



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Oral Answers

Business of the House

Bob Blackman (Conservative): ... Many of my Jewish constituents enjoy playing golf at Hendon golf club. Recently, during Yom Kippur, the most abhorrent antisemitic statements were raked into the bunkers. That is under police investigation, but may we have a debate on 28 October on how we can create measures to combat hate crime across all religions and all backgrounds, so that we can unite and show the House that we are determined to stamp out behaviour of this abhorrent nature in society?

The Leader of the House of Commons (Lucy Powell): ... I am extremely sorry to hear about the antisemitic attacks at Hendon golf club, especially as they took place during Yom Kippur. That really is something that we need to end in this country, and we must continue to speak up about it, as the hon. Gentleman frequently does in the House. He has made a very good suggestion for a debate, and I shall certainly speak to the Chief Whip and others about it.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-17/debates/1BE9818B-19ED-4D70-9F93-21F59FFD2D6A/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-3F44C209-BDFC-46F2-9D75-774E3B21A4F7>

Interfaith Understanding

Matt Rodda (Labour) [900661] What progress the Church has made on developing interfaith understanding.

The Second Church Estates Commissioner (Marsha De Cordova): Some 85% of the global population have a faith that shapes their day-to-day life. The Church has been working at a global, national and local level to improve interfaith understanding and engagement. At home, it engages with national and local networks to support faith and civic leaders, mayors and MPs in building trust and resilience in their local communities, as they did during and after the most recent civil unrest.

Matt Rodda: ... Will [the Commissioner] join me in congratulating the local faith communities across the diverse and tolerant town of Reading on their work to support one another, and to understand one another's faith? ... it is wonderful to see different faith communities working together for the whole community. ...

Marsha De Cordova: I join my hon. Friend in congratulating all those working across all faiths to ensure that there is good, strong community cohesion ... That is important across constituencies that, like Reading, have diverse communities with diversity in faith.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-17/debates/9B3313CD-8BE3-4384-9738-B02DE5A844F5/InterfaithUnderstanding>

Access to Places of Worship

Blake Stevenson (Conservative) [900658] What steps the Church is taking with developers and local authorities to ensure that residents in new towns and villages have access to places of worship.

Marsha De Cordova: Local authorities are not currently required to consider the building of new places of worship, but under the national planning policy framework they are permitted to include places of worship among a range of community buildings in a development. Where local authorities include places of worship among community buildings, the Church Commissioners seek to promote these facilities.

Blake Stephenson: Development should be about building places and communities where people can live fulfilling lives, not just building houses, and places of worship play an important role in that. Will the hon. Member work with Ministers to ensure that the Government's new towns commission incorporates the creation of places of worship in new towns?

Marsha De Cordova: The Church Commissioners are very much invested in place-making; it is at the core of their approach to bringing forward new homes for communities across the country. ...

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-17/debates/C6CB42D3-A77F-4CFD-8656-093A55B966E3/AccessToPlacesOfWorship>

House of Commons Written Answers

Racial Discrimination

Kim Johnson (Labour) [7864] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government, whether she plans to respond to the report by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination entitled Concluding observations on the combined twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth periodic reports of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, published on 23 August 2024.

Alex Norris: The UK condemns all forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related forms of intolerance and we remain steadfast in our commitment to combatting it, at home and abroad. This includes bringing forward new legislation to tackle persistent racial inequalities.

We recognise the important work of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and are committed to working with them to ensure that no one should have to endure racism. In accordance with the Convention and as per the process outlined in the Committee's report, we will be considering the Committee's recommendations and will provide an update to the Committee on specific recommendations by August 2025, followed by a full periodic report on our progress by April 2028.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-08/7864>

The report referred to above can be read at
<https://undocs.org/en/CERD/C/GBR/CO/24-26>

Demonstrations: Police

Alex Easton (Independent) [8918] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Metropolitan Police on the policing of public demonstrations relating to the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Diana Johnson: The Home Secretary is in regular contact with the Metropolitan Police Service on a range of issues, including public order.

The management of demonstrations is an operational matter for the police, who are independent from government.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-14/8918>

The following two questions both received the same answer

Coroners

Neil Shastri-Hurst (Conservative) [8015] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps her Department has taken to help tackle delays at Coroners' Courts.

Neil Shastri-Hurst (Conservative) [8016] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps her Department has taken to reduce regional variations in the services provided by coroners.

Alex Davies-Jones: It is important that the inquest process is as swift and efficient as possible to avoid additional distress for bereaved families at such a difficult time in their lives. Whilst the Ministry of Justice is responsible for coroner law and policy, the Department does not have operational responsibility for coroner services as they are a local service, funded and administered by individual local authorities. Coroners themselves are independent judicial office holders, led by the Chief Coroner. However, we are keen to understand the factors underlying the length of time for the completion of inquests, and to provide support, where possible and appropriate. To that end, we have introduced a raft of statutory measures to help streamline coroner processes and intend to take forward further measures when Parliamentary time allows. In addition, on 9 September 2024, the Government implemented the statutory Medical Examiner scheme which, by providing a more robust framework for the scrutiny of cause of death, is intended to decrease the number of deaths which are unnecessarily referred to the coroner, thereby helping to reduce pressure on coroner services and associated services such as pathology. We will continue to work with the Chief Coroner to consider and address any issues of consistency which may exist across coroner areas. We will also continue to support the merger of coroner areas where opportunities arise, to better provide consistent service standards for bereaved families.

We welcome the findings of the Justice Committee's 2023 follow-up inquiry into the coroner service, including in relation to support for the bereaved in the inquest process. We are carefully considering the Committee's findings to establish a wider strategy for the development of coroner services including on issues such as coronial pathology and learning from death. We look forward to working closely with the Chief Coroner, local authorities and other key partners inside and outside of Government to devise and deliver this framework for the future, including working on an update to the *Guide to Coroner Services for Bereaved People*.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-08/8015>

and

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-08/8016>

Information about the Medical Examiner Scheme, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/patient-safety-insight/national-medical-examiner-system/>

Information about the Justice Committee inquiry referred to above can be read at <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/8029/the-coroner-service-followup/publications/>

The current version of the Guide referred to above can be read at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e258ec240f0b62c52248094/guide-to-coroner-services-bereaved-people-jan-2020.pdf>

Faith Schools: VAT

John Hayes (Conservative) [8104] To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether she has made an assessment of the potential impact of the introduction of VAT on private school fees on faith schools.

James Murray: On 29 July, the Government announced that, as of 1 January 2025, all education services and vocational training provided by a private school in the UK for a charge will be subject to VAT at the standard rate of 20 per cent. This will also apply to boarding services provided by private schools.

A technical note setting out the details of the policy has been published online here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-on-private-school-fees-removing-the-charitable-rates-relief-for-private-schools>

Draft VAT legislation was also published alongside this technical note, forming a technical consultation, which closed on 15 September. As part of this technical consultation, the Government engaged with a broad range of stakeholders.

Whilst developing these policies, the Government has carefully considered the impact that they will have on pupils and their families across both the state and private sector, as well as the impact they will have on state and private schools. Following scrutiny of the Government's costings by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), details of the Government's assessment of the expected impacts of these policy changes will be published at the Budget on 30 October in a Tax Information and Impact Note.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-09/8104>

The draft legislation referred to above can be read at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66a7a1f8a3c2a28abb50d8c1/Private_Schools_Draft_Legislation_-_DIGITAL.pdf

Religion: Education

Laura Kyrke-Smith (Labour) [8104] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps she is taking to ensure faith groups are regularly consulted on locally agreed syllabuses for religious education.

Catherine McKinnell: Religious education (RE) is an important subject that should provide pupils with an opportunity to learn about a wide range of religious and non-religious beliefs. RE should help pupils to better understand the values and traditions of different religious communities, which is why it remains a compulsory subject in all state-funded schools in England for each pupil up to the age of 18. To support high-quality teaching, the department offers a £10,000 bursary for those undertaking RE postgraduate initial teacher training in the 2024/25 academic year. The government does not specify what a local RE curriculum should consist. These considerations, in relation to mainstream state funded schools, are a matter for individual schools or for Agreed Syllabus Conferences (ASCs), which review and recommend a locally agreed syllabus to their local authority for approval. Academies and most maintained schools with a religious designation are permitted to develop their own RE syllabus. In the case of schools with a religious designation these may be in accordance with their trust deeds or tenets of their faith. For other schools, and in locally agreed syllabuses, schools must reflect: "the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account

of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”.

