



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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col 117 **William Moy [Chief Executive, Full Fact]:** ...in an open society there should be an open mechanism for responding to information incidents—outbreaks of misinformation and disinformation that affect people's lives. That should be set out in the roles of the regulator, the Government and internet companies, so that there is a framework that the public understand and that is open, democratic and transparent in declaring a misinformation and disinformation incident, creating proportionate responses to it, and monitoring the effects of those responses and how the incident is managed. At the moment, it largely happens behind closed doors and it involves a huge amount of restricting what people can see and share online. ...

col 118 Then, the Bill would need to deal with three main threats to freedom of expression that threaten the good information in our landscape. ... First, we must recognise that the artificial intelligence that internet companies use is highly error-prone, and it is a safety-critical technology. Content moderation affects what we can all see and share; it affects our democracy, it affects our health, and it is safety-critical. In every other safety-critical industry, that kind of technology would be subject to independent third-party open testing. Cars are crashed against walls, water samples are taken and tested, even sofas are sat on thousands of times to check they are safe, but internet companies are subject to no third-party independent open scrutiny. ...

col 119 The second big threat, as I said, is the internet companies themselves, which too often reach for content restrictions rather than free speech-based and information-based interventions. ...

The final risk to freedom of expression, and therefore to tackling misinformation, are the Government themselves. ... that is happening behind closed doors. Is that acceptable in an open democratic society, or do we think there should be a legal framework governing when Governments can seek to put pressure on internet companies to affect what we can all see and share? ...

col 125 **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Chris Philp):** ...We heard some commentary earlier ... about the need to address

misinformation, particularly in the context of a serious situation such as the recent pandemic. I think you were saying that there was a meeting, in March or April 2020, for the then Secretary of State and social media firms to discuss the issue and what steps they might take to deal with it. You said that it was a private meeting and that it should perhaps have happened more transparently.

Do you accept that the powers conferred in clause 146, as drafted, do, in fact, address that issue? They give the Secretary of State powers, in emergency situations—a public health situation or a national security situation, as set out in clause 146(1)—to address precisely that issue of misinformation in an emergency context. Under that clause, it would happen in a way that was statutory, open and transparent. ...

William Moy: ...no, I do not accept that. ... we have normalised a level of censorship that was unimaginable in previous generations. A significant part of the pandemic response was, essentially, some of the main information platforms in all of our day-to-day lives taking down content in vast numbers and restricting what we can all see and share. We have started to treat that as a normal part of our lives, and, as someone who believes that the best way to inform debate in an open society is freedom of expression, which I know you believe, too, Minister, I am deeply concerned that we have normalised that. ...

I think that the Bill needs to step in and prevent that kind of overreach ...

col 126 **William Perrin [Board Member, Carnegie Trust UK]:** Can I just add that it does not say “emergency”? It does not say that at all. It says “reasonable grounds” that “present a threat”—not a big threat—under “special circumstances”. We do not know what any of that means, frankly. With this clause, I get the intent—that it is important for national security, at times, to send messages—but this has not been done in the history of public communication before. ...

If this clause is to stand, it certainly needs a much higher threshold before the Secretary of State can act—such as who they are receiving advice from. Are they receiving advice from directors of public health, from the National Police Chiefs’ Council or from the national security threat assessment machinery? ...

col 128 **Alex Davies-Jones (Labour):** ... Does the Bill give Ofcom discretion to regulate on the smaller but high-risk platforms? ...

Danny Stone [Chief Executive, Antisemitism Policy Trust]: ...We have made various representations about the problems that we think there are with small, high-harm platforms. The Bill creates various categories, and the toughest risk mitigation is on the larger services. They are defined by their size and functionality. Of course, if I am determined to create a platform that will spread harm, I may look at the size threshold that is set and make a platform that falls just below it, in order to spread harm.

It is probably important to set out what this looks like. The Community Security Trust, which is an excellent organisation that researches antisemitism and produces incident figures, released a report called “Hate Fuel” in June 2020. It looked at the various small platforms and highlighted that, in the wake of the Pittsburgh antisemitic murders, there had been 26 threads, I think, with explicit calls for Jews to be killed. One month prior to that, in May 2020, a man called Payton Gendron found footage of the Christchurch attacks. Among this was legal but harmful content, which included the “great replacement” theory, GIFs and memes, and he went on a two-year journey of incitement. A week or so ago, he targeted and killed 10 people in Buffalo. One of the things that he posted was: “Every Time I think maybe I shouldn’t commit to an attack I spend 5 min of /pol/”—which is a thread on the small 4chan platform—“then my motivation returns”.

