

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

Contents

[Israel](#)

[Foreign Affairs](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Consultations](#)

[Israel](#)

House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL4246] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel regarding alleged reports of withholding of the corpses of Palestinians killed in suspected stabbing attacks.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv have raised the return of Palestinian bodies with the Israeli authorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-12-19/HL4246/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL4247] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions are they having with the government of Israel over reports of the continued demolition and seizure of structures in Area C and East Jerusalem on the grounds of lack of building permits.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We continue to raise our concerns with the Israeli authorities about demolitions with the government of Israel and in international forums. We also continue to urge the government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes. The UK provides technical assistance to support Palestinian communities currently threatened with demolition action to meet the requirements of the Israeli planning system and funding to support long-term planning for Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-12-19/HL4247/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL4248] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding reports of the designation of nearly 30 per cent of Palestinian land in Area C as firing zones for military training.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we regularly press Israel to ease the current restrictive permitting regime and to transfer control of Area C to the Palestinian Authority as per the Oslo Accords.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-12-19/HL4248/>

Israeli Settlements: Water Supply

Baroness Tonge [HL4249] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel following reports that thirty springs are under full Israeli settler control and inaccessible to Palestinians, with another 26 springs at risk of becoming similarly controlled.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not discussed this specific issue, we regularly raise the issue of water in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Israeli authorities. We have stressed the urgent need for Israel to take immediate and practical measures to improve the current situation and ensure fair distribution of water in the West Bank and Gaza.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-12-19/HL4249/>

Mohammad Faisal Abu Sakha

Baroness Tonge [HL4250] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding reports of the continued administrative detention of Mohammed Abu Sakha.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have not raised the particular case of Mr Sakha with the Israeli authorities but we are following his case closely. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should only be used when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice, and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We continue to call on Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law, and either charge or release detainees.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-12-19/HL4250/>

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge [HL4251] To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Israel following reports of the approval of a plan to build a further 770 housing units in the Gilo neighbourhood, south of Jerusalem.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr. Ellwood), issued a statement on 8 December expressing our deep concern about 770 units in Gilo receiving final approval. We strongly condemn the pace of settlement advancement, increased plans for new settlements deep in the heart of the West Bank, and moves to retroactively approve unauthorised settlement outposts. We continue to raise our grave concerns about expansion of Israeli settlements with the Israeli Government.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-12-19/HL4251/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Explanation of vote by Ambassador Matthew Rycroft, UK Permanent Representative to the United Nations on Israel-Palestine

... The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2334 today - the first Security Council resolution on the Israel-Palestine issue in over seven years.

The adoption of this resolution is, first and foremost, a clear reinforcement of the international community's conviction that a two state solution remains the only viable route to sustained Arab-Israeli peace.

As the Quartet Report in July highlighted, the foundations of peace - trust and goodwill - are being corroded for all sides because of violence, incitement, demolitions, and

settlement activity.

Ultimately, as long as terrorists are treated as martyrs, peace will be distant. The scourge of anti-Semitic, racist and hateful language must be excised from the region. It is critical that the Palestinian leadership implement the recommendations of the Quartet Report and continue their efforts to tackle terror and incitement, strengthen institutions, and develop a sustainable economy. ...

But good will alone will not secure peace. Today's resolution is a sober recognition that the two state solution is slipping away. By undermining the prospects for a contiguous Palestinian state, settlement construction is corroding the possibility of a two state solution. ...

The UK is a dear and close friend of the State of Israel. We reject all efforts to de-legitimise or undermine Israel. The movement for Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions – rooted as it is in a culture of prejudice and hostility to Israel – is a barrier to peace. And my government will never support any resolution that advances the cause of boycotts or de-legitimation in any way.