Legislation requires each locally agreed syllabus for religious education to be reviewed at least once every five years by an ASC established by the local authority. Membership of the ASC must be drawn from Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the opinion of the local authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area. Membership must also be drawn from the Church of England, teacher associations and the local authority. This ensures that all relevant faith groups can be consulted.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-14/8936>

Hinduism: Religious Buildings

Laura Kyrke-Smith (Labour) [8934] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect Hindu places of worship.

Dan Jarvis: 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 routinely assess potential threats to ensure that protective measures are in place to protect Hindu communities and their places of worship against 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 of all other faiths in England and Wales that are particularly vulnerable to religiously or racially motivated hate crime.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-14/8934>

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>

Hinduism: Hate Crime

Laura Kyrke-Smith (Labour) [8929] To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to tackle anti-Hindu hatred in Aylesbury constituency.

Alex Norris: No one should ever be a victim of hatred because of their race or religion and the Government continues to work with police and community partners to monitor and combat this. This Government is committed to protecting the right of individuals to freely practise their religion and we will not tolerate anti-Hindu hatred in any form.

From 2016/17 to 2022/23, under the Protective Security for Places of Worship Scheme, the Home Office has approved security measures at 523 places of worship across England and Wales, including Hindu temples. In 2024/25, £3.5 million will be available for the places of worship and associated faith community through the scheme.

More broadly, we continue to look at tackling all forms of religious hatred and the government is actively exploring a more integrated and cohesive approach to this.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-14/8929>

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 Oral Answers

Humanist Weddings

Baroness Thornton (Labour): To ask His Majesty's Government whether they plan to give legal recognition to humanist weddings.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice (Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede): ... The Government understand humanists' strength of feeling about legally recognising humanist weddings. I know that this strength of feeling extends to many within this House. As a new Government, we must look closely at the details of any proposed changes before setting out our position, which we will do in due course.

Baroness Thornton: ... Not only did this House put humanist marriage in the equal marriage Act of 2014 but, in 2020, the High Court ruled that the failure to provide humanist marriages in England and Wales means that the present law gives rise to discrimination, and that the Government "could not sit on its hands" and do nothing. Given that the Government know they must act here, given that this is Labour policy, given that it will cost nothing and given that the Church of England has given it its blessing, what is the problem and why can we not get on with it?

Lord Ponsonby of Shubrede: My Lords, we are aware that humanists have long been campaigning on this issue, and all the elements which my noble friend mentioned are true. However, the previous Government chose not to respond to the Law Commission report, and we believe that, as a new, incoming Government, we should give ourselves time to respond in as wide a context as possible. Therefore, we will set out our position in due course. We recognise that humanists have been campaigning on this issue for many years. However, there are other issues, such as co-habitation, on which there is also a Labour manifesto commitment, which we want to reflect on before we come forward with our position.

Lord Desai (Crossbench): My Lords, what is the difficulty about the humanists? I have been here for 30 years and again and again I have heard the answer that we cannot do it for humanists. We can have Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriages—we can have Satanist marriage—but no humanist marriage. Is the established Church so much against it that no Government here can do anything about humanist marriages? What is going on?

Lord Ponsonby of Shubrede: The Government are not in favour of Satanist marriages. I think the noble Lord answers his own question: there are other groups that would claim that they have special beliefs which they would want to be reflected through potential secondary legislation. We do not think that is the way to go. We think we need to look at the question in the round, and that is what the Government intend to do.

Lord Dobbs (Conservative): ... It is Labour policy; it is law in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Jersey; and we have been looking at it for ever. Why the delay? Why do the Government have to look at this yet again, when in opposition they were very clear about it? When they have looked at it, what is the timescale? When will the Minister bring the Government's view back to this House, so that we can deal with something positive?

Lord Ponsonby of Shubrede: My Lords, unfortunately, the timescale is "in due course". Nevertheless, there is a commitment to look at this and to look at the question in the round. The noble Lord's question was answered by the noble Lord, Lord Desai: there are other groups that also believe they are special, and they want special recognition—Sharia wives might be one such group. We do not want to legislate by secondary legislation; we do not think that is appropriate in this example. That is why we will take our time and come back with a considered view.

Baroness Burt of Solihull (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, "the Liberal Democrats clearly support this change; the Labour Party supports this change; the Government in Wales support this change; the Government in Scotland support this change; and, as we have

heard from the noble Lord, Lord Pickles, it is ultimately going to be a political decision, so why are the Government waiting for the Law Commission's report?"—[[Official Report, 25/04/22; col. 9.](#)]

These are not my words but the words of the Minister himself. I despair, to be honest. The Law Commission has now reported, as he knows. Will he answer now his own question? When will this happen?

Lord Ponsonby of Shubrede: Unfortunately, the answer is the same as the one I gave to earlier questions: it will be in due course. I understand the strength of feeling on this matter. There are a lot of other issues to be considered within this context, and the Government want to take time to do it properly.

The Lord Bishop of Sheffield: My Lords, on these Benches we would welcome humanist wedding ceremonies being given legal status, but the recommendations of the Law Commission go beyond that and would create a free market celebrant-based approach to the wedding industry. I gather that Humanists UK shares our concern that such a move could undermine the solemn nature of marriage, which is never a trivial transaction. Given this unlikely alliance between the Lords spiritual and Humanists UK, can the Minister confirm that the Government will not enact the recommendations of the Law Commission without considering carefully the impact of a further commercialisation of weddings?

Lord Ponsonby of Shubrede: I thank the right reverend Prelate for his question; he makes the point very well. I have heard the phrase "free market approach", and I have heard people speak about the privatisation of weddings, which would not be the right approach. That is indeed the reason we want to look at this question in the round, and that is what we intend to do.

Lord Keen of Elie (Conservative): Those who wish a marriage to be conducted in England without any religious significance have always been able to carry out a ceremony with a registrar. The places in which that marriage may be carried out have been extended. The fundamental issue in the law of marriage in England is that it is based upon the place of the celebration and not the identity of the celebrant, and there is no point in making piecemeal reforms to that basic law. It is therefore time, is it not, for the Government to address the key recommendation of the Law Commission to move from the emphasis on building to the emphasis on celebrant? That is not going to open up a free market in marriage; it will simply ensure that particular groups may be able to qualify as celebrants of a ceremony going forward. Does the Minister agree?

Lord Ponsonby of Shubrede: I agree with the noble and learned Lord. That is an important factor within the wider consideration of this issue. It is also a factor concerning which groups would be included. His point about focusing on the celebrant rather than the building is fundamental.

Lord Meston (Crossbench): My Lords, although this Question refers only to humanist weddings, it really does concern the unsatisfactory state of the law on the formation and validity of marriages. The inconsistencies and potential for unfairness have been comprehensively shown by the Law Commission in its report, which I remind the House was produced over two years ago. As to humanist weddings, which are part of the wider problem, there remains the anomalous difference between the law applied in England and Wales and the law in Scotland and other places where humanist marriages are recognised without the need for a separate civil ceremony. Can the Government indicate what work is under way to align and modernise the British law overall? At the very least, surely the Government do not want to become responsible for an exodus of lovelorn humanists to Gretna Green.

Lord Ponsonby of Shubrede: I thank the noble Lord, Lord Meston, for his question, and I agree with his premise that the current state of laws regarding weddings is unsatisfactory. Although the current weddings law is contained within the Marriage Act 1949, the fundamental structure of weddings law dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries. There are profound difficulties, and I acknowledge that

point. I am giving a commitment that the Government will look at this in the whole and undertake to come back in due course with rounded recommendations to address these issues.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-16/debates/723F31C3-144F-4404-9D0B-5A89320F6C5C/HumanistWeddings>

The Law Commission report referred to above can be read at

<https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/cloud-platform-e218f50a4812967ba1215eaecede923f/uploads/sites/30/2022/07/A-new-weddings-law-LC-report.pdf>

Department of Health and Social Care

Assisted dying bill debate: advice to doctors from the UK chief medical officers and NHS England National Medical Director

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/assisted-dying-bill-debate-advice-to-doctors/assisted-dying-bill-debate-advice-to-doctors-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-and-nhs-england-national-medical-director>

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Government partners with civil society to transform lives across the UK

... The creation of a ‘Civil Society Covenant’ will usher in a new era of partnership between government and civil society and help tackle some of the country’s biggest challenges ...

The new Covenant is designed to harness the knowledge and expertise of voluntary, community, social enterprises (VCSEs) and charities to deliver better outcomes for communities right across the country. ...

The new Covenant will build a new partnership between government and civil society based on trust and mutual respect. ...

As a first step, a Covenant Framework has been developed in consultation with key civil society bodies, including the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO). ...

Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer said: To fix the foundations of our country we need a fundamental reset of the relationship between government and civil society. ...

By harnessing the dynamism, innovation and trusted reach of civil society organisations, we can boost growth and deliver better outcomes for communities right across the country”.

Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy said: The Covenant paves the way for a new era in the relationship between government and civil society — one that recognises the critical role the sector plays as a trusted partner in achieving shared goals for the benefit of communities across the UK.

Voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises all understand the challenges being faced every day in our villages, towns and cities and the government wants to work hand-in-hand with them to help fix them — changing lives for the better. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-partners-with-civil-society-to-transform-lives-across-the-uk--2>

Charity Commission

Decision: Charity Inquiry: Keren Shmuel

Keren Shmuel's ... [charitable] purposes, as set out in the Governing Document, are:

- the advancement of the Orthodox Jewish religion
- the promotion and support of Orthodox Jewish religious education, and
- the relief of poverty among persons of the Jewish faith ...

On 20 September 2013, the Charity Commission ... opened a statutory class inquiry (the 'Class Inquiry') into charities whose trustees were in default of their statutory obligations to meet reporting requirements ...

Having failed to submit its annual accounting documents to the Commission for the financial year end 31 December 2014 and 2015, the charity became part of the Class Inquiry on 15 February 2017. ...

On submission of the outstanding annual documents, the charity ceased to be part of the Class Inquiry on 10 March 2017 ... On 11 May 2017, the Commission published a [statement of the results of the Class Inquiry](#) specifically in relation to the charity.

Following its exit from the Class Inquiry, the charity went into two further defaults having failed to file its annual accounting documents on time ... with the December 2021 filing being submitted on 17 February 2023. ...

Consequently, on 4 April 2023, the Commission opened a Statutory Inquiry ...

A Commission accountant reviewed the accounts submitted and identified that they were deficient and did not comply with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice ('SORP'). ...

The Inquiry's review of the charity's bank statements found that between 2018 and 2022 more than £550,000 of charitable funds was transferred overseas ... The Inquiry is of the view that whilst the former trustees have provided an explanation as to how the funds have been applied, there was insufficient evidence provided to show and explain how the majority of the charity's funds were expended in furtherance of the purpose for which they were sent overseas. ...

The Inquiry found that the conduct of the former trustees fell below the standard that the Commission expects of trustees and that there had been misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity. ...

This includes a serious disregard for, and/or a lack of understanding of, the importance of proper financial controls and accountability in respect of the charity's funds. ...

To improve aspects of the charity's administration and governance, the Inquiry has issued the current trustees with rectifying actions in the Official Warning which requires them to take certain actions within a specified timeframe, referring to the failures set out above. ...

To read the full decision see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-inquiry-keren-shmuel/charity-inquiry-keren-shmuel>

Welsh Senedd Oral Answers

'Anti-racist Wales Action Plan'

John Griffiths (Labour) [OQ61719] What is the Cabinet Secretary's assessment of progress made on the 'Anti-racist Wales Action Plan'?

Jane Hutt (Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip): ...

Since the 'Anti-racist Wales Action Plan' was launched two years ago, we have laid significant structural foundations for improving outcomes for ethnic minority people in Wales, including an external accountability group, which holds us to account. ...

Altaf Hussain (Conservative): ... the Welsh Conservatives are firmly against racism and all forms of hate and bigotry. This has no place in society, and there should be zero

tolerance for antisemitism, Islamophobia and all hate crimes.

The escalating crisis in the middle east has led to the horrific deaths of thousands of innocent people. The situation is catastrophic and, sadly, also affects many people in Wales who have friends and relatives in the region affected. Furthermore, this has escalated extreme hate and appalling racism directed towards Jewish and Muslim people in their Welsh communities, simply because of their faith. The Welsh Government attempted many times over the last 25 years to end discrimination, but ordinary Jewish and Muslim people continue to feel anxious, concerned for their safety, and, unfortunately, believe that this is just a part of normal life.

My question is: what is the Welsh Government doing to tackle prejudice and foster good relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities in Wales? How is the Welsh Government supporting Jewish and Muslim faith leaders and grass-roots charities?

Jane Hutt: It's so important, and we also recognise that that's a very important question, because we are in Wales hate crime week this week. In fact, I spoke at the Wales hate crime support network yesterday and I spoke at that event about the fact that, arguably, 2024's been a year like no other in recent memory. We saw the riots in England and Northern Ireland having an impact on people in Wales, people from different ethnic minorities, backgrounds—Muslims, in particular, are feeling fearful they will become targets, from the summer events, but also the heart-wrenching conflict, as you say, across the middle east has also left Welsh community members from different groups feeling very fearful, and, in fact, there has been an uplift, unfortunately, of hate crime based on one's faith and religion. So, it's really important, as I said yesterday, that Wales has no place for hate, and I think this is where we can come together to express that. We do know there are reports of hate crime targeted towards Jewish and Muslim communities in Wales. The key point yesterday we were making at the Wales Hate Support Centre is that people encourage people to report any hate incidents and they can contact the police or the Wales Hate Support Centre, run by Victim Support, but I'm grateful for that question.

To read the full transcript see

<https://record.senedd.wales/Plenary/14142#C620563>

The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, referred to above, can be read at

<https://www.gov.wales/anti-racist-wales-action-plan>

Northern Ireland Executive Department of Education

Minister launches Pre-school Toolkit for Diversity

... Welcoming the toolkit, the Minister said: "All children deserve an equal chance in life, irrespective of their ethnic, cultural or religious background. Teaching and fostering respect for diversity between our children at an early stage, is vitally important to ensure that all children feel safe, included and supported within our schools and wider society and to enable them to meet their full potential." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/minister-launches-pre-school-toolkit-diversity>

Pre-School Toolkit for Diversity 2024

<https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/intercultural-education-service-ies/newcomers/intercultural-resources/ies-toolkits>

TOP

Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answers

Prime Minister's Questions

col 825 **The Prime Minister (Keir Starmer):** ... I also wish to acknowledge the extraordinary life of Holocaust survivor Lily Ebert whose message of hope showed such courage. May her memory be a blessing. ...

Rishi Sunak (Conservative): I join the Prime Minister's words of tribute to Alex Salmond and the Holocaust survivor Lily Ebert ...

col 828 **Ed Davey (Liberal Democrat):** I echo the Prime Minister's tributes to ... Lily Ebert. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-16/debates/9C206E7E-CDC1-4E7A-8B2B-876723663536/Engagements>

TOP

Israel

See also Commons written answer 8918 "Demonstrations: Police", and Welsh Senedd oral answers "Anti-racist Wales Action Plan" that are included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Commons Oral Answers

Prime Minister's Questions

Ed Davey (Liberal Democrat): ... Let me turn to the middle east. Israeli Finance Minister Smotrich has said that starving 2 million people in Gaza might be "justified and moral". National Security Minister Ben-Gvir called settlers who killed a 19-year-old on the west bank "heroes". After my visit to Israel and Palestine last February, having witnessed the damaged that those extremist Ministers in the Netanyahu Government are doing, I called on the last UK Government to sanction them. They refused, but we now learn that the former Foreign Secretary was considering it. Will the Prime Minister now sanction Ministers Ben-Gvir and Smotrich?

The Prime Minister: We are looking at that, because those are obviously abhorrent comments, as the right hon. Gentleman rightly says, along with other really concerning activity in the west bank and across the region. The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire: the death toll has surpassed 42,000 and access to basic services is becoming much harder. Israel must take all possible steps to avoid civilian casualties, to allow aid into Gaza in much greater volume, and to provide the UN and humanitarian partners the ability to operate effectively. Along with France, the UK will convene an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council to address that.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-16/debates/9C206E7E-CDC1-4E7A-8B2B-876723663536/Engagements#contribution-C03F3A21-A18C-48F1-B496-15D0B0A0869B>

Prime Minister's Questions

Blair McDougall (Labour): As the Prime Minister works for a ceasefire and the return of the hostages, he will have the support of Members across the House. He will have noted

the comments from the White House calling for urgent action to deal with the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and for the Netanyahu Government to increase access to aid and the amount of aid getting through. Does the Prime Minister agree with those comments from the White House, and what representations is he making on that matter?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I do agree ... we are constantly making representations on this with our partners. There is an urgent need, as there has been for a long time, for more aid to get into Gaza. It is a desperate situation, and Israel must comply with its international humanitarian law obligations. That is why we are convening a session of the UN Security Council, with others, to address that issue.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-16/debates/9C206E7E-CDC1-4E7A-8B2B-876723663536/Engagements#contribution-D9707FE0-0367-4FE1-98B6-43A538724117>

Business of the House

Kit Malthouse (Conservative): The Labour manifesto contained a pledge to recognise Palestine. Subsequently, the Prime Minister has said that the Palestinians have an “undeniable right” to recognition, but something is holding him back. Could we please have a debate in Government time to examine the fact that all our Arab allies are saying that recognition is now a prerequisite for peace in the middle east, so that the House can vote to support the Prime Minister in taking this very significant step?