That is the kind of material that we are seeing: legal but harmful material that is inspiring people to go out and create real-world harm. At the moment, the small platforms do not have that additional regulatory burden. These are public-facing message boards, and this is freely available content that is promoted to users. The risks of engaging with such content are highest. There is no real obligation, and there are no consequences. It is the

most available extremism, and it is the least regulated in respect of the Bill. I know that Members have raised this issue and the Minister has indicated that the Government are looking at it, but I would urge that something is done to ensure that it is properly captured in the Bill, because the consequences are too high if it is not.

Alex Davies-Jones: ... So in your opinion, you would rather see a risk-based approach, as opposed to size and functionality.

Danny Stone: I think there are various options. Either you go for a risk-based approach—categorisation—or you could potentially amend it so that it is not just size and functionality. You would take into account other things—for example, characteristics are already defined in the Bill, and that might be an option for doing it.

col 129 **Liron Velleman [Political Organiser, HOPE not hate]:** ...most of our work targeting and looking at far-right groups is spent on some of those smaller platforms. ... there are so many smaller platforms—whether small means hundreds of thousands, tens of thousands or even smaller than that—that are almost as easy to use as some of the larger platforms we all know so well. Some of the content on those smaller platforms is definitely the most extreme. There are mechanisms utilised by the far-right—not just in the UK, but around the world—to move that content and move people from some of the larger platforms, where they can recruit, on to the smaller platforms. To have a situation in which that harmful content is not looked at as stringently as content on the larger platforms is a miscategorisation of the internet. ...

Alex Davies-Jones: ... One of our concerns with the Bill, which we raised with the regulator, Ofcom, in Tuesday's evidence session, is what would happen in the interim if one of those smaller categorised platforms was to grow substantially and then need to be recategorised. Our concern is about what would happen in the interim, during the recategorisation process, while that platform was allowed to disseminate harmful content. ...

Liron Velleman: We have seen this similarly with the proscription of far-right terrorist groups in other legislation. It was originally quite easy to say that, eventually, the Government would proscribe National Action as a far-right terror group. What has happened since is that aliases and very similar organisations are set up, and it then takes months or sometimes years for the Government to be able to proscribe those organisations. We have to spend our time making the case as to why those groups should be banned.

We can foresee a similar circumstance here. We turn around and say, "Here is BitChute" or hundreds of other platforms that should be banned. We spend six months saying to the Government that it needs to be banned. Eventually, it is, but then almost immediately an offshoot starts. We think that Ofcom should have delegated power to make sure that it is able to bring those platforms into category 1 almost immediately, if the categorisations stay as they are.

Danny Stone: It could serve a notice and ensure that platforms prepare for that. There will, understandably, be a number of small platforms that are wary and do not want to be brought into that category, but some of them will need to be brought in because of the risk of harm. Let us be clear: a lot of this content may well—probably will—stay on the platform, but, at the very least, they will be forced to risk assess for it. ... It is a step better than what they will be doing without it. ...

col 130 **Alex Davies-Jones:** ... The Antisemitism Policy Trust has made the case that search services should be eligible for inclusion as a high-risk category. Is that still your position? ...

Danny Stone: Very much so. ... I recognise that search services are not the same as user-to-user services, so there does need to be some different thinking. However, at present, they are not required to address legal harms, and the harms are there.

I appeared before the Joint Committee on the draft Bill and talked about Microsoft Bing,

which, in its search bar, was prompting people with “Jews are” and then a rude word. You look at “Gays are”, today, and it is prompting people with “Gays are using windmills to waft homosexual mists into your home”. That is from the search bar. The first return is a harmful article. ...

Search returns are not necessarily covered because, as I say, they are not the responsibility of the internet companies, but the systems that they design as to how those things are indexed and the systems to prevent them going to harmful sites by default are their responsibility, and at present the Bill does not address that. ...