It is because of our steadfast and stalwart commitment to Israel's security and its existence as the Jewish homeland that we voted for today's resolution, and worked tirelessly to secure a balanced final text. We believe that Israeli settlement activity represents a clear and present danger to our shared vision of two states for two peoples. The United Kingdom's longstanding view is that settlement expansion is illegal, and this is not in Israel's long-term interests. ...

We have long held that for negotiations to be successful, they will need to lead to a safe and secure Israel living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state; based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps; Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states; and a just, fair, agreed, and realistic settlement for refugees. ...

... we recognise that the passing of this resolution will not change the situation on the ground overnight. 2017 will not be an easy year for the Israel-Palestine issue: fifty years since the Six Day War and the subsequent occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; and one-hundred years since my country issued the Balfour Declaration. However, we must all uphold our responsibility, as this Council has finally upheld its responsibility today, in order to deliver the long-term security that Israelis deserve, and the statehood and end to the occupation that Palestinians are calling out for.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/explanation-of-vote-by-ambassador-matthew-rycroft-uk-permanent-representative-to-the-united-nations-on-israel-palestine>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-03279 Ross Greer: UN Security Council Resolution on Illegal Israeli Settlements – That the Parliament approves of Resolution 2334, which was passed by the UN Security Council on 23 December 2016; notes that it urges an end to the illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine; believes that, although around 140 such settlements have been built in the West Bank, Golan Heights and East Jerusalem since 1967, these are not recognised by any other country, including Israel's strongest allies, and urges all nations and other organisations to take further action through complete economic, cultural and academic boycotts, including suspension by sporting governing bodies, such as FIFA, of teams and competitors that are based in the settlements.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-03279>

[TOP](#)

Foreign Affairs

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-03267 John Mason: Return to the 1930s – That the Parliament notes the warning made by the Duke of Rothesay regarding persecution faced by minority religious groups around the world; understands that his comments included a warning that society should not return to "the dark days of the 1930s"; agrees with his comment that "the scale of religious persecution around the world is not widely appreciated"; understands that the charity, Aid to the Church in Need, recently released its report, Religious Freedom in the World, which ranks countries based on the level of religious freedom that they have; welcomes the Duke of Rothesay's stated belief that, whichever religious path people follow, the destination is the same, "to value and respect the other person", and believes that these basic principles of tolerance and compassion are ones that everyone should fight to uphold in an increasingly uncertain world.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-03267>

[TOP](#)

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/arbitrationandmediationservicesequality.html>

Assisted Dying Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/assisteddying.html>

Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/culturalpropertyarmedconflicts.html>

Lobbying (Transparency) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/lobbyingtransparency.html>

Wales Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/wales.html>

[TOP](#)

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 3 days**

Consultation on the Crown Prosecution Service Public Policy Statement on Racially and Religiously Aggravated Hate Crime (closing date 9 January 2017)

http://www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/hate_crime_rr_consultation_2016.html

**** closes in 3 days**

Consultation on the Crown Prosecution Service Policy on Prosecuting Crimes against Disabled People (closing date 9 January 2017)

http://www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/hate_crime_dhc_consultation_2016.html

**** closes in 3 days**

Consultation on the Crown Prosecution Service Public Policy Statement on the prosecution of offences involving hostility on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity (closing date 9 January 2017)

http://www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/hate_crime_ht_consultation_2016.html

**** closes in 5 days**

Draft Referendum Bill (closing date 11 January 2017)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00507743.pdf>

**** closes in 7 days**

Introduction of the medical examiner role and reforms to death certification (Wales) (closing date 13 January 2013)

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/introduction-medical-examiner-role-and-reforms-death-certification>

Welsh Assembly Inquiry into Lobbying (closing date 31 January 2017)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=236&RPID=1507974161&cp=yes>

Consolidation and revision of the school governance regulatory framework in Wales (closing date 17 February 2017)

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/consolidation-and-revision-school-governance-regulatory-framework-wales>

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation: increasing numbers of successful donations (Scotland) (closing date 14 March 2017)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511160.pdf>

[TOP](#)