The Leader of the House of Commons (Lucy Powell): We absolutely do support recognising Palestine as a state, which is an indelible right of the Palestinian people. It is absolutely critical that we achieve a long-term, two-state solution in the middle east that recognises both Israel’s right to exist as a safe and secure country, and the Palestinian people’s right to have a Palestinian state that is also safe, secure and free. That is what we are working towards internationally and with our allies across the world, and it is something that I know the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister spend a lot of their time dealing with. We have Foreign Office questions coming up next week, and I know that the Foreign Secretary is keen to come to this House as often as possible to update Members on what is happening in the middle east. I am sure these issues will be debated further.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-17/debates/1BE9818B-19ED-4D70-9F93-21F59FFD2D6A/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-3FA34D7C-B95B-474B-8EDF-6C17BAE02783>

Business of the House

Richard Foord (Liberal Democrat): I was contacted this week by a resident of Sidmouth whose parent was interned in a Japanese camp during world war two. She wrote to me about her father’s affidavits, which are held by the Imperial War Museum, saying, “They do not make good reading, but bear great similarity to what is happening in Gaza.”

Will the Government make a statement about their stance on whether Israel’s far-right Ministers Smotrich and Ben-Givri should be subject to UK Government sanctions? Also, will they offer support to the International Criminal Court as it seeks arrest warrants for the likes of Netanyahu and Hamas Leader Yahya Sinwar?

Lucy Powell: The comments made by the Israeli Ministers, as the Prime Minister said yesterday, were “abhorrent”; disgraceful and unacceptable language was used. We are working closely with our allies internationally to bring an end to the horrors we are seeing in Israel and Gaza, which is why we need to make sure that everybody operates within international law. The Government are committed to that and to bringing about an immediate ceasefire so we can work towards a long-term solution.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-17/debates/1BE9818B-19ED-4D70-9F93-21F59FFD2D6A/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-B7E4C946-53C3-473E-B008-638D84EE6634>

House of Lords Oral Answers

Gaza and Lebanon

[The Minister for Development's answer](#) to a Commons urgent question was read in the Lords.

Lord Callanan (Conservative): My Lords, on Monday this week, my noble friend Lord Howard of Lympne asked the noble Lord about an answer given on 3 September by his ministerial colleague, the noble Baroness, Lady Chapman, regarding the partial arms embargo on Israel. ... Was the noble Baroness, Lady Chapman, correct when she told the House that the Government were “required to suspend certain export licences”?—[\[Official Report, 3/9/24; col. 1065.\]](#) ...

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Collins of Highbury): When I reread *Hansard* after the noble Lord's intervention on Monday, I found that what the noble Baroness, Lady Chapman, said was exactly what I said on the F35 situation: it is very difficult to determine where the supply will go and its impact. ...

Lord Purvis of Tweed (Liberal Democrat): My Lords, after more than a year of the conflict, many of the hostages have still not been released and the suffering of Palestinian civilians is unbearable. But the excess of violence in the West Bank is often underreported. In March I asked the then Government to designate the politicians, Ministers Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, who have been actively facilitating some of the excessive violence in the West Bank and speaking for it. I asked the then Foreign Secretary, and he has now endorsed this. I do not expect the Minister to comment on potential designations under sanctions, but can he confirm that it is the policy of the Government not to exempt serving politicians from designations?

Lord Collins of Highbury: I heard the noble Lord, Lord Cameron, on the radio. I am always willing to take his advice ... The reality of the situation in the West Bank is that violence is increasing. I would certainly go on record condemning the totally unacceptable language of Smotrich and Ben-Gvir. It is appalling. As the noble Lord, Lord Purvis, knows, I would not speculate on future sanctions, but let me tell noble Lords that yesterday, under the global human rights regime, the United Kingdom sanctioned three outposts and four entities linked to the violence in the West Bank. So we are acting and will be prepared to act. We are certainly not going to tolerate the sort of violence that I have personally witnessed in the West Bank.

Viscount Hailsham (Conservative): ... Does the Minister share my concern that there are now many people making policy in Israel who, by their acts and omissions—both on the West Bank and in Gaza—are creating facts on the ground that will make it impossible for the Palestinians to live in either of those two territories? Thereby, an enlarged and largely Palestinian-free Israel will have been created.

Lord Collins of Highbury: I am not going to speculate on the motives—I am certainly not going to speculate on what is going on in the mind of Premier Netanyahu—but what I do know is that our allies and the United Kingdom have a long-standing commitment to ensure that the integrity of the State of Israel is upheld, and that this should go alongside an independent Palestinian state, with two states living side by side. The road map to that two-state solution is not an easy one but I am absolutely determined that this Government, the United States and our allies in the European Union are all committed to it. I hope that we can influence those in Israel who might not have the same sort of view.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (Labour): My Lords, this morning some of us attended a shocking briefing on the state of healthcare in Gaza, including the restrictions on doctors entering the country and the sick and injured being able to leave—in particular for hospital care in east Jerusalem. Is this something on which the Government could bring pressure to bear?

Lord Collins of Highbury: Absolutely. One of the concerns of all of us is the absolute humanitarian catastrophe that is occurring in Gaza. Almost 42,000 people have died and more than 50% of the identified bodies are those of women and children. The impact on health, education and other public services is absolutely deplorable.

In Prime Minister's Questions today, the Prime Minister said that he agrees with the letter from the US to Netanyahu about the situation of humanitarian aid going into Gaza. We have taken action on arms, as we have discussed. We need to put even more pressure on the Israelis to ensure open access to humanitarian aid. It is a determination that we are going to ensure that access—and we are going to continue to work with our allies to get it.

The Lord Bishop of Norwich: My Lords, just over a year ago I was in Gaza, three days before Hamas's evil attacks, visiting the Anglican-run al-Ahli hospital. Today that hospital is the only functioning hospital in northern Gaza, but it is weeks since it has been supplied. What are His Majesty's Government doing to ensure that healthcare supplies are getting into Gaza and in particular that al-Ahli hospital, which is doing the incredible work of healing, is supplied?

Lord Collins of Highbury: I repeat what I have said: it is absolutely the number one priority. Humanitarian access is what the United States is demanding of Israel and what we have demanded. We want those access routes opened properly and protected, not attacked. It has to be a priority of this Government and all our allies.

Lord McDonald of Salford (Crossbench): My Lords, it is now less than three weeks until the US presidential election. Hamas and Hezbollah have a history of timing their attacks to generate maximum international attention as well as local disruption. Have His Majesty's Government considered the possibility that there might be a spike in violence before America votes?

Lord Collins of Highbury: We are taking all possible action to defend, protect and not take anything for granted. ... We are prepared for the worst, but we are trying to ensure that it does not happen.

Baroness Blower (Labour): My Lords, at the briefing I attended with my noble friend Lady Lister, we heard that for surgeons who wish to go to Gaza to assist in the terrible situation, to provide surgery and so on, it is now impossible for them to go for less than a month. Often it is six weeks, because they have to take a week to get in and a week to get out. Is my noble friend the Minister prepared to meet with some of these organisations, with me and my noble friend Lady Lister, to hear at first hand what they have been telling us, in order to try to get at least some medical care into Gaza—and to press the case for a humanitarian corridor so that those needing medical evacuation can go to the West Bank?

Lord Collins of Highbury: ... The reality is that the Prime Minister, and the Foreign Secretary when he visited the region on 14 July, have announced additional funding—£5.5 million to UK-Med for operating its field hospitals in Gaza, extending the medical facilities. During her visit on 7 August, Minister Dodds announced a further £6 million to UNICEF, which is supporting families in Gaza. No one should underestimate the desperate situation. We can all see it; the evidence is quite clear. The only way we can do this is by working with our allies to ensure that the Israeli Government respond to our calls to open the routes in, to ensure that we get proper humanitarian and medical aid into Gaza.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Conservative): My Lords, what assessment have His Majesty's Government made of the important role that British troops have over many years continued to play in training the Lebanese army in light of the current challenges in the south of Lebanon, the UNIFIL mission and the continuing support required by the Lebanese armed forces, particularly in the north of the country? Are British troops continuing in that vital role?

Lord Collins of Highbury: They are, and there was a question in the other place

on our support for UNIFIL and how we can act. We are keeping all this under review, but I assure the noble Lord that we will maintain that presence and that training.

