Political Affairs Digest
A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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House of Commons Point of Order

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

Dawn Butler (Labour): … there are not many levers to tackle injustices, but boycotting is one of them. That is why I could not vote for the Government’s Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill yesterday, which Ministers and lawyers have said would likely place the United Kingdom in breach of international law obligations. The hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Alicia Kearns)—I have informed her that I will be mentioning her—said in an intervention on the Minister:

“The Foreign Office’s own legal advice states that the Bill could breach UNSC 2334. How am I being told repeatedly from the Dispatch Box that that is not the case, when that is what Government lawyers are saying themselves?”

She said, “please do not repeat that this does not change anything when the Government lawyers themselves say it does.”—[Official Report, 3 July 2023; Vol. 735, c. 656.]

Conservative Members seem to have been informed that the Bill could breach international law, while Government Ministers state the opposite. I am minded to believe the hon. Lady, but could you advise me, Madam Deputy Speaker, on what I can do to ensure that the Government place all their legal advice in the Library, so that we can all have a read and discover who is telling the truth?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Eleanor Laing): … No, the Chair does not have the power—nor has it ever in the whole of our constitutional development—to require the Government to place any document in the Library, and certainly not legal advice. The hon. Lady, who is well versed in these matters, has rightly used the opportunity of a point of order to put her opinion on the record, and I am sure that it will have been heard by those on the Treasury Bench. As I say, she is well versed in these matters, and she will know it has been the long-standing practice of Governments of every political persuasion not to publish their legal advice. That is the normal course, and I certainly have no power from the Chair to compel the Government to do otherwise.

House of Lords Written Answer

**Islamic Human Rights Commission**

Lord Godson (Conservative) [HL8822] To ask His Majesty's Government what official warnings have been issued, or enforcement action taken, by the Charity Commission in the past 24 months in relation to Islamic Human Rights Commission or its affiliates, including the IHRC Trust.

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The Charity Commission issued the Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust with an Official Warning on 28 March 2023. This was due to concerns about the Trust’s management of its relationship with a non-charitable entity, the Islamic Human Rights Commission, and its failure to comply with legal reporting requirements.

The Official Warning was given following regulatory advice previously issued by the Charity Commission to the Trust. Further details of the Official Warning are publicly available on the Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust’s entry on the register of charities.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission is not a registered charity and does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Charity Commission.

https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2023-06-27/hl8822

The Official Warning referred to above can be read at

http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/SCHEMES/023240.PDF

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Israel

See also the Point of Order on the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill that is included in the Home Affairs section above.

House of Commons Oral Answers

**Violence in the West Bank**

Beth Winter (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if he will make a statement on the violence in the west bank.

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): The accelerating cycle of violence in the west bank risks another round of bloodshed and the Government are doing everything possible to urge the de-escalation of the situation. The latest operation by the Israel Defence Forces in the Jenin refugee camp in the northern west bank on Monday is the latest episode in a conflict that has become more worrying as the year has progressed. While the UK firmly supports Israel's right to defend itself and its citizens against terrorism, we urge the Israel Defence Forces to demonstrate restraint, adhere to the principles of international humanitarian law and prioritise the protection of civilians.

While the security situation today remains fragile, the UK welcomed Israeli and Palestinian engagement at meetings in Aqaba on 26 February and Sharm El Sheik on 19 March. We are clear-eyed that those meetings have not been a silver bullet, but they are an open, meaningful channel of communication between senior Israelis and Palestinians. At times of strife, this is important in assisting de-escalation and reducing violence. We have consistently engaged with both the Israelis and the Palestinians to urge them to de-escalate tensions and to support efforts towards
renewed negotiations.
My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary spoke to the Israeli Foreign Minister, Eli Cohen, on 26 June—when they discussed the security situation in the west bank—having spoken to the Palestinian Prime Minister, Mohammad Shtayyeh, on 16 June. I can confirm that the Minister for the Middle East, Lord Ahmad, will be discussing the evolving situation with the Israeli ambassador later today, further to discussions in recent days. He also spoke to the Palestinian Foreign Minister, Riyad al-Maliki, on 5 May. Our ambassadors in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem regularly speak to both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to urge de-escalation and to make clear our expectation that all sides avoid unilateral steps that move the parties further away from dialogue.