Kim Leadbeater (Labour): ... The Bill contains duties to protect content of “democratic importance” and “journalistic content”. What is your view of these measures and their likely effectiveness? ...

Liron Velleman: These are both pretty dangerous clauses. We are very concerned about what I would probably be kind and call their unintended consequences. They are loopholes that could allow some of the most harmful and hateful actors to spread harm on social media. ...

A number of companies mentioned in the previous evidence session are outlets that could be media publications just by adding a complaints system to their website. ... They just need to add a complaints system to their website and then they would be included as a journalist. There are a number of citizen journalists who specifically go to our borders to harass people who are seeking refuge in this country. They call themselves journalists; Tommy Robinson himself calls himself a journalist. These people have been specifically taken off platforms because they have repeatedly broken the terms of service of those platforms, and we see this as a potential avenue for them to make the case that they should return.

col 131 We also see mainstream publications falling foul of the terms of service of social media companies. If I take the example of the Christchurch massacre, social media companies spent a lot of time trying to take down both the livestream of the attack in New Zealand and the manifesto of the terrorist, but the manifesto was then put on the *Daily Mail* website—you could download the manifesto straight from the *Daily Mail* website—and the livestream was on the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sun's* websites. We would be in a situation where social media companies could take that down from anyone else, but they would not be able to take it down from those news media organisations. I do not see why we should allow harmful content to exist on the platform just because it comes from a journalist.

On “democratic”, it is still pretty unclear what the definition of democratic speech is within the Bill. If we take it to be pretty narrow and just talk about elected officials and candidates, we know that far-right organisations that have been de-platformed from social media companies for repeatedly breaking the terms of service—groups such as Britain First and, again, Tommy Robinson—are registered with the Electoral Commission. ...

If we take it on a wider scale and say that it is anything of “democratic importance”, anyone who is looking to cause harm could say, “A live political issue is hatred of the Muslim community.” ... To us, that is unacceptable and should be removed from the Bill. We do not want a two-tier internet where some people have the right to be racist online, so we think those two clauses should be removed. ...

Kim Leadbeater: ... should the comments section on news publisher platforms be included in the scope of the Bill?

col 132 **Danny Stone:** I feel quite strongly that they should. I think this is about clauses 39(2) and (5). When they had an exemption last time, we were told they were already regulated, because various newspapers have their own systems, because of IPSO or whatever it might be. ...

A number of years ago, we worked—through the all-party parliamentary group against antisemitism, to which we provide the secretariat—on a piece with the Society of Editors

on comment moderation on websites, so there have been efforts in the past, but this is a place where there is serious harm caused. You can go on *The Sun* or wherever now and find comments that will potentially be read by millions of people, so having some kind of appropriate risk assessment, minimum standard or quality assurance in respect of comments boards would seem to be a reasonable step. If it does not get into the Bill, I would in any event urge the Minister to develop some guidance or work with the industry to ensure they have some of those standards in place, but ideally, you would want to lose that carve-out in the Bill. ...

Caroline Ansell (Conservative): May I ask about anonymity? It is mentioned in the Bill, but only once. Do you think there is a need for more expansive coverage of this issue? Do you think people should be able to use the internet while remaining anonymous, and if not, to whom would users disclose their identity? ...

Stephen Kinsella [Founder, Clean up the Internet]: ... We always felt that focusing on anonymity was the wrong place to start. Instead, we thought that a positive right to be verified, and then a right to screen out replies and posts from unverified accounts, was the way to go. ...

col 133 **Liron Velleman:** We set two clear tests for the situation on anonymity on platforms. First, will it harm the ability of some groups in society to have freedom of speech online? We are concerned that verification could harm the ability of LGBT people and domestic abuse survivors to use the platforms in the full ways they wish to. For example, if a constituent who is, say, a domestic abuse survivor or LGBT, wished to get in touch with you but was not verified on the platform, it would be one restriction that you would not be able to get around if you chose to change your settings. ...

col 134 One of our key questions is whether verification would mean that you had to use your real name on the platform or whether you had to verify that you were a person who was using a platform, but could then use a pseudonym on the front face of the website. I could sign up and say, "Here is my ID for the platform verification", but if I did not wish to use my name, in order to protect my actual identity publicly on the platform, I could choose not to but still be verified as a real person. ...