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2024-10-16/debates/47E531AD-E4E0-4ABD-9518-738EFA326585/GazaAndLebanon>

The Prime Minister's comments during Prime Minister's Questions referred to above by Lord Collins of Highbury can be read at

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-16/debates/9C206E7E-CDC1-4E7A-8B2B-876723663536/Engagements#contribution-3DA1AED1-97E6-42DE-B064-E98A8F39E39D>

The Commons question relating to UNIFIL referred to above by Lord Collins of Highbury may have been

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-15/debates/F06AD760-7ECD-4216-B0A1-4C778C20927B/GazaAndLebanon#contribution-BA1579A3-3FCC-4ED9-A381-C772813A4A26>

and the related question

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-15/debates/F06AD760-7ECD-4216-B0A1-4C778C20927B/GazaAndLebanon#contribution-F9B0E9EE-800B-445F-BCCE-6A88CFBEE7EA>

Downing Street

PM speech in Berlin: 18 October 2024

... Firstly, the situation in the Middle East.

Let me start by saying that no one should mourn the death of the Hamas Leader Sinwar.

On his hands is the blood of innocent Israelis.

Killed on the 7th of October and over years of terror.

And also the blood of the Palestinian people.

Who suffered in the chaos and violence that he sought and celebrated.

We continue to support Israel's right to self-defence.

Particularly in the face of the attacks by the Iranian regime.

Allies will keep working together.

To de-escalate across the region.

Because we know there is no military-only solution here.

The answer is diplomacy.

And now we must make the most of this moment.

What is needed now is a ceasefire in Gaza.

The immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

Immediate access for humanitarian aid.

And a return to the path towards the two-state solution.

As the only way to deliver long-term peace and security.

The dire humanitarian situation cannot continue.

And I say once again to Israel, the world will not tolerate any more excuses on humanitarian assistance.

Civilians in northern Gaza need food, now.

The UK strongly supports UNRWA in the vital work it does in Gaza, across the OPTs and the region.

UNRWA must be allowed to continue its life saving support.

The suffering must end, including in Lebanon, where we need a ceasefire to implement a political plan based on UN resolution 1701.

That empowers the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Strengthens UNIFIL.

And allows communities on both sides of the border to return to their homes.

That delivers humanitarian and economic support to the people of Lebanon.

Supports democracy and bolsters the Lebanese State. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-in-berlin-18-october-2024>

PM meeting with President Macron of France, Chancellor Scholz of Germany and President Biden of the United States: 18 October 2024

... The leaders also discussed events in the Middle East, in particular the implications of the death of Yahya Sinwar, who bears responsibility for the bloodshed of the October 7th terrorist attack, for the immediate necessity to bring the hostages home to their families, for ending the war in Gaza, and ensure humanitarian aid reaches civilians.

The leaders also reiterated their condemnation of Iran's escalatory attack on Israel and coordinated on efforts to hold Iran accountable and prevent further escalation. They discussed the situation in Lebanon and agreed on the need to work towards full implementation of UNSCR 1701 and a diplomatic resolution that allows civilians on both sides of the Blue Line to return safely home.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-meeting-with-president-macron-of-france-chancellor-scholz-of-germany-and-president-biden-of-the-united-states-18-october-2024>

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))

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

David Lammy Sinwar was a brutal terrorist responsible for the horror of October 7th. My thoughts this evening are with his victims and the families of all those who suffered the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust, and the hostages who must still be released. Now is the time for a ceasefire which leads to a new chapter in the Middle East.

<https://x.com/DavidLammy/status/1847034478440387022>

Anneliese Dodds The suffering of civilians affected by conflict across the Middle East is intolerable. That's why we will match public donations to the @DECapeal Middle East Humanitarian Appeal, up to £10million, to provide immediate lifesaving aid. [plus video]

<https://x.com/AnnelieseDodds/status/1846827371095023923>

Northern Gaza must not be cut off from the south: UK statement at the UN Security Council

... The situation in northern Gaza is harrowing. Approximately 400,000 Gazans have been ordered to evacuate the north and move southwards to the IDF designated humanitarian zone. Many of these people will already have been displaced, some many times over, and are desperately searching for refuge.

But there are no safe places in Gaza. Just this week we saw horrifying images following the Israeli strike on Al-Aqsa hospital, inside the IDF designated humanitarian zone.

Those who decide to move face intimidation, active fighting zones and the threat of continued airstrikes. Those who stay face extreme hunger and appalling conditions, without access to basic services or healthcare.

In the first half of October, no food aid was delivered to northern Gaza, with Israeli authorities denying or impeding the vast majority of humanitarian movements between

north and south. We expect October to see the least aid enter Gaza since the beginning of the conflict, lower even more than September.

Families in Gaza are facing a second winter with even less resilience and fewer resources. This is unconscionable.

Israel must comply fully with international humanitarian law and ensure sufficient aid reaches all parts of Gaza. We also reiterate our concern at legislative proposals seeking to undermine UNRWA, which is vital to the humanitarian response in Gaza.

Let me be clear. Northern Gaza must not be cut off from the south. Palestinian civilians, including those evacuated from northern Gaza, must be permitted to return to their communities and rebuild. There must be no forcible transfer of Gazans from or within Gaza, nor any reduction in the territory of the Gaza Strip.

We need to see an immediate ceasefire, to bring this devastating conflict to an end.

President, we must also hold in the front of our minds, the unthinkable suffering of the 101 hostages who remain in captivity in Gaza. Their ordeal has gone on for far too long. Once again, we call on Hamas to release the hostages immediately and unconditionally.

And as we know, the suffering in the region goes beyond Gaza. We reiterate our call for an immediate ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel. All parties must take measures to avoid civilian casualties, and ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel.

And in the West Bank, as my Foreign Secretary has said, we urge the Israeli Government to take action to crack down on settler violence and to stop settler expansion on Palestinian land.

That is why yesterday, my Government announced further sanctions against three illegal settler outposts and four organisations in order to bring accountability to those who perpetrate such heinous human rights abuses against Palestinians.

President, the Palestinian people, the Israeli people, and the region as a whole, deserve a better reality than the daily cycle of violence and fear to which they have become accustomed. But there is a path to peace. One which would see a safe and secure Palestinian state, beside a safe and secure Israel.

We urge the parties to be courageous and to take the path towards peace and a better future for their people.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/northern-gaza-must-not-be-cut-off-from-the-south-uk-statement-at-the-un-security-council>

The sanctions announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-uk-sanctions-target-illegal-outposts-and-organisations-supporting-extremist-israeli-settlers-in-the-west-bank>

UK pushes for Middle East stability on ministerial visit to Egypt

... Announcing a new package of support to assist civilians medically evacuated from Gaza to Egypt, the Minister [for the Middle East, Hamish Falconer] pledged £1 million of UK assistance to the Egyptian Ministry of Health that will support medically evacuated civilians from Gaza who are receiving care in Egypt.

Delivered through the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Egypt, the funding will provide vital medical supplies and medications, including chemotherapy and rehabilitative equipment, to those in need. It will also strengthen capacity to care for patients from Gaza with chronic diseases.

Minister for the Middle East Hamish Falconer said: "As a key regional partner, Egypt plays a central role alongside the UK in working for stability and security across the Middle East and driving forward de-escalation efforts in both Gaza and Lebanon.

"The worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to bring devastation to many lives, with many requiring life-saving support over the border in Egypt. That's why, alongside our Egyptian partners, we are funding life-saving treatments and support for

medically evacuated civilians from Gaza.

“At Al Arish, I saw that many tonnes of lifesaving aid continue to be denied entry into Gaza by Israel. As winter approaches, Israel can and must do more to ensure aid flows freely into Gaza and to facilitate the UN and humanitarian agencies to carry out their work safely. ...

The Minister also met with Egypt’s Foreign Minister, Badr Abdelatty where he thanked Egypt for its ongoing role in getting aid into Gaza and agreed the need to continue working together for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon. ...

The UK continues to play a leading role in alleviating the suffering in Gaza and continues to provide significant funding to partners to support those most in need. The UK has already provided 78,000 shelter items, 76,000 wound care kits, and 1.3 million items of medicine.

The UK trebled its aid commitment to the OPTs in the last financial year and this Government will maintain significant funding this financial year to support trusted aid agencies on the ground.

The UK continues to call for an immediate ceasefire on all fronts and continues to push for urgent aid to enter Gaza and reach those most in need.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-pushes-for-middle-east-stability-on-ministerial-visit-to-egypt>

Department for Business and Trade

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Israel

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fab3a92bb81fcdbe7b978/israel-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2024-10-18.pdf>

Updated Trade and Investment Factsheet: Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa77b080bdf716392f4a5/occupied-palestinian-territories-trade-and-investment-factsheet-2024-10-18.pdf>

Charity Commission

Regulators urge safer giving to help people impacted by humanitarian crisis in the Middle East

... the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Fundraising Regulator have published advice on how people can help civilians impacted by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

The advice comes as the [Disasters Emergency Committee](#) (DEC) launches a humanitarian appeal to help civilians affected by humanitarian crises in Gaza and Lebanon caused by conflict. ...

