

Heads of Mission join Palestinian farmers in olive harvesting

World news story

UK, EU, Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden join Palestinian farmers in olive harvesting in Kufr Ni'mah village near Ramallah.



Heads of Mission and representatives from the UK, EU, Belgium, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden visited Kufr Ni'mah village in the Ramallah district today. They took part in the olive harvest, which began this month and which has significant cultural and economic importance for Palestinians.

According to UN OCHA, nearly half of cultivated Palestinian agricultural land in the West Bank is planted with 10 million olive trees. An estimated 100,000 families in the West Bank rely on olive oil for primary or secondary sources of income according to the West Bank Protection Consortium.

Participants heard from locals, the West Bank Protection Consortium and Première Urgence Internationale about settler violence in the Ramallah district, which is getting worse for farmers each year and which often peaks during the Olive Harvest season. In the discussion, participants reiterated their continued opposition to Israel's settlement policy and concern over the increasing rates of settler violence.

British Consul General Diane Corner said: "The Olive Harvest is a special time for Palestinians. It is central to their economy, their culture and their heritage. Sadly, persistent settler violence continues to be a major concern. As the occupying power, the Israeli authorities should ensure settlers who are responsible for crimes against Palestinians are held to account and should protect Palestinians against such violence."

During the visit, Heads of Mission and diplomats were briefed on recent settler attacks against Palestinians across the West Bank and in the Ramallah district in particular. Settler violence is at record levels – the UN has recorded the highest monthly average of settler attacks since it began

tracking incidents in 2005.

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[Help for vulnerable people to spot disinformation and boost online safety](#)

- Funding awarded to improve media literacy among vulnerable and 'hard-to-reach' groups
- Will support projects across the UK to ensure everyone can protect themselves from online disinformation
- Part of the government's Online Media Literacy Strategy to help people be safe online

Elderly, disabled and other vulnerable people will get better support to stay safe online and avoid being misled by disinformation thanks to a funding boost from the government to mark UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Week.

More than £1 million has been granted to 17 UK organisations to pilot new ways of boosting media literacy skills for people at risk of experiencing online abuse and being deceived into believing false information, such as vaccine disinformation, deepfake videos or propaganda created by hostile states.

Research shows some people struggle to engage and benefit from the range of media literacy education on offer, due to limited experience or overconfidence in using the internet, as well as a lack of awareness of how to access resources and their unavailability outside of schools and colleges.

[The Media Literacy Taskforce Fund](#) is one of two funding schemes created to target 'hard-to-reach' and vulnerable groups by investing in community-led projects to ensure everyone has the opportunity to improve their media literacy skills and protect themselves from online disinformation.

Social enterprise [Freshrb](#) will work with young people to develop their own podcasts exploring online dis- and misinformation to be aired on local radio. Another project run by charity [Internet Matters](#) will provide media literacy training for dozens of care workers and leavers in the Greater Manchester area.

Elderly people from diverse backgrounds in Leeds will have access to digital media skills training online and in community centres as part of the [Leeds Older People's Forum](#). [Parent Zone](#) is working with eight local councils including Calderdale, Luton and Middlesbrough to deliver media literacy resources tailored to parents and carers of teenagers.

A separate scheme, the [Media Literacy Programme Fund](#), will deliver training courses, online learning, tech solutions and mentoring schemes to vulnerable internet users.

Digital Secretary Michelle Donelan said:

With the rise of online disinformation, teaching people to identify fact from fiction has never been more important to public safety.

As well as bringing forward new laws to tackle the root causes of these problems, we are funding organisations to give people the skills to stay safe online so everyone can benefit from all the internet has to offer.

Winning projects in the [Media Literacy Programme Fund](#) to receive grants today include:

- [NewsGuard](#), which will work with ageing-focused charities to, deliver workshops to older adults to support them in spotting mis- and disinformation online;
- The [Economist Educational Foundation](#) will work with disadvantaged schools and boost teachers' skills through news literacy training and support students to engage with the news and think critically about what they're consuming online;
- Online Safety charity [Glitch](#) will deliver workshops and training to vulnerable and marginalised women to support their media literacy skills including tackling online abuse.