The second test for us is whether it is going to make a real difference to reducing online harm. With a lot of the harm we see, people are very happy to put their names to the racism, misogyny and sexism and homophobia that they put online. We would not want to see a huge focus on anonymity, whereby we "ended" anonymity online, and yet online harm continued to propagate. ...

Danny Stone: I think one issue will be Ofcom's ability to ensure consistency in policing. It is very difficult, actually, to find out where crimes have happened and who an individual is. Sometimes, the police have the power to compel the revelation of identity. The way the platforms respond is, I think, patchy, so Ofcom's position in its guidance here will be pretty important. ...

Navendu Mishra (Labour): ... do you think that the Bill gives sufficient protection to groups who suffer disproportionate abuse online because of protected characteristics? Do you think that those protections should be clarified in the Bill?

Danny Stone: ... There is a principle that has been established in the Bill to list priority illegal harms, and there is no reason why priority harms against adults should not be listed. Racism and misogyny are not going anywhere. The Joint Committee suggested leaning into existing legislation, and I think that is a good principle. The Equality Act established protected characteristics, so I think that is a start—it is a good guide. ...

col 136 **Chris Philp:** ... we have had some fairly extensive discussions on the question of small but toxic platforms such as 4chan and BitChute ... do you accept that those platforms should be subject to duties in the Bill in relation to content that is illegal and content that is already harmful to children?

Danny Stone: Yes ... The extent and the nature of the content that is harmful to adults on

such platforms—you mentioned BitChute but there are plenty of others—require an additional level of regulatory burden and closer proximity to the regulator. ...

Chris Philp: ... Liron, in an earlier answer, you referred to the protections for content of democratic importance and journalistic content, which are set out in clauses 15 and 16. You suggested and were concerned that they could act as a bar to hateful, prohibited or even illegal speech being properly enforced against. Do you accept that clauses 15 and 16 do not provide an absolute protection for content of democratic importance or journalistic content, and that they do not exempt such content from the Bill's provisions? They simply say that in discharging duties under the Bill, operators must use "proportionate systems and processes...to ensure that...content of democratic"—or journalistic—"importance is taken into account".

That is not an absolute protection; it is simply a requirement to take into account and perform a proportionate and reasonable balancing exercise. Is that not reasonable?

Liron Velleman: ... First, we and others in civil society have spent a decade trying to de-platform some of the most harmful actors from mainstream social media companies. What we do not want to see after the Bill becomes an Act are massive test cases where we do not know which way they will go and where it will be up to either the courts or social media companies to make their own decisions on how much regard they place in those exemptions at the same time as all the other clauses.

Secondly, one of our main concerns is the time it takes for some of that content to be removed. If we have a situation in which there is an expedited process for complaints to be made, and for journalistic content to remain on the platform for an announced time until the platform is able take it down, that could move far outside the realms of that journalistic or democratically important content. ...

col 137 **Chris Philp:** ... Some people have claimed—I think wrongly—that the provisions in the Bill in some way threaten free speech. ... I do not think, for a number of reasons, that that is remotely true ...

Danny Stone: My take on this ... is that it ultimately creates a regulated marketplace of harm. As a user, you get to determine how harmful a platform you wish to engage with—that is ultimately what it does. I do not think that it enforces content take-downs, except in relation to illegal material. It is about systems, and in some places, as you have heard today, it should be more about systems, introducing friction, risk-assessing and showing the extent to which harm is served up to people. That has its problems.

The only other thing on free speech is that we sometimes take too narrow a view of it. People are crowded out of spaces, particularly minority groups. If I, as a Jewish person, want to go on 4chan, it is highly unlikely that I will get a fair hearing there. I will be threatened or bullied out of that space. Free speech has to apply across the piece; it is not limited. We need to think about those overlapping harms when it comes to human rights—not just free speech but freedom from discrimination. ...

col 138 **Liron Velleman:** We are satisfied that the Bill adequately protects freedom of speech. Our key view is that, if people are worried that it does not, beefing up the universal protections for freedom of speech should be the priority, instead of what we believe are potentially harmful exemptions in the Bill. ...

col 139 **Danny Stone:** I think that a media literacy strategy is really important. There is, for example, UCL data on the lack of knowledge of the word "antisemitism": 68% of nearly 8,000 students were unfamiliar with the term's meaning. Dr Tom Harrison has discussed cultivating cyber-phronesis—this was also in an article by Nicky Morgan in the "Red Box" column some time ago—which is a method of building practical knowledge over time to make the right decisions when presented with a moral challenge. ...