The appeal will fund the distribution of emergency items such as mattresses, blankets, tents, food and water to those in need of basic humanitarian relief in the region.

The government has pledged to match donations received by the DEC appeal, up to £10million ...

Many people in the UK will separately be wishing to support charities operating in or supporting those across communities impacted by recent events in Israel. Checking charity registers before donating will ensure that support reaches its intended cause. ...

David Holdsworth, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission said: As we’ve watched the appalling humanitarian crisis unfold in the Middle East, many of us will be asking how best to help the millions of people in need of basic aid.

Registered charities with experience working in incredibly complex and dangerous circumstances, across and within borders, are the best organisations to support financially to ensure donations reach civilians in need. ...

People can give with confidence to relief efforts by following a few simple steps:

- consider donating through the DEC's [emergency appeal](#)
- for those who choose to donate to other charities, the charity regulator is reminding people to check charities are [registered](#) and legitimate
- look out for the [Fundraising Badge](#) – the logo that says 'registered with Fundraising Regulator' – and check the [Fundraising Regulator's Directory](#) of organisations committed to fundraise in line with its Code of Fundraising Practice.
- contact a charity directly or find out more online about the charity that you're seeking to donate to or work with to understand how it is spending funds
- make sure the charity is genuine before giving any financial information
- be careful when responding to emails or clicking on links within them
- check the charity's name and registration number on the [Charity Register](#) – most charities with an annual income of £5,000 or more must be registered in England and Wales

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulators-urge-safer-giving-to-help-people-impacted-by-humanitarian-crisis-in-the-middle-east>

Scottish Government

Humanitarian aid for Middle East

Humanitarian aid efforts in the Middle East will receive funding of £250,000 in response to a Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Appeal.

DEC, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) and Mercy Corps will use the funding to support humanitarian activities as the situation in the region continues to deteriorate.

£200,000 will contribute to a fund shared between DEC's 15 member organisations helping to provide food, water, medical assistance and shelter to displaced people in the region. SCIAF and Mercy Corps will each receive £25,000 to support aid activities.

First Minister John Swinney said: "Thousands of innocent people have been killed in the crisis in the Middle East, with millions more displaced and left without certainty about how to access to shelter, food, clean water and medical care.

"The humanitarian crisis in the Middle East continues to deepen and spread, and an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation of conflict is needed to prevent more innocent lives being lost and bring an end to the unimaginable suffering this conflict has caused.

"Urgent humanitarian aid must be provided to all those who need it, and this contribution from the Scottish Government will assist the Disasters Emergency Committee, SCIAF and Mercy Corps in ensuring it reaches as many people as possible. Members of the public can also pledge support and make donations to the DEC Appeal in a variety of ways and I would urge everyone to consider donating if they are in a position to do so."

<https://www.gov.scot/news/humanitarian-aid-for-middle-east/>

World Health Organisation (WHO)

WHO in Lebanon working to stop cholera spread amid conflict

On 16 October, the Ministry of Public Health of Lebanon confirmed a cholera case, highlighting the escalating health risks amidst ongoing conflict. ...

“WHO has been sounding the alarm on the risk of emerging infectious diseases like cholera resurfacing in Lebanon as a result of poor water and sanitation conditions and the impact of the current conflict.” said Dr Abdinasir Abubakar, WHO Representative in Lebanon. “Our immediate focus now is to enhance surveillance and water sanitation conditions to interrupt transmission and prevent further spread.”

The current resurgence occurs as conflict strains Lebanon’s already overburdened health system, exacerbating displacement, and contributing to a further decline in water and sanitation services and infrastructure. Overcrowded shelters are not equipped to accommodate the increasing number of displaced people, raising the risks of the spread of cholera. ...

In response to the detection of the current case, WHO has immediately activated a cholera preparedness and response plan to enhance surveillance and contact tracing, including environmental surveillance and water sampling, strengthen laboratory testing capacity, preposition cholera supplies and support infection prevention and control measures in designated treatment centre facilities. ...

<https://www.who.int/news/item/17-10-2024-who-in-lebanon-working-to-stop-cholera-spread-amid-conflict>

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

Gaza Strip: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for September - October 2024 and Projection for November 2024 - April 2025

<https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1157985/>

Gaza Strip: IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Special Snapshot September 2024 - April 2025

https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Sep2024_Apr2025_Special_Snapshot.pdf

United Nations

You Are ‘on the Front Line of Peace’, Says Secretary-General, in Solidarity Message to United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon

... I am full of admiration and gratitude to the men and women of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). I am so proud of you — and I know your countries are proud of you, too.

You should know that here in New York, we are all very aware of your bravery during some of the most challenging moments in the history of UNIFIL. I have been crystal clear: the safety of United Nations personnel is our highest priority.

And all parties have an obligation to ensure the safety of our personnel. The inviolability of UN premises must be respected, at all times.

Attacks against UN peacekeepers are completely unacceptable. They are in breach of international law, against international humanitarian law and may constitute a war crime.

Despite all the challenges, UNIFIL remains in its positions. Every day you keep the blue flag flying — and ensure the primacy of international law. I am in constant contact with General Aroldo Lázaro — assessing the latest developments.

Our path forward is clear. We need an immediate ceasefire and the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The men and women of UNIFIL are tirelessly working to give our diplomatic efforts a fighting chance.

You are not just on the Blue Line in Lebanon, you are literally on the front line of peace. Thank you for your service.

Ending Atrocities in Gaza Cannot Happen through Words, but ‘through Urgent, Unequivocal Action,’ Senior Humanitarian Official Tells Security Council

... “The atrocities in Gaza must end, but this cannot happen through words; it must happen through action — urgent, unequivocal action,” declared **Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator**, who reported that, since her last briefing to the Council on 9 October, the people of Gaza have suffered multiple mass casualties due to Israeli air strikes, with nearly 400 Palestinians killed in Gaza and almost 1,500 injured. “The world has seen the images of patients and displaced persons, sheltering near Al-Aqsa Hospital, burning alive, while others, including women and children, are suffering the excruciating pain of severe life-changing burns,” without any way to get urgent care, she said.

Detailing other developments in northern Gaza, where Israel’s military offensive is intensifying and Jabaliya is under siege, where 55,000 displaced people are stranded with water and food running out, she reported that, hours before, a strike on a school serving as a shelter in Nuseirat killed more than 20 people. Meanwhile, only 3 of the 10 hospitals in North Gaza Governorate are now operational and only at minimum capacity. In addition, 11,000 pregnant women have no antenatal care. On 12 October, an inter-agency team — from the United Nations, an international, non-governmental organization and the Palestine Red Crescent Society — was finally able to reach the Kamal Adwan and Al-Sahaba hospitals in northern Gaza, “after nine separate attempts where they were denied or impeded by Israeli forces,” she pointed out, stressing that “humanitarian aid cannot be provided in one-off batches”.

Also reporting that no food aid entered northern Gaza from 2 October to 15 October, when a trickle was allowed in, she said: “Given the abject conditions and intolerable suffering in north Gaza, the fact that humanitarian access is nearly non-existent is unconscionable.” Less than a third of the 286 humanitarian missions coordinated with Israeli authorities in the first two weeks of October were facilitated without major incidents or delays. ... However, the second polio campaign began in northern Gaza, with teams from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) vaccinating 43 per cent of children the first day, thus demonstrating the critical role of the Agency. ...

In the face of the “monstrosity” unfolding in northern Gaza, “silence and inaction are not an option,” said **the Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine**. The Palestinian and Lebanese people are paying the price for Israel’s impunity. Yet that country is not being held accountable for any of it. In northern Gaza, 400,000 besieged, starved, and bombed Palestinians are being subjected to the so-called General Plan, according to which any Palestinian remaining in the north is considered a legitimate military target. “That is not war. These are crimes. They must be stopped. And they must be stopped now.”

Although “many members around this table refuse to do so”, he called on the Council to “fight back with the tools provided by the Charter and by the law to combat those who are obliterating the Charter and the law”. The massacres have to stop. “Ceasefire now,” ... “The Palestinian people enduring hell did not surrender. Neither should you.”

