

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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UK Parliament Ministerial Statement

Anti-Semitism Inquiry (Government Response)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Andrew Stunell): I am pleased to announce that I am today laying before Parliament the coalition Government's three-year-on response to the all party parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism (Command Paper Cm 7991).

In May 2008 the previous Government published a progress report on the 35 recommendations in the all party parliamentary inquiry into anti-Semitism. Since coming into office the coalition Government undertook to report back to Parliament on further progress in implementing the inquiry's recommendations.

We believe the best way to tackle anti-Semitism is through effective implementation of strong legislation against racial and religious discrimination and racially and religiously motivated crime. This must be underpinned by policies and strategies which support an integrated society where people are able to take part in society to the full; get on well together and are treated fairly.

We have made significant progress against the 35 recommendations made by the all party parliamentary inquiry's constructive and comprehensive report through the cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism which brings together civil servants from across Whitehall and members of the three major Jewish community organisations.

We have ensured that there is now agreement for all police forces to record anti-Semitic hate crimes and the first disaggregated statistics were published in November. Another key success has been the agreement by the Department for Education to fund counter-terrorism security needs of Jewish faith schools within the state sector.

Despite the progress outlined in the report, there is no room for complacency and we will continue to take practical, effective action to stamp out anti-Semitism whenever and wherever it occurs. We are committed to increasing the number of hate crimes brought to justice, tackling anti-Semitism on university campuses, and challenging hate crime and extremism on the internet. We have agreed to continue our support of the cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism and will report back to Parliament on any further progress.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101215/wmstext/101215m0001.htm#10121523000014>

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Holocaust

Scottish Parliamentary Questions

Holocaust Day 2011

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive what plans it has to commemorate Holocaust Day 2011. (S3W-37970)

Ken Macintosh (Eastwood) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Executive where the national event in Scotland Holocaust Day 2011 will be held. (S3W-37971)

Fergus Ewing: The Scottish National Holocaust Memorial Day Commemorations 2011 will take place in Craigmoynton High School in Edinburgh on 27 January 2011. As well as working with the school, the event is being developed and delivered by the Scottish Government in partnership with the Edinburgh Inter Faith Association; Edinburgh City Council, and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/Business/PQA/default.aspx?pg=S3W-37970>

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Israel

UK Parliamentary Questions

EU: Israel Association Agreement

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adherence to human rights clauses in the European Union-Israel Association agreements.[HL4895]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): Israel's progress against the European Union-Israel Association Agreement, and its implementing action plan, is reviewed annually by the European Commission, including the new External Action Service. The UK contributes to these reviews. These assessments, which include human rights, are published on the Commission websites

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm#3 and

http://eeas.europa.eu/israel/index_en.htm.

For example, the report covering 2009,

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/progress2010/sec10_520_en.pdf, highlighted that international democracy indexes rank Israel at levels comparable to EU member states but more efforts were needed to address the economic and social situation of the Arab minority and enhance their integration in Israeli society.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101215w0001.htm#10121535000320>

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Robert Halfon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports his Department has received on the number of rocket and mortar attacks on Israel (a) in 2010, (b) since 2005 and (c) since 2000; and if he will make a statement. [29426]

Alistair Burt: According to the Israel Defence Force (IDF) as of 7 October, 165 rockets and mortars were fired at Israel in 2010. The IDF do not publish records prior to 2002. Since then a total of 11,293 rockets have been fired at Israel, of which 7,778 have been since 2005. The IDF note that at current levels 2010 is set to be the year with the lowest number of rocket attacks since 2002. This is small comfort to those at the receiving end and we continue to condemn all rocket

attacks. Such acts of terrorism are indiscriminate and frequently target civilian populations. We call on all sides to halt acts of violence and focus efforts on a negotiated solution.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101215/text/101215w0001.htm#10121536000041>

Middle East: Overseas Aid

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made on implementation of support for projects in Israel and the Occupied Territories which have already received approval in principle for funding from the Conflict Pool. [30199]

Alistair Burt: A total of £4.1 million was earmarked from the 2010-11 Middle East and North Africa Conflict Pool for Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The majority of the allocation is used to support the British Support Team (BST) working principally on security sector reform within the Palestinian Authority under the umbrella of the of the United States Security Coordinator, and the UK contribution to the EU Police Co-ordinating office for Palestinian Police Support (EUPOL COPPS) programme. The remainder was available to support short term projects led by Israeli and Palestinian non-governmental organisations. By September 2010 the Conflict Pool had agreed funding for 12 non-governmental organisations which amounted to 85% of the available funding. Unallocated funds for the remainder of the year are currently being reviewed. No new spending will be allocated until after the full implications of the review are known. This is unlikely to be before the end of this financial year.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101215/text/101215w0001.htm#10121536000042>