All the schemes are part of the government's plans to deliver the [Online Media Literacy Strategy](#), a national action plan to empower people to stay safe online by giving them the skills they need to think critically about what they see and read on the internet.

Launched in July 2021, the three-year strategy supports media literacy organisations to deliver education and initiatives in a more wide-reaching and effective way. The [year two](#) plan, published in April, is backed by more than £2 million in targeted funding, including today's announcement. This is in addition to the £250,000 grant funding delivered to five organisations working with schools to adapt media literacy resources for teachers working with disabled students in our year one action plan.

The announcement coincides with the [UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Week](#), a global initiative celebrating the progress countries have made toward making media literacy education more accessible to its citizens by implementing national media and information literacy policies.

The grant funding complements the measures in the groundbreaking [Online Safety Bill](#), which supports a safer online environment by requiring tech firms to protect children from harmful content and tackle criminal activity on their platforms.

- DCMS is backing the country's powerhouse sectors to grow the economy and make a difference where people live.
- DCMS sectors, like tech, telecoms and the creative industries, contribute £211 billion to the economy each year and support more than four million jobs across the UK. And they are creating new jobs, with 250k more jobs filled now than before the pandemic.
- The digital sector contributes approximately £138 billion to the economy. There are 1,822,000 jobs in the sector – 250,000 more than in 2019 before the pandemic.
- The UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Week, this year hosted in Nigeria, is an annual celebration of the progress achieved towards [Media and Information Literacy for All](#). The 2022 theme is "Nurturing Trust: A Media and Information Literacy Imperative".
- The UK's independent communications regulator, Ofcom, [defines media literacy](#) as the 'ability to use, understand and create media and communications in a variety of contexts'.
- More than 170 organisations are currently involved in delivering media literacy education in the UK.
- DCMS has created a webpage offering [online media literacy resources](#).
- See the full list of grant recipients below.

Winners of the Media Literacy Programme Fund:

Winners of the Media Literacy Taskforce Fund:

[Enhancing the overall safety, sustainability and security of outer space: Joint statement by 46 Member States](#)

Thank you to the Co-Chairs of the First and Fourth Committees,

I am pleased to make this intervention on behalf of the following countries and groups: Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, EU, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United States, Ukraine and my own country

the United Kingdom.

At the outset, we thank you for organising this timely discussion of our efforts to ensure the security and long-term sustainability of outer space activities. Our thanks also to the panellists for their contributions.

There is an important distinction between discussions in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and the Disarmament Commission here in New York on national security activities, and those at COPUOS in Vienna on peaceful uses of outer space, which is mirrored in the UN General Assembly between its First and Fourth Committees. On the other hand, as resolution 76/55 that convened this meeting recognises, both UNGA Committees and their subsidiary bodies have vital and complementary roles to play in ensuring that human activity in outer space is safe, secure and sustainable so that space systems can continue to deliver benefits to humanity into the future. For example, the deliberate destruction of space systems can have major impacts not only on security but also on the space environment, and create unnecessary hazards to human spaceflight, as well as a broad range of other space missions. We therefore welcome the coming together today to discuss issues of joint interest to the two Committees.

Since the last joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees in October 2019, we have come a long way in raising awareness about space security and threats to space systems. At that last meeting, many of us called for the start of a new, inclusive conversation on how

to address threats to space systems. That call led the following year to General Assembly resolution 75/36 (Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviour), and the resultant Secretary-General's report of August 2021.

That was followed by General Assembly resolution 76/231, which established an Open- Ended Working Group to take those ideas forward.

Our countries are pleased with how the work of the OEWG has started. We warmly commend the Chair, Mr Hellmut Lagos of Chile, for the inclusive, transparent and creative way in which

he has steered it. Discussions in the meetings so far have shown the widespread, cross- regional interest in space security, from both space-faring and not yet space-faring countries.

We believe that these discussions are already making a positive contribution to our common goal of preventing an arms race in outer space and promoting transparency and confidence between States.