However, **Israel’s representative**, detailing recent attacks against his country, including Hizbullah’s launching of 320 missiles and drones on Yom Kippur, underscored that while today’s meeting is on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, Israelis are targeted daily by those seeking their destruction. Although “101 human beings have been tormented by

Hamas terrorists in their terror dungeons” for the past 376 days, Council members barely mentioned the hostages, or did so as an afterthought, he said. “Hamas must release the hostages immediately and unconditionally and lay down their arms,” he said, calling on anyone who “truly wishes to see change” to echo his demand.

Days ago, Israeli forces uncovered weapons and explosives in a clinic of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), he reported. Meanwhile, Israel has facilitated humanitarian aid, despite Hamas’ effort to embed itself among medical staff and patients. Israel and its humanitarian partners have “flooded” Gaza with humanitarian aid. The Council, he insisted, is missing the real issue: that Hamas has hijacked aid and “weaponized” the humanitarian situation. ...

Drawing attention to illegal settler expansion on Palestinian land, **the United Kingdom’s delegate** called on the Israeli Government to take action to crack down on settler violence, adding that her Government announced yesterday further sanctions against three illegal settler outposts and four organizations to bring accountability to those who perpetrate heinous human rights abuses against Palestinians. [[click here to read this speech in full](#)]

Meanwhile, **France’s representative** urged Israel to cease projects aiming to criminalize UNRWA’s activities and prevent the Agency from operating in the occupied Palestinian territories ... Voicing support for a reformed Palestinian Authority, he further called on Israel to stop hindering the transfer of revenues to the Palestinian Authority.

For her part, **the United States’ delegate** stressed that “Israel has a responsibility to do everything possible to avoid civilian casualties, even if Hamas was operating near the hospital in an attempt to use civilians as human shields.” Her Government has made clear to the Israeli Government at the highest levels that it must do more to address the intolerable and catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza. “A ‘policy of starvation’ in northern Gaza would be horrific and unacceptable and would have implications under international law and U.S. law,” she emphasized, noting that the Israeli Government has said that this is not their policy. “We will be watching to see that Israel’s actions on the ground match this statement,” she added.

Countering that, **the Russian Federation’s delegate** called out the United States for its provision of military aid to Israel. ...

“Only a ceasefire can end this humanitarian catastrophe”, **Japan’s representative** stated. The deal outlined in ... resolution [2735 (2024)] would allow for the release of all hostages, immediate ceasefire and the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinians at scale. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15854.doc.htm>

UNSCR 2735, referred to above, can be read at

[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2735\(2024\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2735(2024))

World Fails to Stop Use of Starvation as Genocidal Tactic, Expert Warns Third Committee amid Looming Famine in Gaza

Major world Powers all tacitly agree to allow starvation to be a geopolitical weapon, an independent expert told the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) today, citing conflict as the leading driver of hunger and malnutrition, as materialized in the looming famine in Gaza.

“One year ago, I told you that food is increasingly used as a weapon against civilians ... raised alarm over the risk of genocide against the Palestinian people; unfortunately, you did not take any sufficient action,” stated Michael Fakhri, Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

As he predicted, Israel’s war proved to be a genocidal campaign against the Palestinian

people. "... no number of facts, no degree of horror, no amount of death and pain is enough to trigger a global response to starvation or genocide" ...

"Children in Gaza are dying of starvation and severe malnutrition," stated **the observer for the State of Palestine**, stressing that "severe malnutrition is not a quiet or painless death". As children get hungry, their bodies weaken, their vision blurs, their immune systems and organs fail and their hearts stop.

"At this stage, children are too weak to cry," she said. Palestinian fathers and mothers have been running from corner to corner under non-stop Israeli bombs and airstrikes, searching for milk, food and water. Many of them never made it back or made it when it was too late. She condemned Israel's "starve or leave" policy, denying the entry of sufficient aid and killing aid workers. ...

"As a result of the ongoing Israeli aggression, **Lebanese** people are enduring food insecurity more than ever," said the **country's delegate**, adding that agricultural land and trees have been burned in the south and farmland abandoned. The ongoing crisis has affected 40,000 Lebanese farmers. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/gashc4414.doc.htm>

Weapons Suppliers to Israeli Military Makes Them 'Complicit in the Genocide against Palestinian People', First Committee Hears During General Debate

There has not been a single moment in the past year when the Palestinians have not felt a "terrible pain that rips our heart because of the massacres and the destruction by the Israeli war machine," said **the representative of the State of Palestine** ...

He said the occupying Power has used illegal arms, including the deadliest explosive weapons, killing innocent people in some of the most densely populated areas of the world, particularly in Gaza. The Israeli military is bombing and burning people in tents, in refugee centres, in front of the world. Nobody is spared and nobody is saved. "The occupying forces have killed what humanity would never have imagined could be targeted," including patients in hospitals and newborns. "We mourn those who are in the rubble" and those "in the incubators that are coffins today".

Some States are providing and transferring weapons to the Israeli military, which makes them complicit in the genocide against the Palestinian people, he said. It is a moral duty to call for an end to this and uphold international law. ...

Turkiye's delegate said Gaza's entire population is being subjected to indiscriminate targeting by Israel, with 42,000 Palestinians killed, predominantly women and children. Regional spillover is no longer a risk but a bleak reality, as each day without a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon brings the situation closer to a broader regional war. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/gadis3742.doc.htm>

UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel

Position Paper of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel: Legal analysis and recommendations on implementation of the International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion, Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/coiopt/2024-10-18-COI-position-paper_co-israel.pdf

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Freedom of expression in a global crisis, says UN expert

Deadly attacks on journalists in Gaza and double standards and discrimination against those advocating for Palestinian rights have created a global crisis of freedom of expression, a UN expert said yesterday.

Presenting her report to the General Assembly, Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, highlighted the widespread violations of freedom of expression arising from the conflict in Gaza, including the killing of journalists in Gaza, the crushing of protests worldwide against the carnage, the muzzling of Palestinian advocacy and the upsurge of disinformation, misinformation and hate speech online and offline.

“No war in recent times has affected freedom of opinion and expression so seriously or so far beyond its borders,” the expert said.

“Rarely have we seen such extensive patterns of unlawful, discriminatory and disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression by States and private actors, especially in western democracies,” she said.

“When the best universities and cultural institutions in western countries collude with their States to intimidate, isolate and silence dissenting voices on the Palestinian situation, they undermine their own artistic and academic freedoms and diminish the vibrancy of their own democracies,” Khan said.

“The targeted killings and arbitrary detention of journalists, destruction of press facilities and equipment in Gaza, the denial of access to independent media, the banning of Al Jazeera appear to indicate a deliberate strategy by Israeli authorities to silence critical reporting and obstruct documentation of possible international crimes,” the expert said.

“Why have States that promote themselves as media freedom champions remained silent in the face of such unprecedented attacks on journalists in the occupied Palestinian Territory?” she asked.

“The repression of media in Gaza and the West Bank is an attack on the right to information of people around the world who want to know what is happening there,” Khan said.

“While Jews, Jewish Israelis and Palestinians have all been targeted by disinformation, misinformation and hate speech on social media, the companies have tended in their content moderation to show a bias against Palestinian expression,” she said.

“Online and offline, international standards are being distorted and misinterpreted to equate criticism of Israeli Government policies and Zionism with antisemitism, which is racial and religious hatred of Jews and must be unequivocally condemned,” the expert said.

“Israel is a State. Zionism is a political ideology. Under international human rights law on freedom of expression, no State or political ideology can be shielded from criticism.”

The Special Rapporteur urged all States, companies and private institutions to refrain from discrimination and uphold freedom of expression equally for all persons, in line with international standards. She called on all States to act on the concrete recommendations in her report.

“Freedom of opinion and expression enjoyed on an equal basis by all sides is an invaluable tool for fighting hate, encouraging mutual respect and dialogue, for preserving democracy at home and promoting peace abroad,” Khan said.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/freedom-expression-global-crisis-says-un-expert>

Global threats to freedom of expression arising from the conflict in Gaza

<https://undocs.org/en/A/79/319>

Amid escalating carnage, broad impunity and trampling of international law, Türk calls on UN General Assembly to invest in human rights

... We know that warfare, if its causes are not addressed, will metastasize into new battle zones; and that its effects will continue and even amplify in future generations.

The prolonged oppression of the Palestinian people and repeating cycles of hatred, death and destruction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and elsewhere in the Middle East, are a tragic demonstration of this fact.

For decades, Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory has deprived generations of Palestinians of their rights – to self-determination, to equality; to life; to dignity; and more.

It is clear that there is absolutely no justification for the horrific atrocities committed on 7 October against Israelis by Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups.

In the year that has followed, shockingly, more than 42,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza – mostly women and children – as the relentless, intensive Israeli military offensive continues.

