they

were simply living their lives.

This is a day for the global community to repeat in the loudest voice our utter condemnation of the abhorrent acts of Hamas, including the taking of hostages.

Over the course of the past year, I have met with the families of hostages...learned more about the lives, hopes and dreams of their loved ones ... and shared in their anguish and pain.

I cannot imagine the torture they are forced to endure every day. I demand once again the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

Until then, Hamas must allow the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit those hostages.

The 7th of October is naturally a day to focus on the events of that awful day. I express my solidarity with all the victims and their loved ones.

Since October 7th, a wave of shocking violence and bloodshed has erupted.

The war that has followed the terrible attacks of one year ago continues to shatter lives and inflict profound human suffering for Palestinians in Gaza, and now the people of Lebanon.

I have spoken out about this often and clearly.

It is time for the release of the hostages. Time to silence the guns. Time to stop the suffering that has engulfed the region. Time for peace, international law and justice.

The United Nations is fully committed to achieving those goals.

In the midst of so much bloodshed and division, we must hold on to hope.

Let us honour the memory of the victims, reunite families and end the suffering and violence in the whole Middle East.

And let us never stop working for a lasting solution to the conflict where Israel, Palestine and all other countries of the region can finally live in peace and dignity and with respect for one another.

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2024-10-07/secretary-generals-message-mark-one-year-the-attacks-of-7-october-2023-scroll-down-for-arabic-chinese-french-hebrew-russian-and-spanish>

Avoid 'All Out War' in Lebanon, Stop 'Tit-for-Tat Violence' Engulfing Middle East, Secretary-General Tells Security Council

... The raging fires in the Middle East are fast becoming an inferno. ...

As I told the Council last week, the Blue Line has seen tensions for years. But since October, exchanges of fire have expanded in scope, depth and intensity.

I stated that the almost daily exchanges of fire by Hizbullah and other non-State armed groups in Lebanon and the Israel Defense Forces are in repeated violation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

I emphasized that the daily use of weapons by non-State armed groups is in violation of Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006).

And I stressed that Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected and the Lebanese State must have full control of weapons throughout Lebanon.

In the few short days since then, we have seen a dramatic escalation ...

Israeli forces have conducted relentless air strikes across Lebanon — including Beirut.

The United States and France — with the support of several other countries — have proposed a temporary ceasefire, allowing for the restart of negotiations.

Israel refused that proposal and stepped up its strikes, including bombing the Hizbullah headquarters where its leader was killed.

Hizbullah has continued rocket and missile attacks on Israel.

And yesterday, the Israel Defense Forces conducted what it stated were “limited incursions” into southern Lebanon. ...

Civilians are paying a terrible price ... Since last October, more than 1,700 people have been killed in Lebanon — including over 100 children and 194 women.

Over 346,000 people are confirmed to have been displaced from their homes. Government estimates put this number as high as 1 million. Another 128,000 people — both Syrian and Lebanese — have crossed into Syria.

Since 8 October 2023, Hizbullah attacks on Israel have killed 49 people — with over 60,000 people displaced from their homes. ...

Yesterday, Iran launched approximately 200 ballistic missiles towards Israel. It stated it was in response to the killings of Hassan Nasrallah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp commander, Abbas Nilforoushan, last week — as well as that of the Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in Tehran in July.

Millions of people across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory were forced to seek shelter. One person was killed from the Iranian strikes — a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank. ...

These attacks paradoxically do nothing to support the cause of the Palestinian people or reduce their suffering.

Almost one year has passed since the atrocious 7 October 2023 acts of terror by Hamas and the taking of hostages.

Since last October, Israel has conducted in Gaza the most deadly and destructive military campaign in my years as Secretary-General. The suffering endured by the Palestinian people in Gaza is beyond imagination.

At the same time, the situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continues to deteriorate with Israeli military operations, construction of settlements, evictions, land-grabs and intensification of settler attacks — progressively undermining any possibility of a two-State solution.

And simultaneously, armed Palestinian groups have also used violence. Hamas has continued to launch rockets, and just yesterday seven Israelis were killed in a terror attack in Jaffa. ...

Each escalation has served as a pretext for the next. We must never lose sight of the tremendous toll that this growing conflict is taking on civilians.

We cannot look away from systematic violations of international humanitarian law. This deadly cycle of tit-for-tat violence must stop. Time is running out.