To read the full transcript see

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-05-26/debates/a8f25ba3-fcfa-460b-8287-055606dcc344/OnlineSafetyBill\(ThirdSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-05-26/debates/a8f25ba3-fcfa-460b-8287-055606dcc344/OnlineSafetyBill(ThirdSitting))

A summary of the CST report referred to above can be read at

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2020/06/11/hate-fuel-the-hidden-online-world-fuelling-far-right-terror>

TOP

Israel

House of Lords Written Answer

Shireen Abu Akleh

The Marquess of Lothian (Conservative) [HL210] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel and the Palestinian authorities on the need for a full, independent, transparent and accountable investigation into the killing of the Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on 11 May.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 11 May, the Minister of State for Asia and the Middle East [Amanda Milling] publicly expressed her sadness upon hearing news of the tragic death of veteran Palestinian Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh, and called for a thorough investigation. The Foreign Secretary also made this clear in a statement on 12 May. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv have reiterated the importance of an investigation with the Israeli authorities. The safety of journalists across the globe is vital and they must be protected when carrying out their critical work.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-05-12/hl210>

The statements referred to above can be read at

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1524396468370653184>

and

<https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1524648916012220417>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Cycle of violence moves us further away from a peaceful future for Israelis and Palestinians: Statement by Ambassador James Kariuki at the UN Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East

... Sadly, the world's attention has been drawn repeatedly to the fragile situation in the Middle East this month.

We started with an appalling terror attack on innocent Israeli citizens in Elad as they celebrated their Independence Day. Our thoughts remain with the three victims and their families. We condemn the recent attacks against Israelis in the strongest possible terms, and reaffirm that the UK stands with Israel in the face of terrorism and violence.

We then witnessed the tragic killing of veteran Palestinian-American Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh in Jenin, and the deeply disturbing scenes of the disproportionate use of force by Israeli police at her funeral. We urge a swift, transparent and impartial investigation into these events and meaningful accountability. ...

We also saw the advancement of over 4000 settlement units in the West Bank, and the increased risk of eviction of over 1000 Palestinians in Masafer Yatta. We are clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, settlements, demolitions and forced evictions are illegal under International Humanitarian Law. We call on the Israeli government to halt all settlement expansion and evictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Madam President, this ongoing cycle of violence only moves us further away from the

peaceful solution that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve. We urge the parties to return to dialogue and take urgent steps to make progress towards peace. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/cycle-of-violence-moves-us-further-away-from-a-peaceful-future-for-israelis-and-palestinians>

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

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

Updated Travel Advice: Occupied Palestinian Territories

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

United Nations

Security Council: Middle East

Tor Wennesland, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said that the killing of revered Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh on 11 May brought Palestinians, and countless others around the world, together in grief and anger, while serving as another reminder of the devastating human cost of this conflict. Echoing the Secretary-General's condemnation of all attacks against journalists and his call for the relevant authorities to carry out an independent and transparent investigation, he said those responsible must be held accountable. Daily violence continued throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. During the reporting period, 10 Palestinians, including one woman and three children, were killed by Israeli security forces, and four Israeli civilians and one Israeli security personnel were killed by Palestinians.

On 11 May, Ms. Abu Akleh was shot and killed while covering an Israeli security forces' operation in Jenin in which Palestinian militants exchanged fire with them, he said. Another journalist was shot and injured in the same incident. Both were wearing press vests and helmets. Subsequent scenes of violence during Ms. Abu Akleh's funeral procession, where Israeli police entered the hospital and subsequently beat pallbearers and other mourners with batons, were deeply distressing and offensive, and were widely condemned. Settler-related violence continued during the reporting period. On 7 May, in five separate incidents, Israeli settlers, accompanied by the Israeli security forces, entered four Palestinian towns resulting in 100 Palestinians injured. He stressed that security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

On 12 May, for the first time in some seven months, Israeli authorities advanced plans for over 4,000 housing units in settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank. Despite a notable reduction during Ramadan, Israeli authorities demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 40 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and 12 in occupied East Jerusalem, as well as two structures in Area A, displacing 98 Palestinians, including 50 children. ... On 4 May, the Israeli High Court of Justice decided to allow implementation of eviction orders issued to 1,200 Palestinian residents, including 500 children, in Masafer Yatta, in the southern West Bank ...