We have witnessed recurring violations of fundamental precepts of international humanitarian law that may amount to war crimes and other atrocity crimes. I cannot underscore enough the desperate survival conditions of Palestinians in Gaza.

And the deep trauma inflicted on people in Israel and in Gaza.

Nearly 1.9 million people in Gaza have been displaced, many multiple times. Israeli military operations have resulted in homes, healthcare and infrastructure across Gaza destroyed.

Adequate humanitarian aid and assistance have been systematically hindered and denied.

An unknown number of people have died from the denial of food, water, sanitation, hygiene, shelter and healthcare. There is no place of safety, and people are terrified.

Meanwhile, Palestinian armed groups operate among civilians, hold hostages, and fire indiscriminate rockets into Israel, in flagrant violation of international law.

And the year-long war in Gaza has been accompanied by deepening Israeli oppression, segregation and violence in the Occupied West Bank.

More recently, months of exchanges of missiles between Hezbollah and Israeli forces along the Israel-Lebanon border have escalated into spiralling violence of much greater scale, and even greater danger, with Israeli troops now present in Lebanon. The toll on civilian lives and infrastructure is getting heavier by the day.

The involvement of Iran, as well as non-state actors in Yemen and Iraq, creates the threat of a wider and more terrible war – one that could engulf the lives, the hopes and the human rights of people across the entire region. ...

Nobody has been made safer by this violence.

War destroys. It destroys lives. It destroys communities, infrastructure and development.

It profoundly damages the environment – poisoning ecosystems and choking off the future of humanity.

War also poisons minds. It destroys empathy. It spawns cruelty, and a callous indifference to suffering, which fuels the atavistic machine of revenge and retribution.

Continued impunity and injustice erode the values at the core of humanity, and pushes young people towards extremist ideas, fuelling new cycles of destruction and pain.

War can only truly end when respect for human rights re-establishes reason, justice and compassion. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/amid-escalating-carnage-broad-impunity-and-trampling-international>

Human rights' focus on fact, law and compassion particularly crucial in the fog of war, Türk tells journalists in New York

... We are in a particularly dangerous period in history, when disregard, disrespect for

international human rights law and international humanitarian law is reaching a deafening crescendo. ...

Today's findings by the IPC – the recognized authority on food security – are beyond terrifying. They show that the number of people at catastrophic levels of hunger is expected to double in the coming months, and the risk of famine persists across the whole of Gaza. The world cannot let this happen.

This crisis is principally the consequence of decisions made by the Israeli authorities. It is in their power to change the situation – urgently. I have previously warned that starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited by international humanitarian law. It constitutes a war crime. As the occupying power, Israel has the specific obligation under IHL to bring into Gaza the necessary foodstuffs, medical supplies and other articles, and to facilitate humanitarian relief by all means at its disposal.

Unfortunately, the reality on the ground is that there is only a trickle of aid getting into Gaza. There are reports that Israeli forces are preventing humanitarian aid from accessing the north, exacerbating the already desperate humanitarian and medical needs.

Israel's evacuation orders appear designed to cut off North Gaza completely from the rest of the territory, as bombing and other attacks continue. There are serious concerns about a large-scale forcible transfer of civilians, not meeting the requirements of international law for evacuation on imperative military grounds. Forcible transfer of a large part of the population of North Gaza would amount to a war crime.

I call on Israel immediately to facilitate the massive influx of humanitarian aid that is needed across all parts of Gaza.

Meanwhile, Palestinian armed groups continue to hold hostages – now for over a year, in flagrant violation of international law. They must be immediately and unconditionally released.

Moving to Lebanon: months of exchanges of missiles between Hezbollah and Israeli forces along the Israel-Lebanon border have escalated into spiralling violence of much greater scale, and even greater danger, with Israeli troops now present in Lebanon.

Attacks against UN peacekeepers are in breach of international law – and may also constitute war crimes.

In Lebanon, Israel's daily strikes on residential buildings in urban areas are taking an appalling toll on civilian lives, with significant numbers of casualties, destruction and displacement. Hezbollah also continues to fire rockets into Israel, where many thousands are displaced from their homes

The risk of a full-fledged regional remains very high – one that could engulf the lives and the human rights of millions of people. ...

A ceasefire, an end to the occupation and a return to the negotiating table – only these can advance the rights of Palestinians, Israelis, people in Lebanon, across the region and beyond to live in peace and security. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/human-rights-focus-on-fact-law-compassion-crucial-in-fog-of-war-hc>

The IPC findings referred to above can be read at

<https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1157986/>

Supporting the rights to peace, security and justice in the Middle East

Hostilities in the Middle East are having a catastrophic impact on civilians, particularly women and children, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. Since 7 October 2023, tens of thousands have been killed, many more injured and millions have been displaced in a widening conflict that risks engulfing the entire region, potentially causing even more suffering and human rights violations and abuses.

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk has repeatedly urged all parties and States with influence to ensure the protection of civilians and the full respect for international law. He has also urgently called for a ceasefire to end the violence, for accountability, and for addressing the root causes of the conflict. ...

According to Ajith Sunghay, head of the UN Human Rights Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the massive violations of human rights that are taking place within the region have broader, serious global implications.

Occupied Palestinian Territory

Following the attacks on 7 October 2023 by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in southern Israel and Israel's intensive subsequent military campaign in Gaza, [UN Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#) has strengthened its monitoring and reporting work. The Office has an experienced team that collects testimonies and information from multiple sources for reports on human rights violations to increase accountability in Gaza and the West Bank. ...

The Office also leads a broad-based group of humanitarian actors (the Protection Cluster) that is charged with coordinating protection activities of international and national humanitarian and human rights actors, and advocates for human rights and international law in humanitarian action. ...

“What we are monitoring and recording now is really the tip of the iceberg. It is simply impossible to cover all the violations that are happening in Gaza and in the West Bank due to the restrictions we face,” Sunghay said. The reports can be seen [here](#).

Lebanon

With armed violence between Israel and Hezbollah recently escalating dramatically, UN Human Rights has adapted its operations in Lebanon to respond to the worsening human rights and humanitarian crisis, said Mazen Shaqoura, Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA). The [UN Human Rights Regional Office](#), which covers 10 countries, is located in Lebanon, but most of its staff has been operating outside the country since October 2023 because of security concerns.

Despite limited resources and restricted access, the Office has stepped up its work of monitoring human rights violations, with a focus in the south of Lebanon and Beirut, where recent strikes have killed civilians and displaced hundreds of thousands inside Lebanon and into neighboring Syria, Shaqoura said. ...

“We are focusing our monitoring work on civilian casualties and fatalities, damage to civilian infrastructure, and the compliance of parties with the principles of international human rights and humanitarian law,” said Shaqoura ...

Syria

Set up in 2013, [UN Human Rights in Syria](#) monitors and reports on the human rights situation in Syria, highlighting emerging concerns and providing early warning analysis, including in relation to conditions of return in Syria. Hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees have crossed into Syria since the escalation of the conflict in Lebanon in the last few weeks, and a majority of them are Syrians who had sought safety in Lebanon throughout the decade-long conflict.

Yemen

In Yemen, 17 staff from UN agencies, including eight OHCHR colleagues, and a large number of employees of civil society organizations, are being arbitrarily detained by de facto authorities. UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk, alongside other senior UN leaders, has demanded their immediate and unconditional release, and the release of all human rights and humanitarian workers similarly arrested and detained without legal protections. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2024/10/supporting-rights-peace-security-and-justice-middle-east>

UNIFIL

UNIFIL statement (16 October 2024)

This morning, peacekeepers at a position near Kafer Kela observed an IDF Merkava tank firing at their watchtower. Two cameras were destroyed, and the tower was damaged. Yet again we see direct and apparently deliberate fire on a UNIFIL position. We remind the IDF and all actors of their obligations to ensure the safety and security of UN personnel and property and to respect the inviolability of UN premises at all times.
<https://unifil.unmissions.org/unifil-statement-16-october-2024>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Esther McVey (Conservative) [8437] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps to establish a Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief on a statutory footing.

Anneliese Dodds: The Government will champion freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all abroad. No one should live in fear because of what they do or do not believe in. Envoy roles will be decided upon in due course. There are currently no plans to legislate on Envoy roles during this parliamentary session. We continue to use the strength of our global diplomatic network, including dedicated staff within the FCDO, to promote and protect FoRB around the world.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-10-10/8437>

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Other Relevant Information

HOPE not hate

Fear & Hope 2024: The Case for Community Resilience

<https://hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Fear-and-HOPE-2024.pdf>

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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>

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>

** Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3774>

First Reading, House of Commons

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-10-16/debates/C71F944C-105D-4760-9597-2361661D1E41/BillsPresented>

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>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

** *closes in 9 days*

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/>

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