Let me finally draw the House’s attention to the statement that the Foreign Secretary made jointly with his Canadian and Australian counterparts last Friday. The UK opposes Israel’s announced proposal to expand settlements across the west bank, and we ask Israel to halt and reverse its policy of supporting settlement expansion. Settlements are not the only obstacle to peace, but they are an important one, and our concerns about these recent steps are clear. The lives lost in this wider conflict are tragic. There is an urgent need for all parties to avoid further escalation in the west bank and Gaza, now and in the days ahead.

col 696 Beth Winter: The past 24 hours have seen a horrifying military assault by the Israel Defence Forces on the overcrowded refugee camp in Jenin. The UN Refugee Agency says that about 15,000 people live in less than half a square kilometre in the camp, yet we have all witnessed on our screens the Israel Defence Forces launching air attacks, including attacks from drones, and they have sent in hundreds, if not thousands, of ground troops in the largest military action in the west bank for 20 years. News agencies are reporting 10 deaths of Palestinians, including three children, and 100 Palestinians injured, while the Palestinian Red Crescent says that it has evacuated 3,000 people. The UN’s Vanessa Huguenin has said: “We are alarmed at the scale of air and ground operations that are taking place in Jenin”.

The World Health Organisation has said: “First responders have been prevented from entering the refugee camp”. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority leadership has resolved to “immediately petition the UN Security Council to implement Resolution 2334 and the relevant resolutions on providing international protection to the Palestinian people, stopping unilateral measures, and imposing sanctions on the occupying power.”

The UK currently holds the presidency of the UN Security Council and is therefore responsible for guiding its response to requests made by the Palestinian Authority. May I therefore ask the following questions? What are the UK Government doing in their capacity as President of the UN Security Council? How have they responded at the UN to the Palestinian Authority’s call for international protection? What has the Foreign Office said to its Israeli counterpart about the Israel Defence Forces preventing medical staff from accessing the Jenin refugee camp, or firing tear gas into hospitals sheltering children and elderly residents?

Finally, what steps will the Foreign Secretary take to review whether the IDF have made any use of UK arms sold to Israel in this attack? Will he immediately suspend all arms sales, including surveillance technology, and will he ban collaboration between the UK and Israel’s armed forces and military industries as a result of this horrific attack on civilians?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … We will continue to urge the Israel Defence Forces to demonstrate restraint in this operation so that all parties can try to avoid further escalation in the west bank and Gaza. … while the UK will always support Israel’s right to self-defence, the protection of civilians, particularly children, must always be prioritised, and we expect the armed forces’ conduct always to be in line with international humanitarian law. We therefore call on Israel to adhere to those
principles of necessity and proportionality while defending its legitimate security interest. …

Alicia Kearns (Conservative): We stand on the precipice of the Gaza crisis of 2023 and the third intifada. Yesterday, an Israeli military incursion into the Jenin refugee camp resulted in the deaths of more than 10 refugees. Hundreds were injured and … the ensuing gun battle has prevented civilians from getting the aid and medical care they need. Today, five Israeli civilians were killed in a terrorist car ramming and a stabbing, and we are in an endless cycle of violence. We need a return to the diplomatic table. …

col 696 I therefore call on the Government to try to secure the following. The Israelis must stop the expansion of illegal settlements … We must see Hamas end its terror attacks on Israel. They are wrong—they are terror attacks—and although we have no influence over Hamas, we must use our voice to make it clear that it must immediately stop. As the UK, can we urge our Israeli friends to show restraint? Can we appoint a middle east peace process envoy who can be tasked with spending their entire time working with our allies around the region to de-escalate the situation? …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … we recognise the very real security challenges facing Israel and the Palestinian Authority and condemn all terrorist groups planning and carrying out attacks, but we mourn the loss of innocent lives. Indeed, the injuries to civilians and particularly children are deeply concerning. …

Wayne David (Labour): … Israel has the right to defend itself against militant groups, but that right must be exercised proportionately and in line with international law. … I am also aware that statements from the spokesman for the United Nations Secretary-General suggest that this military operation has not been conducted within the parameters of humanitarian law. The Secretary-General is said to be “deeply concerned” about the situation on the ground.