To read the full transcript see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgsm22400.doc.htm>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

UNSCR 1559, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1559\(2004\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1559(2004))

‘Deadly Cycle of Tit-for-Tat Violence Must Stop,’ Demands Secretary-General, as Security Council Takes Up Situation in Middle East

... “The raging fires in the Middle East are fast becoming an inferno,” warned the Secretary-General ... [\[click here to read this speech in greater detail\]](#)

... **the representative of France** ... stated that his country “has mobilized its military means in the Middle East to fend off the Iranian threat”. He called on Iran to abstain from any action that could lead to further destabilization in the region and voiced opposition to any Israeli land aggression in Lebanon. ...

Similarly, **the United Kingdom’s representative** called on Iran and its allies to exercise restraint and “step away from the brink”. ... [\[click here to read this speech in full\]](#)

“This is the moment for this Council to speak out with one voice and condemn Iran for its

unprovoked attack against another Member State and ... to impose serious consequences on the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] for its actions,” stressed **the representative of the United States** ... Affirming her country’s support for Israel, she said: “Our actions have been defensive in nature. ...

In a similar vein, **Israel’s representative** said that Iran, in launching on 1 October the largest ballistic missile attack in history, relinquished any deniability and claimed full ownership over Hizbullah’s actions. Recounting Hizbullah’s crimes over time, including its targeting of fellow Muslims, he said: “Iran for years has armed terrorists in tyrannical regimes, and their weapons are responsible for the deaths of countless civilians across the globe.”

He demanded immediate crippling sanctions on Iran and the designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. ... “Israel will defend itself; we will act. The consequences Iran will face for their actions will be far greater than they could have ever imagined,” he warned.

Countering that assertion, **Iran’s representative** said: “The apartheid and occupying regime of Israel has continued its brutality in occupied Palestine with full impunity — and now this regime is extending its aggressive war to Lebanon.” Israel has no intention of pursuing peace or a ceasefire, while the United States, United Kingdom and certain Western States have “given a carte blanche to this aggressive terrorist regime for all sorts of sinister behaviour”.

Iran’s launch on 1 October of a series of missile strikes targeting the military and security positions of the Israeli regime was in full accordance with the inherent right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, he stressed ...

Lebanon’s representative supported that view, noting the Israeli forces and rows of battle tanks all along the southern borders of his country. The Israeli Government has ratified the ground invasion of Lebanon, which started on the evening of 1 October, following 11 months of barbaric aggression that spared no civilians, and thus its “claims of a limited surgical military operation” are untrue. ...

“Israel is not above the law, and we must hold it accountable,” emphasized **Algeria’s representative**, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the end of Israeli occupation of Arab lands. ...

Echoing Arab States’ rebuke of Israel were the representatives of China and the Russian Federation, with the latter pointing out that Israel continued its brutal campaign in Gaza ... On Israel’s declaring of the UN Secretary-General as “persona non grata”, he called on the Organization to respond to the “outrageous act”, which he called “a slap on the United Nations and all of us”.

The representative of Switzerland ... voiced concern about the endangered lives of civilians. International humanitarian law must be respected by all parties in all circumstances and irrespective of the lawfulness of the use of force. ...

Italy’s representative ... [said] With the brutal attacks perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October, the ensuing conflict in the Gaza Strip and the extremely worrisome situation in Lebanon originated by Hizbullah’s continued attacks on Israel, “relaunching the political process has become more urgent than ever” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15841.doc.htm>

The UN Charter, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

With World Crises Much Different than Past Sessions, Legal Committee Deliberates Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, as Seventy-Ninth Session Begins

... “The law is what distinguishes us from the terrorists, the law is what distinguishes peace-

loving States from rogue States, and it is intrinsic to the United Nations counter-terrorism architecture,” declared **the observer for the State of Palestine**, also noting that she was delivering her statement “for the first time seated among Member States”. Noting that Israel has designated the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a “terrorist organization”, she also said that Israel rejects Palestinian existence such that “anything a Palestinian does — short of dying — is terrorism”.

Further, she asked: “If those of us — and most of us in this room — who resort to international law and peaceful settlement of disputes are labelled as terrorists, then what do we call a settler colonial apartheid regime that commits the most sadistic and organized barbarity in modern history against a civilian population, half of which is children?”

