

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

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what recent representations the cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism has received from the Jewish community; and if he will make a statement. [20255]

Andrew Stunell: The cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism is made up of officials from across Government and senior representatives of the Jewish Community and therefore is in regular receipt of representations from the Jewish community on issues of concern.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101101/text/101101w0002.htm#10110144000003>

Anti-Semitism

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills who represents his Department on the cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism; whether any changes in that representation are planned during the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [20244]

Mr Willetts: An official from the Department's Higher Education Directorate who covers policy on anti-Semitism as part of their remit attends the cross-Government working group. No changes are planned.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101101/text/101101w0005.htm#10110231000006>

Crime: Hate

Lord Avebury: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that police forces routinely keep records of the religion or beliefs of defendants and victims in cases of racially or religiously aggravated offences, and make them available to the Crown Prosecution Service.[HL2656]

Earl Attlee: The Government understand the importance of the recording of hate crime, which is why the programme for government includes a commitment to improve the collection of these data. We are currently liaising with the police on the implementation of this commitment and we anticipate the collection of this data to begin in April 2011. This will provide us with police recorded crime data for the Government's five hate crime strands (disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation).

However, in order to balance the commitment on the better collection of hate crime data with our desire to end Whitehall interference in local policing, the data

will not be disaggregated to reflect the religion or belief of offenders and victims. We are removing targets and reviewing the data burden placed on forces. We believe that the work that is being taken forward achieves this balance.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101101w0001.htm#1011015000676>

English Defence League

Lord Ouseley: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have assessed the threat posed to community cohesion and good race relations by the activities of the English Defence League; and whether they are taking measures to counter their influence.[HL2807]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government (Baroness Hanham): The Government will not tolerate those who spread hate and seek to divide society and deliberately raise community tensions. The Government, working with police and other agencies, routinely assess community tensions. This includes any perceived threat posed to effective community cohesion by the activities of extremist organisations such as the English Defence League. Where appropriate, suitable measures are taken at community level by the relevant authorities to counter their influence and minimise their impact.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101101w0001.htm#1011015000679>

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Israel

UK Parliamentary Questions

Israel: Illegal Settlers

Gareth Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what aims and objectives his Department has set for its policy on Hezbollah. [20010]

Alistair Burt: We want to see Hezbollah reject violence and play a constructive, democratic and peaceful role in Lebanese politics, in line with the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions, most notably UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls upon Hezbollah to disarm.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101101/text/101101w0004.htm#1011022000042>

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Michael Ellis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on the condition of Gilad Shalit; and what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the matter. [19984]

Alistair Burt: The UK has long called for Gilad Shalit's immediate and unconditional release. It is also vital that Hamas allows the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit Gilad immediately and ensure that he is in good health. His continued captivity without any ICRC access and with only very occasional, minimal contact with his family is utterly unacceptable.

We continue to call on Hamas to renounce violence and take immediate and concrete steps towards the Quartet principles and to free Gilad Shalit without delay.

Gareth Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent progress his Department has made in efforts to secure the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit. [20011]

Alistair Burt: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear in the

House on 14 September 2010, Official Report, column 740:

"Obviously, we are not able directly to secure his release, but that matter is one of the deeply aggravating factors that mean that Gaza remains such an immense international problem. We have called repeatedly for the release of Gilad Shalit and will continue to do so, and the international community will continue to work towards that end. If Hamas and other forces in Gaza were remotely interested in a political settlement and in coming to terms with Israel and the rest of the international community, they would wish to do that".

The UK Permanent Representative to the UN reiterated this message on 18 October 2010.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101101/text/101101w004.htm#1011022000043>

Israel and Palestine: West Bank

Lord Hylton: To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they will take to help ensure that Palestinian access to water and sanitation in the West Bank is not prejudiced while negotiations continue.[HL2767]

Baroness Verma: Palestinian access to water and sanitation in the West Bank is severely constrained by Israeli movement and access restrictions, particularly in Area C, covering 62 per cent of the West Bank, and around Israeli settlement blocks. Israel has eased some restrictions on movement and access in the West Bank, but we call on them to go further.

Although the issue of water transcends the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, it is essential that direct negotiations on a two-state solution include discussions to ensure that there is a just solution on shared water resources as part of a final status agreement. The fair and effective distribution of shared water resources across the Middle East is of great concern to the UK Government; these resources are limited and require effective co-operation from all parties to ensure there is enough for all.