Likewise, I am extremely concerned about the breaking news of a suspected car ramming in Tel Aviv, where latest reports suggest that at least five people are injured. …

On Jenin, I am concerned about reports that emergency health teams have been prevented from entering Jenin to treat the injured and to help people in general, and that two hospitals have been damaged. … I am sure that everyone in the House will agree that it is truly appalling that children—Palestinian and Israeli—continue to be the innocent victims in this conflict. …

col 698 … there will be a lasting peace only when there is a negotiated diplomatic settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The only real solution will be a settlement based on two states: a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and independent Palestinian state. We strongly oppose actions that make this two-state solution harder to achieve. …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … We absolutely condemn Hamas’s use of indiscriminate violence and attacks of this nature. There can never be any justification for such acts of violence, and we will continue to call on Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their incitements against Israel. …

Crispin Blunt (Conservative): Understanding that this comes in the context of, for years, Israel building settlements that block the route to a settlement of this dispute, and understanding that Israel is failing to show restraint, failing to follow international humanitarian law and failing to protect civilians, what are the Government actually going to do?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … the statement that the Foreign Secretary put out with his Canadian and Australian counterparts last week set out a clear message to the Israelis about stopping the settlement expansion. …

Drew Hendry (SNP): Violence on all sides must be condemned. However, contrary to what the Minister said, illegal settlements are a barrier to peace, yet the UK Government continue to fail to take any meaningful action towards preventing that. … It has been confirmed that thousands of people have been displaced from the camp. What
discussions has the Minister had with international colleagues on how to minimise the suffering of those refugees—civilians—who have now been displaced twice? …

Bob Blackman (Conservative): Clearly, this morning’s car ramming is only the most recent of the terrorist attacks that have emanated from the city of Jenin. So far, Operation House and Garden has resulted in the destruction of three labs, hundreds of improvised explosive devices and thousands of grenades. Underneath the mosque, there were two tunnels with hundreds of weapons, and 120 people have been arrested. Clearly, the terrorist activity is going to be severely limited. Behind all this is the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Hamas and the Jenin battalions. Does my right hon. Friend agree with me that this is a proportionate attempt to reduce terrorism against the state of Israel?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: As I say, while the UK remains absolutely resolute in its commitment to Israel’s security, and we condemn absolutely the use of indiscriminate force by Hamas and other terrorist groups, we call on all parties to maintain a proportionate balance, so that we can de-escalate the existing situation and ensure that civilians are not caught up in this any more.

Afzal Khan (Labour): With water and electricity services in the Jenin refugee camp damaged as a result of the violence, camp residents are unable to move from their homes. Many are in urgent need of food, drinking water and medical support, but the ambulances have been prevented from reaching the wounded. Will the Secretary of State raise with the Israeli authorities the issue of access for ambulances and medical teams to the Jenin camp?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The FCDO Minister for the middle east … will be able to give an update in the other place later today about his ongoing discussions with Israeli counterparts.