The representative of Saudi Arabia, speaking for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), agreed, calling on the international community to classify Jewish settlement movements as terrorist organizations and to include them in global terrorist lists. He also condemned the Knesset’s adoption of laws he deemed racist, including preventing UNRWA from operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and rejecting a Palestinian State. Further condemning Israel’s recent actions in Lebanon and Syria, he underscored — in the context of progress towards an international counter-terrorism convention — the need for a legal definition of “terrorism”.

For his part, **Israel’s representative** pointed to the “profound, tragic difference” between his statement before the Committee in 2023 and the one he delivered today. While Israel reaffirmed its commitment to the global fight against terrorism on 2 October 2023, he said: “Little did we know that, only five days later, the very gates of hell would violently burst open and nothing in this world would ever be the same again.” He also noted that, following Hamas’ 7 October 2023 attack, “the perpetrators proudly boasted of their crimes online, and to their own parents — a direct result of decades of radicalization and indoctrination into a culture of hatred and terror”.

Also spotlighting large-scale, indiscriminate attacks by “Hizbullah and other terrorist groups in Lebanon” against his country, he underscored that Israel is “fighting a just and necessary war against the forces of pure evil”. Further, he said that “the refusal of this body to designate terrorist groups actively operating against Israel is no less than outrageous”, adding: “There is no substantive difference between Hamas and Hizbullah and ISIS, Boko Haram and Al-Qaida.” ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/gal3714.doc.htm>

‘Orphanage city’ helps children in Gaza as the war grinds on

... In the Al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Younis, teacher Mahmoud Kallakh set up a camp aimed at providing some relief to families who had lost their men and breadwinners.

The Al-Baraka orphanage camp currently hosts 400 Palestinian families ...

“We have a dedicated medical centre and a school sponsored by the United Nations, through UNICEF, which thankfully provided the necessary resources for the school, embracing students, providing them with stationery and paying teachers’ salaries,” Mr. Kallakh said. ...

The number of unprotected orphans in Gaza now ranges between 17,000 and 18,000, many of whom are unaccompanied by any family members. ...

UNICEF says the escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip is catastrophically affecting children and families, with children dying at an alarming rate. More than 14,000 children have been killed, according to estimates by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, and thousands more have been injured.

An estimated 1.9 million people – about 9 out of 10 Gazans – have been internally

displaced, more than half of them children, without adequate water, food, fuel and medicine. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1155356>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Universities must respect peaceful activism and revise repressive policies targeting pro-Palestine solidarity movement: UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of assembly and association, Gina Romero

... “After reviewing persistent allegations, and talking with around 150 people from 30 countries, including students and faculty members, I can conclude that the situation surrounding protests and international solidarity with the Palestinian people and victims within university environments, coupled with inadequate institutional responses, reveals a widespread hostile environment for the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Now that peaceful assemblies in universities worldwide have resumed after holidays, re-joining the growing global movement to safeguard Palestinian rights and lives, and anticipating commemoration mobilisations by both Israeli and Palestinian solidarity groups in October, I urge academic institutions to:

- i. Recognise and respect the importance of youth meaningful and free engagement, and their valuable contributions for human rights, dignity, peace, and justice, including through exercising their public freedoms;
- ii. Immediately cease the stigmatisation and hostilities that silence members of the academic community and discourage the exercise of their rights;
- iii. Actively facilitate and protect peaceful assemblies, including by prioritising negotiation and mediation where necessary, and refrain from calling on law enforcement to disperse peaceful protests;
- iv. Refrain from and cease any surveillance and retributions against students and staff for expressing their views or participating in peaceful assemblies;
- v. Ensure transparent and independent investigation into human rights violations that occurred in the context of the camps and other peaceful assemblies, revoke sanctions related to the exercise of fundamental freedoms, and provide effective and full remedies to affected students and staff; and
- vi. Ensure that their regulations are in line with international standards.

Universities and other educational institutions have an important window of opportunity to learn from the experiences of the university-based pro-Palestine solidarity movement and repair the harm. They must recognise that their responsibility extends beyond campus borders – their actions have the potential to shape political discourse, culture, civic education, and ultimately, the future sustainability of democracy, freedoms and human rights. Respecting and guaranteeing dissent is essential to ensure the universities remain spaces for free thought, speech and academic freedom, as well to guarantee freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The brutal repression of the university-based protest movement is posing a profound threat to democratic systems and institutions; it risks alienating an entire generation, damaging their participation and perception of their role in democratic processes, in addition to failing the responsibility to prevent atrocity crimes and to contribute to peace.”

