

Political Affairs Brief

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

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UK Parliamentary Questions

Anti-Semitism

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to the answer of 29 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 1127W, on anti-Semitism, whether figures on occurrences of anti-Semitism have been added to the annual data requirements for police community safety figures; [317145]

(2) with reference to the answer of 18 March 2009, *Official Report*, column 1154W, on anti-Semitism, whether the five data requirements of hate crime have been added to the annual police community safety figures; and what data has been collected on anti-Semitic incidents. [317103]

Alan Johnson: The Annual Data Requirement (ADR) has not yet been extended to cover crime data disaggregated by the five hate crime strands. The situation is being resolved in order that this data can be collected as part of the ADR from April 2011. This is the next occasion in the annual data cycle that this will be possible. The extension to the ADR will not enable us to disaggregate the data on racist offences in order that we can identify specific data on anti-Semitic crimes.

The ACPO National Community Tension Team (NCTT) has been collating data on anti-Semitic crimes since April 2008. The data are collated as an intelligence document and has not been published previously. We are seeking publication of this data at the earliest opportunity in order that indicative figures on anti-Semitic hate crime for the year 2009-10 can be made available.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100223/text/100223w009.htm#10022418000004>

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with reference to the answer of 18 March 2009, *Official Report*, column 1154W, on anti-Semitism, what meetings the cross-government champion on reducing incitement on the internet has attended in that role; and what the outcomes were of these meetings. [317104]

Alan Johnson: In his role as cross-Government internet hate crime champion, Home Office Minister Mr. Alan Campbell has met with the Internet Watch Foundation and the Trades Union Congress. The topics for discussion were the blocking of internet service providers and tackling the Redwatch website respectively.

Since becoming the cross-Government champion, the Minister has overseen the progress of the Internet Hate Crime Action Plan. This is part of the wider Cross Governmental Hate Crime Action Plan. Work on this plan has included the creation of an online reporting mechanism for hate crime on the internet.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100223/text/100223w0010.htm>

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House of Lords Short Debate

Israel

Baroness Williams of Crosby: To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Israel about holding up construction materials for United Nations-sponsored projects for social housing and for public sanitation.

Lord Brett: My Lords, the United Kingdom continues to be extremely concerned by the current restrictions imposed on the Gaza border by the Israeli authorities ... We shall continue to raise these issues with the Israeli Government at the highest level.

Baroness Williams of Crosby: ... Are the Government aware that more than 6,000 houses have been destroyed or very badly damaged since Operation Cast Lead, which led to the invasion of Gaza by Israel? Is he aware that those houses have been left unfinished for more than two years, meaning that thousands of Gazan families have nowhere to live? Is he also aware that raw sewage is now being poured into the Mediterranean for lack of the necessary components to repair the sewerage system ... In conclusion, do the Government believe that such a devastating blockade can go on for much longer, and what steps do they propose to take to reinforce the advice that they are trying to give, which seems singularly ineffective?

Lord Brett: My Lords, I confirm the very serious situation that the noble Baroness refers to. My figures tell me that 3,540 homes need reconstruction, 20,000 people have been displaced, 90 to 95 per cent of water is unfit for human consumption and 50 to 80 million litres of sewage flow into the Mediterranean each day. We are doing all we can to assist the population of Gaza. We gave £26.8 million in humanitarian aid and £21 million has been distributed to charities operating in Gaza. It is a long list, and as I am restricted to short answers I will not go through it all. ...

Lord Campbell-Savours: My Lords, why do we not just break the blockade?

Lord Brett: This is a diplomatic question-using diplomacy in its widest sense-put in a fairly undiplomatic way. The answer is that there is only one long-term solution: the two-state solution based on the 1967 boundaries. ...

Lord Hylton: Is the noble Lord aware that the sewage is threatening not only the sea but also the land, by polluting groundwater? Will the Government take much more effective steps than they have until now to ensure that reinforcing steel and cement get through to Gaza, and safely into the hands of the UN agency there? ...

Lord Howell of Guildford: ... Is it not the position that 240 out of the 640 schools in the Gaza Strip have been damaged, and 18 have been flattened? Would it not be worth pointing out to the Israeli authorities that, if they are concerned with Israel's security, as they properly should be, and if they are nevertheless worried that some materials may go towards building rocket stations rather than restoring civilian facilities, it is directly in the interests of the people of Israel, and of their future citizens' security, that the schools should be replaced and that young children in the Gaza Strip should go back into them as soon as possible?...

Lord Wallace of Saltaire: As Gaza has a southern border as well as northern and eastern borders, what representations have we been making to the Egyptian authorities who are complicit in this blockade?

Lord Brett: That is slightly unfair. I understand that the Egyptians have been facilitating and hoping for greater access to Gaza. ...

Lord Anderson of Swansea: ... Does my noble friend at least understand the concerns of Israel that the materials supplied are not diverted for military use? How do we ensure that guarantees are given that such material is properly screened so that is not used against Israel itself? ...

Lord Brett: I am sure that President Obama's Administration are doing all they can to persuade the Israeli Government of the wisdom of the suggestions and solutions put forward by the international community. Senator Mitchell made a statement in that regard

as recently as last week. However much we in this Chamber wish and desire to see a solution, and however much we harangue and plead, the answer lies within the borders and the people of that country. The United Kingdom is doing everything possible in terms of humanitarian aid but that is not the problem so much as the political will.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100223-0002.htm#10022363000381>

Prime Minister's Questions

Mark Durkan (Foyle) (SDLP): Can the Prime Minister confirm that he condemns not only the use of false UK passports in a criminal operation, but any act of state-sponsored assassination anywhere? Will he drop the Government's plans to amend the law on universal jurisdiction, which has so far been justified on the basis of the need to protect Israel's right to due diplomatic conduct and to proper inter-governmental engagement—standards for which the Israeli Government showed utter contempt by the disdain with which the Israeli Foreign Minister treated the Foreign Secretary this week?