Nicola Richards (Conservative): Let us be clear: any loss of innocent civilian life is one too many. But let us also be clear that the Palestinian Authority has lost control over Jenin and it has become a safe haven for terrorists. Terror groups have fortified the area with IEDs and last week they fired rockets towards Israel from inside the camp. Iran has also boasted about arming, training and funding the Palestinian terror groups that operate there. …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: We recognise the real security concerns facing Israel and the Palestinian Authority while they try to deal with those terrorist groups, and we condemn absolutely terrorist groups planning and carrying out attacks. …

Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrat): … The increase in violence by the IDF and the expansion of settlement in the west bank happen because we and other countries in the west do nothing to hold Israel to account. So could the Minister tell us now: will she commit to supporting an International Criminal Court investigation into what is happening there? Will the Government here now set a timetable for the recognition of the Palestinian state?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: This Government and Members on both sides of the House do not waver from the two-state solution that we all wish to see. …

Desmond Swayne (Conservative): But hasn’t our strategic partnership with Israel, announced in this House, afforded us any leverage over Israeli policy in the west bank?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Our strategic relationship with Israel is a strong and long-standing one. We work with Israel in many areas, from security to trade. It is an important partner. That does not negate the fact that we want to see a de-escalation of the current situation and to ensure that the loss of civilian lives is minimised.

Steve McCabe (Labour): … Islamic Jihad has already claimed several of the dead as Islamic Jihad fighters and, as we have heard, the Israelis say that the camp was used as a hub for terrorist operations. Does the Minister think any more can be done to prevent
terrorists from embedding themselves among civilians, particularly in places such as refugee camps?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: We recognise the security challenges that are faced and will continue to be faced, not only by Israel and the Palestinian Authority in this case, but elsewhere in the world, where innocents living in refugee camps are used as a cover for terrorists wishing to cause harm. …

Julie Elliott (Labour): This year has seen more Palestinians killed than in any other year, more settlement starts announced than in any other year, more demolitions in East Jerusalem than in any other year and more violence in general. We are on the precipice of another intifada. At the minute, it looks to me as though Israel is acting with impunity and this is an all-out assault on Palestinian life. …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … We are absolutely committed to working with all parties on the challenges associated with demolitions so that people remain calm and avoid provocation. But we are clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions and forced evictions are contrary to international humanitarian law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace. …

Joanna Cherry (SNP): … the Israeli army enjoys a climate of impunity because the international community never holds Israel to account for its actions. Israel continues to breach international law, including the fourth Geneva convention. … what specific actions will the Government take to ensure that Israel adheres to international law and that its leaders are held accountable for its war crimes?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … My colleague in the other place will speak with the Israeli ambassador later today to ensure that we put forward the UK view that de-escalation is urgently required in this difficult situation and that we continue to tackle the questions associated with illegal settlements, which are contrary to humanitarian law.

John McDonnell (Labour): When the Russians have bombed predominantly civilian areas, resulting in the death of civilians, we have rightly condemned it as a war crime. Why have the Government not condemned these actions, which are resulting in the loss of civilian life, as a war crime? …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … The UK supports Israel’s right to defend itself and its citizens against terrorist activities, but we are clearly urging the IDF to demonstrate restraint in order to prioritise the protection of civilians. …

Philippa Whitford (SNP): We all condemn attacks on civilians, regardless of which community they are from. The actions of the IDF in Jenin are indefensible and have resulted in 2023 being one of the most lethal years for Palestinians. The UK has long claimed to support a two-state solution, endorsed UN Security Council resolution 2334 and recognised that settlements are illegal under international law. So after yesterday’s appalling move to block action by citizens and public bodies to stop illegal occupation and settlements, have UK Government policy changed?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … this Government will continue to stress the importance of the adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality when Israel defends its legitimate security interests, as well as the importance of continuing to provide appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, particularly children.