Turning to Gaza, he said that the United Nations continues to deliver vital humanitarian and development assistance, as well as to make efforts towards further easing restrictions on the movement of people and goods into and out of the Strip. ...

As Jerusalem Day approaches on 29 May, with the planned provocative flag march through the Muslim quarter in the Old City, he urged authorities to take wise decisions to minimize confrontations and the risk of more violence. The status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites must be upheld and respected. ...

Turning to the Golan, the ceasefire between Israel and Syria continues to be generally

maintained in a volatile environment, with continued violations of the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement by the parties. ...

Daniel Munayer, Executive Director of Musalaha, explaining that he comes from a Palestinian Christian family that can trace its history over 800 years through the Eastern Orthodox Church, said his organization conducts reconciliation workshops between Israelis and Palestinians, Christians and Muslims. Participants are brought to the desert for five days, taking part in workshops to address themes of conflict, identity, obstacles to reconciliation, history and narrative. They then return to their communities to engage, address the core issues of the conflict. ...

Describing the obstacles to reconciliation, he turned first to civic space, stressing that the ability to meet and engage together is shrinking. Civil society within Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jerusalem are cut off from one another. Also hindering reconciliation is the imbalance of power. ...

He said that freedom of religion and belief can be used to build bridges. Yet, Israel is trying to turn this into a religious conflict. ...

Robi Damelin, Spokesperson for Parents Circle ... said that she was “here to talk to your hearts”. Sixty-eight children died in Gaza — do you know the names of those children, she asked Council members. When the army came to tell her that her son had been killed by a Palestinian sniper, she recalled, she told them “you may not kill anybody in the name of my child”. ...

Recalling the weekend she spent in East Jerusalem with bereaved Palestinian mothers, she said that the tears that fell on the graves of both Israelis and Palestinians were of the same colour. Underscoring the powerful message of reconciliation from those who had lost loved ones on both sides, she said: “It’s all very well being pro-Palestinian or pro-Israel, but what does that mean, if you cannot be part of the solution?” ...

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (United States) Council President for May, speaking in her national capacity, said any and all violence must be called out, including a string of terrorist attacks against Israelis. She also condemned the killing of Ms. Abu Akleh, who was a role model for many aspiring female journalists, calling for an immediate, transparent and impartial investigation, and full accountability. ... The United States shared its concern with Israel about the troubling video footage of Israeli police intruding into the procession at Ms. Abu Akleh’s funeral. These incidents added to increasing tension during the conversion of Ramadan, Passover and Easter in April, she warned, citing multiple terrorist attacks against Israelis and rockets firings from Gaza and Lebanon. ... They must refrain from unilateral actions that jeopardize a negotiated two-State solution. Such actions include the eviction of Palestinians. ...

Vassily A. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) said the international community is ignoring the systematic violation of Palestinian rights, as the double standards of Western countries contravene international law. He voiced regret that Western colleagues attempt to divert international attention from Israel’s sabotage of the Israeli-Palestinian settlement. ... Emphasizing that the settlement of the conflict will only be achieved by relaunching direct negotiations between the parties, he underscored the importance of creating inter-Palestinian unity. ...

Geraldine Byrne Nason (Ireland), stressing that there is no justification for terrorism, condemned all loss of life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and called on Israel to address its disproportionate security responses, as seen in Jerusalem and elsewhere. She deplored the killing of Ms. Abu Akleh and the excessive use of force at her funeral, calling for an investigation. She similarly condemned the decision by Israel’s High Planning Council to advance plans for 4,000 units in the West Bank and called for a reversal of it, as settlements violate international law and undermine the two-State solution. ... She urged Israel to cease its demolitions and evictions, including of donor-funded structures. ...