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/10/universities-must-respect-peaceful-activism-and-revise-repressive-policies>

**Recommendations for universities worldwide for the second semester of 2024:
Safeguarding the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association on campuses
in the context of international solidarity with the Palestinian people and victims**
<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/association/statements/20241004-stm-sr-association.pdf>

Middle East: Türk appeals for peace

I implore all States, including Members of the Security Council, to act resolutely to prevent a wider conflict in the Middle East with potentially devastating consequences for civilians. It is vital that they use their voices and influence to bring the warring parties to the negotiating table to end this.

We appeal to reason. Peace must prevail.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2024/10/middle-east-turk-appeals-peace>

Lebanon: UN experts deplore Israel's increasing disregard for international law

Unprecedented displacement and suffering as Israel dramatically escalates its military campaign in Lebanon have drawn sharp condemnation from UN experts for violations of international law.

"The number of internally displaced persons in Lebanon has more than tripled in less than a month due to Israel's relentless attacks on populated areas coupled with belated or ineffective evacuation orders, in violation of the principles of distinction and proportionality," the experts said.

More than 1,600 people have been killed in Israeli strikes on Lebanon since October last year. At least 346,000 have been internally displaced and plans are underway to shelter up to one million IDPs. Hundreds of thousands have crossed into Syria. Many of those displaced were already refugees, some of whom have encountered xenophobic discrimination during the latest crisis. Over two-thirds are women and children, who face distinct and gendered impacts.

"Israel's latest breach of international law – a ground invasion [in violation](#) of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and Security Council resolution 1701 – will only add to this mounting toll of death and displacement," ...

"While the humanitarian response has been commendable, Israel has impeded relief efforts through attacking vital civilian infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and water and health facilities, as well as health and humanitarian workers themselves," ... "These are clear violations of the international obligation to respect and protect relief personnel that risk collapsing the system to protect and assist displaced persons." ...

"We unequivocally condemn indiscriminate attacks by non-State armed groups based in Lebanon that have displaced some 63,000 within Israel," said the experts. "Perpetrators should be held accountable, and those displaced should receive protection and assistance.

"However, Israel cannot use such crimes to justify its own atrocities in Lebanon, including acts of violence intended to spread terror among civilians and indiscriminate warfare. To do so would amount to collective punishment, another grave violation of international law. ...

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions, like the state of Israel, arose in response to the horrors inflicted on civilians during the Second World War. It is a terrible and tragic irony that Israel is operating as though every provision of these instruments were null and void," the experts said. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/lebanon-un-experts-deplore-israels-increasing-disregard-international-law>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

UN Human Rights Office - OPT: UN Human Rights Office Condemns Unlawful Airstrike on Tulkarem Camp, Calls for Accountability and Protection of Civilians

The UN Human Rights Office strongly condemns the airstrike carried out by Israeli security forces (ISF) on a residential building in Tulkarem camp on the evening of 3 October that killed at least 18 Palestinians.

At around 2220 hours on 3 October, the Israeli air force bombed a three-story residential building, with a café on the ground floor, in a heavily populated area in Tulkarem camp. No clashes or confrontations were occurring at the site. The airstrike completely destroyed the targeted building and also damaged nearby houses. ... The IDF stated that they had killed a local Hamas leader, who was allegedly planning to carry out attacks on Israeli settlements, including in the “immediate timeframe”, as well as other “significant terrorists”. According to information gathered by OHCHR, most of those killed were not armed or wanted by the ISF and were killed in their homes or while passing in the street. Among those killed were an entire family of five, including two children, who lived in the targeted building. In total, at least three children and two women were among those killed.

The strike is part of a highly concerning pattern of unlawful use of force by ISF during military-like operations in the West Bank that have caused widespread harm to Palestinians and significant damage to buildings and infrastructure. Since 7 October 2023, ISF has killed 697 Palestinians in the West Bank, including 161 children and 12 women, 186 of them in airstrikes. ...