Andy McDonald (Labour): At around 11.30 am yesterday, 17-year-old Majdi Younis Saud Ararawi sustained a gunshot wound to the chest and Nouruddin Husam Yousef Marshoud, who was just 15, was shot in the head by Israeli occupation forces. Their names join a list of more than 30 Palestinian children killed by the Israeli regime since the beginning of 2023. The ultimate cause of those senseless killings is Israel’s brutal and illegal occupation of Palestine, which has gone on for over half a century.
protesting against this abomination, and given Britain’s humanitarian and historic responsibilities to the Palestinian people, what actions have the Government taken? …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … we are engaging both with the Israelis and the Palestinians to urge them to de-escalate those tensions. Lord Ahmad will be speaking to the Israeli ambassador later, highlighting and demanding that under international law access to medical care and staff is allowed …

Andy Slaughter (Labour): The use of aerial bombardment and armoured assault by thousands of troops in a refugee camp, familiar to the people of Gaza, is now extended to the west bank. … Occupation is the cause and context of these latest war crimes. Will the Government acknowledge that and respond by recognising the state of Palestine?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … we are engaging both with the Israelis and the Palestinians to urge them to de-escalate those tensions. Lord Ahmad will be speaking to the Israeli ambassador later, highlighting and demanding that under international law access to medical care and staff is allowed …

Liz Saville Roberts (Plaid Cymru): … We must be clear that this is a violation of international law and that the occupying forces, in particular, have a responsibility to end the violence. … will the UK Government send a clear message of condemnation by bringing to an end the importation into the UK of goods that are produced in those Israeli settlements that are deemed illegal under international law?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … Goods made in the settlements are not allowed to be imported, and that continues to be the case. …

Rachael Maskell (Labour Co-op): … The UK currently has the power of holding the presidency of the United Nations Security Council, so will she call the Security Council together to act now on the atrocities that we have seen in Jenin? …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: As I say, we continue to work on the peaceful two-state solution. …

Ruth Cadbury (Labour): … What assessment has the Minister made of the impact of rising Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians? …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … we continue to be deeply troubled by the high number of Palestinian civilians who have been killed and injured… While Israel has a legitimate right to defend itself, it is important that Israeli forces exercise maximum restraint, especially in the use of live fire, when protecting that legitimate security interest.

Anum Qaisar (SNP): … how can peace be achieved when Palestinians are subjected to systematic and deliberate oppression and discrimination by Israeli authorities? The people in the Jenin refugee camp have already fled their homes, and they have been displaced yet again. … Will she condemn the denial to access medical care for Palestinians in Jenin? And will she join me in calling out Israel’s behaviour for what it is? As stated in a report by Amnesty International, Israel is committing the crime of “apartheid against Palestinians.”

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … Lord Ahmad will be speaking to the Israeli ambassador later and will be making clear that we want to ensure that medical supplies are able to get into refugee camps to provide the care that is needed to those who are injured as a result of the violence of the past few days.

Seema Malhotra (Labour Co-op): … The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports there have been at least 570 attacks by settlers against Palestinians in the west bank this year, which is an average of three attacks a day. What is the Minister doing, in discussions with her counterparts, on tackling Israeli settler violence, as well as on the issues faced because of new Palestinian militant groups? …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … we condemn settler violence in the strongest possible terms and we urge the Israeli authorities to do what they can. …

Mohammad Yasin (Labour): The escalation of violence in the west bank over the past year and the killing of innocent civilians, including children in recent days, is devastating. The two-state solution, which many of us hope will bring peace and stability to the region,
seems further away than ever. What are the Government actively doing to stop the killing of innocent people and to ensure that a two-state settlement is still a diplomatic reality?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: ... we call on all those caught up in the violence today to show restraint and to de-escalate the situation so that the violence can come to a halt and we can ensure that those casualties are able to receive treatment.

Grahame Morris (Labour): ... What we have seen over the past day or two is an attack by Israeli security forces on a refugee camp, using missiles against children, parents, the elderly and the vulnerable. This is not about Israel defending itself. Even the White House has stated that it is tyranny. When will the UK Government intervene not just with words to condemn those actions, but with something in practical terms to support the Palestinian people undergoing such appalling oppression?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The UK's position on the middle east peace process is clear and we will continue to support a negotiated settlement, which leads to a safe and secure Israel living side by side with a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, based on the 1967 borders. ...

Mary Kelly Foy (Labour): ... It has been reported that medical teams have been prevented from entering Jenin. Will the Minister condemn that now ...