In particular, we welcomed the overwhelming recognition and affirmation during those discussions that international law, including the UN Charter, applies in relation to activities in outer space. These binding international rules provide the foundation for activities in the space domain, but there is a clear need to work towards greater specificity and collective understanding on how they apply to certain conduct. We affirm the applicability of

international humanitarian law in space and note that this affirmation does not, in itself, permit or encourage the resort to force. Rather, it reminds States that certain conduct is never lawful, even during armed conflict.

For years, the debate on PAROS was deadlocked between the viewpoint that one single comprehensive legally-binding instrument was needed and another that this was not realistic. We believe we are moving beyond that. While many States consider legally-binding instruments to be the ultimate goal of our work, it is increasingly recognised that they are not the only measure at our disposal. As the Secretary-General said in his 2021 report, “possible solutions to outer space security can involve a combination of binding and voluntary norms, rules and principles... It is encouraging that Member States reaffirm that voluntary norms, rules and principles, including non-binding transparency and confidence-building measures, can form the basis for legal measures. It is hoped that work in each of these areas can continue to be pursued in a progressive, sustained and complementary manner.”

Voluntary and collectively established norms of responsible behaviour, combined with enhanced mutual understanding, dialogue and transparency, and sharing of space domain awareness, will help to reduce risks of misunderstanding and unintended escalation.

Furthermore, there is increasing recognition that the development and implementation of behavioural norms – such as the work to establish the commitment made by an increasing number of States not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing – can be valuable steps towards the eventual negotiation of legally binding instruments. Historically, this is the path international space law has followed: the international community began by developing non-binding principles and norms and then treaties followed thereafter. By demonstrating the effectiveness of voluntary measures over time, we can gradually build up

our confidence to translate these into legally binding rules. This is an important step. In a contested and competitive world, it is vital that we can trust in the rules that we make – that they are practically implementable, and that States will comply with them.

This is why ongoing national implementation efforts and development of best practices concerning the 21 Long-Term Sustainability Guidelines adopted by COPUOS in 2019 are so important. The nearly decade-long effort to arrive at an agreed preamble and 21 guidelines represents a significant evolution in the development of voluntary measures to ensure the safe and sustainable use of space for all countries. The pursuit of this work by COPUOS represents an opportunity for long-lasting progress through ongoing dialogue and practical implementation.

We see the LTS Working Group and the Open-Ended Working Group as distinct, but complementary. Taken together, they will enhance the overall safety, sustainability and security of outer space.

How much more of Russia's nonsense do we have to endure: UK Statement at the Security Council

Thank you President, and thank you Mr Ebo for your very clear briefing. I'd like to start by reaffirming the United Kingdom's deep commitment to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

On 24 February, Russia invaded Ukraine, an act of aggression in clear violation of international law, which the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to condemn.

Since then, the Russian Federation has repeatedly spread disinformation, including wild claims involving dirty bombs, chemical weapons, and offensive biological research.

How much more of this nonsense do we have to endure?

As we've heard, Russia's allegations were given a full hearing last month, according to the processes set out under Article 5 of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

89 States Parties attended that meeting, and listened as Russia delivered nothing but misrepresentations of assorted public documents and copy-and-pasted images from Wikipedia.

The response from the other States Parties was clear and overwhelming:

- that Russia must end its aggression and disinformation campaign against Ukraine; and
- that Russia must stop demonising legitimate peaceful scientific and technical cooperation, which all BTWC States Parties have a right to participate in under Article 10 of the Convention, and which is rightly valued by many States Parties.

That process has now concluded. Russia's claims have been heard, considered, and rejected. The bar has not been met for further investigation and proposals for further action would be a waste of this Council's time. This Council is a serious body and risks being brought into disrepute by Russia's actions.

There are plenty of issues that demand our attention but Russia is clogging up the agenda with conspiracy theories.

Instead of attempting to smear Ukraine, Russia should focus on its own obligations, including the UN Charter, and end this war.

Thank you President.

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