Lord Hylton: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the allegation of poisoning of Palestinian olive trees by Israelis in the West Bank villages of Turmus Aya and Al-Maghayer, and of the further allegations by Rabbis for Human Rights of thefts of the whole olive crop in the village lands of Yanoun, Jit and Imatin.[HL2770]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): According to the non-governmental organisation B'Tselem, in an incident near Nablus settlers attacked farmers attempting to access their land near Azmut village. The UK is concerned by these reports and the recent destruction of Palestinian-owned olive crops. We condemn these acts. We have raised these incidents with the Co-ordinator of Government Activities in the Territories and the Israeli Defence Force.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101101w0001.htm#1011015000697>

Gaza

Lord Hylton: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to the government of Israel with regard to supplies of chlorine for water purification in Gaza.[HL2768]

Baroness Verma: The UK Government recognise Israel's concern that some legitimate items imported into Gaza, such as chlorine in the form of hypochlorite for the purification of water, could also be used for the manufacture of weapons. However, we believe that with robust monitoring and end use verification, it is possible to address Israeli security concerns while importing these materials.

The United Nations (UN) and Office of the Quartet Representative (OQR) continue to press Israel for the full implementation of the measures to relax movement and access announced on 20 June, and for the entry of essential items on the dual-use list. We support them in their efforts.

Lord Hylton: To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions the quartet has had with Israel regarding the state of sewage treatment plants in Gaza and the discharge of raw sewage into the Mediterranean and what has been the result of such discussions.[HL2769]

Baroness Verma: The Office of the Quartet Representative (OQR) has regular discussions with the Government of Israel on the need to make progress on upgrading sewage treatment facilities in Gaza. The North Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment Project, managed by the World Bank, completed its first phase, to divert sewage away from the Beit Lahiya site, in January 2010. The second phase, to build a new sewage plant to meet the sanitation needs of northern Gaza, is scheduled for completion in 2013. The OQR reports that there are still issues to be resolved with other smaller water and sanitation projects; discussions with Israel are ongoing.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101101w0001.htm#1011015000686>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

Daylight Saving Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/daylightsaving.html>

Face Coverings (Regulation) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/facecoveringsregulation.html>

Fixed Term Parliaments Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/fixedtermparliaments.html>

**** Identity Documents Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/identitydocuments.html>

Committee Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101101-gc0001.htm#10110119000202>

**** Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/parliamentaryvotingsystemandconstituencies.html>

Report Stage, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101101/debtext/101101-0002.htm#10110129000001>

Report Stage Proceedings

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/098/pro098011p.245-251.html>

Consideration of Bill as at 1 November

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/098/amend/pbc098011m.975-981.html>

Consideration of Bill as at 2 November

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/098/amend/pbc0980211m.1025-1031.html>

Scottish Parliament

Certification of Death Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/58-CertDeath/index.htm>

End of Life Assistance Bill

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

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Consultations

** new or updated

Equality Act 2010: The public sector Equality Duty: Promoting equality through transparency (closing date 10 November 2010)

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/402461_GEO_EqualityAct2010ThePublicSectorEqualityDuty_acc.pdf

Certification of Death (Scotland) Bill (closes 18 November 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/hs/inquiries/CertificationOfDeathBill/CallForEvidence.htm>

Equality Duty: Detailed Proposals - Consultation on Public Sector Equality Duty Draft Regulations and Order (Scotland) (closes 26 November 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/324431/0104438.pdf>

**** The Future of the Citizenship Survey** (closing date 30 November 2010)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1756366.pdf>

Charity Commission: Proposed withdrawal of paper forms for Annual Returns, Registration applications, and forthcoming Charitable Incorporated Organisations (closes 2 December 2010)

[http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About us/About the Commission/ols consultation_intro.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About%20us/About%20the%20Commission/ols_consultation_intro.aspx)

Equality Act 2010 - Performance of the Public Sector Equality Duties in Wales (closes 17 December 2010)

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/equality/equalityact2010/?lang=en>

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Draft Code of Practice on Further and Higher Education (closes 31 December 2010)

http://live.ehrc.precedenthost.co.uk/cgi-bin/generate.pl?page_id= sx0666i4b&save=screen

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