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: ... international humanitarian law requires access to be made available for medical teams to treat those in need of care, so we are urging Israel to allow that as soon as possible. ...

Christian Wakeford (Labour): The last time that we saw tensions rise like this, we experienced a month of hate, with incidents of antisemitism rising to an all-time high, and horror tropes on the streets of London. Does the Minister agree that, while discussions are taking place to de-escalate the situation, we all have a duty to temper our language to make sure that Jewish residents, such as my constituents, do not live in fear of abuse, graffiti, racist convoys and, ultimately, violence. We all have a duty to try to tackle this behaviour on the streets when we see it.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: We all have a duty to ensure that antisemitic voices are not allowed to cause distress or violence. We will continue to ensure that those who feel anxious get the support they need. ...

Alan Brown (SNP): ... The Israeli Finance Minister has instructed ministries to prepare for an additional 500,000 settlers on the west bank. We have seen 33 Palestinian children killed. While the Government urge restraint and we get the same weak answers time and again from the Dispatch Box, Israel is acting with impunity. I think the Minister said it slightly wrong earlier on, but it seemed that she was saying that trade with illegal settlements is now deemed illegal by the UK Government. Is that the case?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Let me reiterate again that the UK position on settlements is absolutely clear. Those settlements are illegal under international law and, indeed, they call into question that commitment to the two-state solution, to which the UK are committed. We will continue to urge Israel to halt that and ensure that the trade relationships that we have with Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories can progress as they need to.

Rachel Hopkins (Labour): ... can the Minister confirm that there will be additional support for healthcare and medical organisations on the ground so that they can help civilians?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: Once my noble Friend Lord Ahmad has had discussions with the Israeli ambassador, I will ensure that further information on how we will continue to support UNRWA and other humanitarian groups focuses in particular on this incident. ...

Jonathan Edwards (Independent): One eye witness ... compared the impact of the incursion with a natural disaster in terms of the destruction of infrastructure, such as roads, water systems and electricity. ... Is it the policy of the British Government that the state of Israel should pay reparations for damage to civilian infrastructure in the occupied territories as a result of military activity?
Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … we call on the Israeli Defence Forces and the Israeli Government to demonstrate the restraint that is required to prioritise the protection of civilians and ensure that we can see both medical support get into the Jenin camp and de-escalation of the violence as soon as possible.

Ian Byrne (Labour): … can she set out with far, far greater clarity than she has done so far what action the Government will take as president of the UN Security Council to ensure that Israel adheres to international law and that its leaders are held accountable?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: As I set out earlier this week, the Foreign Secretary spoke to the Israeli Foreign Minister, Eli Cohen, on 26 June and to Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 16 June. …

col 707 Stephen Farry (Alliance): Israel is clearly in breach of international humanitarian law as well as multiple UN Security Council resolutions. … As president of the Security Council, the UK has a particular power to convene the Security Council and, indeed, the responsibility to do so. Can the Minister give us a very clearcut answer: will the UK Government convene the Security Council on this issue—yes or no?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … the Government continue not only to have close discussions with the Israelis to try to ensure a de-escalation of the violence that we are seeing today, but to work closely with our allies and partners to ensure that we continue to support and give the clear direction of international partners on the question of the two-state solution.

Jim Shannon (DUP): … Will she outline what discussions have taken place with our Israeli allies to renew peace talks, to allow both states to co-exist beside each other without the tit-for-tat action that has become normalised and yet is truly horrific and heartbreaking for all those who are losing loved ones in this conflict?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … the great tragedy is that civilians are caught up in it, especially where the Israeli Defence Forces are legitimately trying to defend themselves and, indeed, Palestinians from the terrorist threat. …

col 708 Kim Johnson (Labour): … Can the Minister say what it will take for the Government to suspend arms sales to Israel until we can be sure that they are not being used to violate international law and perpetrate war crimes and human rights abuses? …

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: … these violent activities are ongoing and colleagues are in discussions right now with Israeli counterparts. …

Richard Burgon (Labour): … since 2015 the Government have sold £500 million-worth of arms to Israel, and UK arms have been implicated in previous atrocities against Palestine. Can the Minister say categorically whether any of that military equipment has been used in Israel’s assaults on the Jenin refugee camp? Does not this attack again show why the Government should suspend all arms sales to Israel until it abides by international law?