Scottish Parliamentary Question

Procurement

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): To ask the Scottish Executive what its position is on the use of public procurement to support boycotts and disinvestment targeted at Israel and whether it has the power to do this. (S3W-37964)

John Swinney: Israel is a party to the World Trade Organization's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). The GPA is an international trade agreement that applies in the UK, other EU member states and other participating countries, including Israel. It provides that EU companies have a legal right of access to contract opportunities advertised by public bodies in Israel and that Israeli companies have equivalent rights when tendering for public contracts in the EU. Companies which have failed to comply with the law or which have committed acts of grave misconduct may be excluded from competition. It is not usually possible, however, to refuse to deal with a company simply because it has a connection to another country or because it is offering to supply goods produced in another country.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/Business/PQA/default.aspx?pg=S3W-37964>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S3M-7612 Hugh O'Donnell: Restrictions on Sport and Athletics in Gaza—That the Parliament expresses concern at the contents of the open letter sent to Michel Platini, President of UEFA, on 20 November 2010 from Palestinian footballers, coaches and athletes regarding the current situation in Gaza, where sports and athletics have been disrupted and sporting facilities damaged or destroyed by Israeli bombardments and where Palestinian footballers, sportsmen and women and athletes are reported to have

been prevented from participating in events outwith Gaza by Israeli authorities on the grounds that they pose security risks; notes that the letter commends Mr Platini for stating that Israel must choose between allowing Palestinian sport to continue and prosper or be forced to face the consequences for their behaviour, while expressing dismay that this is not currently being permitted; calls on international organisations such as UEFA to apply pressure on Israel to end what it considers to be this oppression, and recognises the work of Scottish Friends of Palestine and other Scotland-based organisations for advocating the rights of Palestinians and raising awareness of their cause and rights.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/business/motions/Default.aspx?motionid=20444>

European Union

Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the Middle East

... I have met Senator Mitchell who has just returned from his mission to the Middle East to discuss the latest developments in the peace process. ... We recognize that our common goals for peace and security in the Middle East should be achieved through negotiations and with the support of the international community.

... the parties must take into consideration Israel's legitimate security concerns and the Palestinian's legitimate national aspirations. The US and the EU reiterate their call for the immediate and unconditional release of Gilad Shalit. ...

The EU and the US commend the work of the Palestinian Authority in building the institutions of the future State of Palestine. We reaffirm our commitment to continue to work in partnership, along with their allies around the globe, to support the work of the PA to build the institutions of its future state.

We expressed our continued concern about the situation in Gaza. ... We appreciate the Government of Israel's recent decision to ease the closure. We encourage a swift implementation and further efforts and complimentary measures in order to achieve a fundamental change of policy that allows for the reconstruction and economic recovery of Gaza. The EU is ready to continue providing institution building support to the PA to increase capacity at the crossings. ...

To read the full press release see

http://www.consilium.europa.eu//uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/118541.pdf

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

Daylight Saving Bill

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

**** Fixed Term Parliaments Bill**

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

Constitution Committee Report

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldselect/ldconst/69/6902.htm>

**** Identity Documents Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/019/amend/ml019-ri.htm>

Explanatory note on Lords amendment

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/113/en/2011113en.pdf>

**** Localism Bill**

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

Explanatory Notes

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/026/amend/su026-vb.htm>

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

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

Committee Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101215-0001.htm#10121533000868>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101215-0003.htm#10121557000079>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/026/amend/su026-vb.htm>

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill

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

Scottish Parliament

Certification of Death Bill

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

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Consultations

**** new or updated**

**** closes tomorrow**

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>

**** closes tomorrow**

Prevent Review (closes 17 December 2010)

<http://preventreview.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

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

Charity Commission for England and Wales: Views on Future Strategy

(closes 14 January 2011)

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/RSS/News/pr_strategic_review.aspx

Improvements to Criminal Justice Statistics (closing date 18 February 2011)
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/statistics-cp171110.htm>

National statistics, published by the Department of Health about the experience of black and minority ethnic patients (closes 18 February 2011)
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_121762

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