James Kariuki (United Kingdom), pointing to the appalling terror attack on Israeli citizens

in Elad as they celebrated their Independence Day, condemned the recent attacks against Israelis in the strongest terms possible. He also condemned the tragic killing of Ms. Abu Akleh in the West Bank city of Jenin, and the disproportionate use of force by Israeli police at her funeral. Expressing concern about the advancement of over 4,000 settlement units in the West Bank, and the increased risk of eviction of over 1,000 Palestinians in Masafer Yatta, he called on Israel's Government to halt all settlement expansion and evictions in the occupied Palestinian territories. ...

Sheraz Gasri (France) condemned the recent terrorist attacks against Israel, expressing uncompromising support for that country's security. She also expressed concern about the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The recent developments on the ground undermine the prospect of a two-State solution, which remains the only formula that can bring about a just and lasting peace. ...

Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine, asked Council members to imagine they are the parents of Gaith Yameen, a 16-years-old boy who had already written at this young age what should be done if he were to die. Imagine how they would feel once his premonition became reality after occupation forces shot him in the back of his head. His testament: "If I were to die, do not put me in the freezer, I never liked the cold. Find a place to bury me alongside other kids, I do not like to be alone. Come visit me and talk to me, I will be listening. And do not cry, I do not want for anybody to be sad or cry because of me." Palestinian children are being killed, arrested, displaced and harassed every day. ...

Ms. Abu Akleh was an exceptional being, but her killing is unfortunately not an exception, he said. She kept telling the stories of her people hoping that by making them known, somehow she would help alter the course of history. She was killed because she never abandoned this belief, even though, regardless how many times she told that story, it kept happening again and again, one child at a time, one home at a time, one acre of land at a time. Ms. Abu Akleh's killing is the story. The same story she was telling. "We are not being killed by mistake, but as part of a grand design, aiming to make sure we all understand no one is safe, so that we all live with fear in our hearts and surrender," he said. ... Israel's choice is clear — aggression, annexation and apartheid.

Noa Furman (Israel) said her country's recent Independence Day celebrations were cut short after Israelis were murdered by Palestinians wielding axes and knives. In 2022, nearly 800 terror attacks have been committed by Palestinians against Israelis. As for what drives a 19-year-old terrorist to take up an axe and hack another human being to death, she blamed inciteful, hateful words. A week earlier, the leader of Hamas in Gaza had said: "Whoever does not have a gun should prepare his cleaver, axe or knife to murder Jews." Incitement directly correlates with acts of terror perpetrated against Israelis. ...

Incitement is also often spread by members of the Council, she said. When dozens of Palestinian extremists co-opted Ramadan as a pretext to incite violence, endangering peaceful worshipers in Jerusalem, Israel's police acted with exemplary restraint: they restored law and order. Yet, the Palestinian Authority used these events to inflame incitement, blaming Israel for the violence. ... Stressing that Israel is fully committed to the freedom of worship and to the status quo of the Temple Mount, she said: "Nothing will change that." She pointed to the tragic death of Ms. Abu Akleh as an example of placing the blame on Israel before an investigation has been conducted. ... It is time for the Council to take a strong stance against Palestinian incitement and to help Israel bring the bodies of its soldiers home. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14909.doc.htm>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

**** Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

Public Bill Committee

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-05-26/debates/a8f25ba3-fcfa-460b-8287-055606dcc344/OnlineSafetyBill\(ThirdSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-05-26/debates/a8f25ba3-fcfa-460b-8287-055606dcc344/OnlineSafetyBill(ThirdSitting))

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-05-26/debates/f7c914ef-dc5b-43a3-8dbe-9d3b0fa3d0cf/OnlineSafetyBill\(FourthSitting\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-05-26/debates/f7c914ef-dc5b-43a3-8dbe-9d3b0fa3d0cf/OnlineSafetyBill(FourthSitting))

Schools Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 6 days**

Independent Review of Social Cohesion and Resilience (closing date 2 June 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-review-of-social-cohesion-and-resilience-call-for-evidence/independent-review-of-social-cohesion-and-resilience-call-for-evidence>

Public Participation at the Scottish Parliament (closing date 30 June 2022)

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cppp/participation-2022/>

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