Anne-Marie Trevelyan: The Government take our defence export responsibilities seriously and we operate some of the most robust export controls in the world. … all applications for export licences are assessed on a case-by-case basis against strict criteria and we will not issue a licence if there is a clear risk that equipment might be used for internal repression. The Government will continue to monitor closely the situation in Israel, Gaza and the west bank and, if extant licences are found to be no longer consistent with those criteria, those licences will be revoked.

To read the full transcript see https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2023-07-04/debates/19C6FFB2-A29E-494D-BEAD-9B51A6EC474A/ViolenceInTheWestBank


UN Security Council Resolution 2334, referred to above, can be read at
House of Commons Liaison Committee

Evidence from the Prime Minister

… Q7 Alicia Kearns (Conservative): Prime Minister, I fear we are on the cusp of a Gaza crisis of 2023. Yesterday, we took up presidency of the UN Security Council. How do you hope that, over this month, we will use that to shed light on what is taking place? Also, what outcomes will we achieve during our presidency?

The Prime Minister: What were you referring to specifically?

Q8 Alicia Kearns: The Gaza crisis—essentially Israel-Palestine—but also, as President of the UN Security Council over the next month, what have you tasked Foreign Office civil servants to achieve?

The Prime Minister: There are a couple of different things. With regard to the current situation in Israel and around, of course we support Israel’s right to self-defence, and have condemned the recent terrorist attacks. We would say that the protection of civilians must be prioritised in any military operation, and urge the IDF to demonstrate restraint in its operation, and for all parties to avoid further escalation in both the west bank and Gaza, both now and in the days ahead. We also call on Israel to adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interests. More broadly, with regard to the UN Security Council and our actions there, I would imagine that we will continue to focus on highlighting what is happening in Ukraine and Russia’s illegal invasion. …

Q9 Alicia Kearns: … in your discussions with Netanyahu how clear were we that we should not see an expansion of illegal settlements, and will we see Israel-Palestine brought forward specifically by the British Government over the next month?

The Prime Minister: The settlements are illegal under international law, and we have said that they present an obstacle to peace and threaten the physical viability of the two-state solution. We have consistently engaged with Israel. I met President Netanyahu a little while ago, and we have repeatedly made it clear to Israel that we oppose any settlement expansion. We have asked the Israeli Government to halt and reverse their policy. …

To read the full transcript see
https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/13426/html/

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Andy McDonald (Labour) [1415] Palestinians facing persecution – That this House recognises that the Palestinian people are under unprecedented attack; notes that the Israeli Government, one of the most right-wing in its history, has launched its biggest military incursion in the West Bank in two decades, is announcing thousands of new illegal settlements on a regular basis, continuing with its expulsions of Palestinians from East Jerusalem and Masafer Yatta and its school and home demolitions, and failing to prevent armed settlers from rampaging through Palestinian villages killing, maiming, and attacking
Palestinians and destroying homes, mosques, and agricultural lands; is horrified to note that this year in the West Bank alone the Israeli military has killed more than 170 Palestinians, nearly one per day; further notes that the US Administration has publicly criticised the plans for illegal settlement expansion; is dismayed that instead of taking concrete steps to uphold human rights and international law, the British Government seems determined to shield Israel from accountability, as well as companies complicit in its occupation, by legislating to silence those trying to achieve change through peaceful and democratic means; believes that any suggestion that, alone among peoples facing oppression around the world, Palestinians should be singled out and denied the right to appeal to people of conscience for support is not only wrong but runs counter to the UK’s legal obligations and must be rejected; and insists that the ability of public authorities to divest from companies proven to be complicit or responsible for violations of human rights should be defended.

https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61152

**United Nations**

**Jenin: UN concerned over ongoing Israeli military operation**

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has expressed deep concern about the developments in Jenin in the occupied West Bank, where Israeli airstrikes have hit the densely populated refugee camp there. …

The incursion follows another operation in the camp on 19 June, which left four Palestinians killed and 91 others injured.