The Prime Minister: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that where there are questions about the misuse of British passports, they have to be answered. We have set up an investigation, which is ongoing, into the very instance that he raised. I would not draw immediate conclusions without seeing the evidence. It is important to see the evidence before any further conclusions are drawn, but I agree that we do not support state-sponsored terrorism in any country. I should say to the hon. Gentleman that the laws on international jurisdiction affect all countries, not just one country.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmtoday/cmdebate/02.htm>

UK Parliamentary Questions

EU: Israel Association Agreement

Lord Hylton: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Israel's compliance with the human rights articles of the European Union-Israel Association Agreement. [HL1941]

Lord Brett: Article 2 of the Association agreement sets out that relations between the parties shall be based on respect for human rights and democratic principles. Based on this principle, the European Commission assesses the situation through formal and informal contacts with the Israeli authorities, including the subcommittee on political dialogue and co-operation and the informal working group on human rights and international organisations. The European Commission publishes an annual report that covers human rights among other things. The most recent, in April 2009, noted continuing concerns especially in relation to Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories.

The EU also made clear its broader concerns about aspects of Israeli policy in the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council on 8 December 2009.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100223w0003.htm#10022368000839>

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on allegations of human rights abuses committed during Operation Cast Lead. [315913]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: From the outset we have called for the very serious allegations around the Gaza conflict to be properly and independently investigated by both sides, including individual incidents and wider operational choices. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made this clear to Prime Minister Netanyahu ahead of

the UN Human Rights Council Special Session on Gaza. Most recently, I raised it in my meeting, on 9 February 2010, with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100223/text/100223w0007.htm#1002249000015>

Palestinians

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all official visits to Gaza made by (a) Ministers, (b) Embassy officials based in Tel Aviv, (c) consular officials based in Jerusalem and (d) Embassy officials based in Cairo in each of the last three years. [318021]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We do not hold records of every visit made by officials to Gaza. However, our officials based in Jerusalem and, to a lesser extent, Tel Aviv, have visited Gaza on more than 20 occasions since January 2009. Our consulate general in Jerusalem also has two members of local staff permanently based in Gaza. There have been no visits made, in the last three years, by our officials based in Cairo. The Secretary of State for Development visited Gaza in March 2009.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100223/text/100223w0007.htm#1002249000017>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Mark Durkan (913) Israeli response to UK and EU representations – That this House deplores the Israeli Foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman's contemptuous treatment of the profound concerns registered by the Foreign Secretary and other EU ministers when they met in Brussels on 22 February 2010; condemns not only the use of forged passports of UK and Irish citizens in a criminal operation but also, unequivocally, any state-sponsored para-terrorist assassination; recognises that the arrogant attitude of impunity and disdain now displayed by Israeli representatives is the reward for the UK Government's serial failure to take a stand against continuous Israeli transgressions including in Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank and the ongoing subjugation of Palestinians through abrogation of humanitarian standards and violation of human rights; and calls on the Government to abandon its plans to amend the law on universal jurisdiction which it has previously justified on the grounds of protecting Israel's right to due diplomatic conduct and intergovernmental engagement, standards for which the Israeli government currently demonstrates a blatant disregard.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=40532&SESSION=903>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

**** Children, Schools and Families Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/childrenschoolsandfamilies.html>

Report Stage, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100223/debtext/100223-0005.htm#10022358000002>

Proceedings

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/061/pro0612302p.233-239.html>

**** Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/constitutionalreformandgovernance.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/068/amend/pbc0682302a.1059-1060.html>

**** Crime and Security Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/crimeandsecurity.html>

Committee Stage, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmpublic/crimeandsecurity/100223/am/100223s01.htm>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmpublic/crimeandsecurity/100223/pm/100223s01.htm>

Proceedings

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/003/pro0032302p.31-37.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/003/amend/pbc0032302m.237-243.html>

**** Equality Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/equality.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldbills/035/amend/am035-c.htm>

Flood and Water Management Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/floodandwatermanagement.html>

Scottish Parliament

End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

Draft Census Order

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2010/draft/pdf/sdsi_9780111007907_en.pdf

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Consultations

** new or updated

****closes in 4 days**

Communities and Local Government: Creating a Single Equality Scheme for 2010 – 2013 (closes 28 February 2010)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/987402.pdf>

Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 2010 (closes 15 March 2010)

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6605.aspx

2011 Census Statistical Outputs (England and Wales) (closes 26 March 2010)
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/consultations/open-consultations/2011-output-consultation---main-statistical-outputs/index.html>

Equality Bill: Draft Codes of Conduct (closes 2 April 2010)
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legislative-framework/equality-bill/equality-bill-codes-of-practice-consultation/#1>

Equality Bill: Draft Guidance (closes 16 April 2010)
<http://ehrc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

Death Certification, Burial, and Cremation (Scotland) (closes 21 April 2010)
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300112/0093686.pdf>

Humanitarian Assistance Strategic Guidance (closes 14 May)
http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultations/HA_strategic_guide_draft.pdf

2011 Census Statistical Outputs (Scotland) (closes 14 May 2010) <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/preparations/consultation-and-research/formal-consultations/spring-10-consultation.html>

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