This incident is another clear example of ISF’s systematic resort to lethal force in the West Bank that is frequently unnecessary, disproportionate, and therefore unlawful....

The International Court of Justice recently held that Israel’s presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful and called for it to end this unlawful presence as rapidly as possible. In the meantime, Israel is bound by the laws of occupation, which require it to take steps to ensure the security of the Palestinian population in the OPT while complying with the international human rights standards applicable to law enforcement. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/un-human-rights-office-opt-un-human-rights-office-condemns-unlawful-airstrike-tulkarem-camp-calls-accountability-and-protection-civilians>

The International Court of Justice Advisory 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>

World Health Organisation

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus The death toll in #Lebanon is rising, and hospitals are overwhelmed with the influx of injured patients. The health system has been weakened by successive crises and is struggling to cope with the immense needs. I met with Arab League Ambassadors in Geneva to discuss the health situation in Lebanon and the region. We agreed that patients, health workers and civilians, including refugees, must be protected and offered the health care they need.

@WHO has been working closely with @mophleb to ensure hospitals have enough medical supplies and health workers are trained for mass casualty events, as well as to

maintain essential health services for the most vulnerable. But more help is needed, and we are scaling up our response. However, what the people of Lebanon, Gaza, Israel and throughout the Middle East need is peace. The violence must end to prevent more loss and suffering. Any further escalation of the conflict will have catastrophic consequences for the region. The best medicine is peace.

<https://x.com/DrTedros/status/1841547039106085320>

UNRWA

In Gaza, over 1 million people did not receive food rations in August

In Gaza, over 1 million people did not receive food rations in August . In September, the number climbed to more than 1.4 million.

Meanwhile, over 100,000 metric tons of food supplies, are stranded outside Gaza due to access restrictions, insecurity, damaged roads, and the breakdown of law and order.

Again and again hunger is spreading in Gaza.

It is entirely man-made.

Nearly 70 per cent of crop fields have been destroyed.

An entire population is forced to exclusively rely on humanitarian aid.

Restrictions and delays in aid deliveries only worsen an already dire situation for displaced families. With winter approaching and weather conditions deteriorating, lack of adequate humanitarian supplies will only generate more suffering.

What is needed urgently is a ceasefire to end the suffering of people in Gaza and across the region.

The way forward through political will and leadership is to:

- release all hostages,
- open additional crossings
- safe and unrestricted humanitarian access to reach people in need of assistance.

Choosing peace as a way forward is a choice of the courageous, it's time.

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/gaza-over-1-million-people-did-not-receive-food-rations-august>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Library

What is the status of Iran's nuclear programme and the JCPOA?

<https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9870/CBP-9870.pdf>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

UN Human Rights Council 57: UK Statement for Item 9 General Debate on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related forms of intolerance.

... The UK condemns all forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related forms of intolerance. We remain steadfast in our commitment to combatting it, at home and abroad. ...

As in all societies, challenges persist. Ongoing efforts to address racial and ethnic inequalities are essential to ensure better outcomes for all communities.

The UK stands firmly against the scourge of racism and is committed to taking further meaningful action domestically and internationally to shape a better society for all. This includes bringing forward new legislation to tackle persistent racial inequalities. We are dedicated to fostering a society where everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity or background, can thrive and live a life free from discrimination and intolerance.

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/un-human-rights-council-57-uk-statement-on-racism>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill

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

Education (Assemblies) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3769>

Holocaust Memorial Bill

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

Palestine Statehood (Recognition)

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3771>

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3765>

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-bil>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

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

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

Northern Ireland Assembly: Inquiry into Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in Schools (closing date 29 October 2024)

<https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2022-2027/education/inquiries/inquiry-into-relationship-and-sexuality-education-rse-in-schools/>

Northern Ireland Executive: Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 (closing date 4 November 2024)

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/PfG-consultation>

Curriculum and Assessment Review [England] (closing date 22 November 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/curriculum-and-assessment-team/curriculum-and-assessment-review-call-for-evidence/>

**** Equality and Human Rights Commission Code of practice for services, public functions and associations** (closing date 3 January 2025)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/code-practice-services-public-functions-and-associations-consultation>

**** Burial and Cremation [Law Commission]** (closing date 9 January 2025)

<https://lawcom.gov.uk/project/burial-and-cremation/>

[TOP](#)

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