The UN’s humanitarian affairs coordination office (OCHA) said on Tuesday that as a result of the air and ground operations taking place in the West Bank town, 10 Palestinians including three children were killed, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health. At least 100 others have been injured, of whom 20 are reportedly in critical condition …

In an apparent retaliatory attack in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv on Tuesday, seven people were injured, three seriously, when a Palestinian man drove into pedestrians standing outside a shopping centre …

The attacker was shot and killed by an Israeli citizen at the scene. …

Airstrikes in Jenin “significantly damaged” structures in which people were living in both the camp and surrounding neighbourhoods. … most of the Jenin camp has lost access to drinking water and electricity. …

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday that the extent of people’s injuries was placing strain on the “fragile and underfunded” health system …

UN humanitarians said that the destruction of roads in the refugee camp was restricting access for medical teams and ambulances, and Israeli forces were conducting checks on vehicles, including ambulances, at the entrance of the camp. …

The agency recalled that there had been a “significant increase” in attacks on healthcare in the West Bank this year. …

The UN human rights chief Volker Türk said in a statement … that the extensive Jenin operation and car ramming attack in Tel Aviv showed “violence only begets more violence.” …

Some of the methods and weapons used by Israeli forces “are more generally associated with the conduct of hostilities in armed conflict, rather than law enforcement.” …

He said in the context of the occupation, deaths resulting from such airstrikes “may also amount to wilful killings”. …

To read the full press release see https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/07/1138332
Comment by the UN Human Rights Chief on Israeli-Palestinian violence
The recent operation in the Occupied West Bank and car ramming attack in Tel Aviv worryingly underscore an all too familiar pattern of events: that violence only begets more violence. The killing, maiming and the destruction of property must stop. Overnight 3,000 Palestinians reportedly fled Jenin camp after a wave of deadly air strikes on the camp. Then, this morning seven people were hurt in a car ramming attack in Tel Aviv.

The scale of the Israeli Security Forces’ ongoing operation in Jenin, including the use of repeated airstrikes, along with the destruction of property, raises a host of serious issues with respect to international human rights norms and standards, including protecting and respecting the right to life.

Some of the methods and weapons used during the operations by ISF in the Jenin Refugee Camp and surrounding areas are more generally associated with the conduct of hostilities in armed conflict, rather than law enforcement. The use of airstrikes is inconsistent with rules applicable to the conduct of law enforcement operations. In a context of occupation, the deaths resulting from such airstrikes may also amount to wilful killings. Israeli forces operations in the occupied West Bank need to abide by international human rights standards on the use of force; these standards do not change simply because the goal of the operation is stated as “counter-terrorism”.

International human rights law sets clear obligations on Israel, as the occupying power, to ensure that all operations are planned and controlled so as to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, resort to force and in particular lethal force. Israel must also ensure timely access to medical care to all those injured.


Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

** Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3475

Point of Order

Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3186

Holocaust Memorial Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3325
Online Safety Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137

Nakba Commemoration Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3461

Palestine Statehood (Recognition) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3217

Private Burial Grounds and Cemeteries Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3188

Same Sex Marriage (Church of England)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3438

Schools Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3156

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Draft Bill

Universal Credit (Removal of Two Child Limit) Bill
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3163

Universal Jurisdiction (Extension)
https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3454

Scottish Parliament

Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

Consultations

Charities tax compliance (closing date 20 July 2023)

A Human Rights Bill for Scotland (closing date 5 October 2023)
The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438

The future of population and migration statistics in England and Wales (closing date 26 October 2023)  
https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/ons/futureofpopulationandmigrationstatistics/