

# Political Affairs Digest

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

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### House of Commons Written Answers

#### **West Bank: Israeli Settlements**

**Catherine West** [63431] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to meet his Israeli counterpart to discuss the retrospective legalisation of settlements in the occupied West Bank.

**Tobias Ellwood:** The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), met the Prime Minister of Israel on Monday 6 February. They discussed the Middle East Peace Process and the UK's firm commitment to a two state solution. On the 7 February I issued a statement condemning the passing of the Land Regularisation Bill and expressing concern that the bill paves the way for significant growth in settlements deep in the West Bank, threatening the viability of the two-state solution.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-07/63431/>

*The statement referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-tobias-ellwood-statement-on-israels-land-regularisation-bill>

#### **Fayez Sharary**

**Catherine West** [63435] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what contact he has had with Fayez Sharary or his family since his detainment in Israel in September 2016.

**Tobias Ellwood:** Both the British Embassy in Tel Aviv and British Consulate General in Jerusalem continue to provide consular assistance to Mr Sharary. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London has also been in regular contact with Mr Sharary's family since we were first made aware of his detention. We continue to closely monitor Mr Sharary's case and remain in contact with the local authorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-07/63435/>

#### **Fayez Sharary**

**Catherine West** [63436] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the case of Fayez Sharary.

**Tobias Ellwood:** The Foreign Secretary, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Mr Johnson), has not discussed this particular case with the Israeli Foreign Minister. However, our Ambassador in Israel has raised Mr Sharary's case with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and officials in country are in contact with the local authorities and continue to monitor the case closely.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-07/63436/>

## European Parliament Debate

### **Situation in the West Bank, in particular settlements**

*Note that, the majority of speeches in this debate are in languages other than English. With one short exception, these have been omitted from this abstract. The full transcript of the debate is available from the link below.*

**Ian Borg (President-in-Office of the Council, on behalf of the Vice—President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy):** ... The international context may be evolving, but the European Union's position is not bound to change. We still believe that the only possible solution is the two-state solution, and we still believe that the current settlement policy, including the regularisation law, threatens the viability of the two states. ...

We still believe in what the Middle East Quartet wrote last summer, that the two-state solution is in great danger, and urgent action is needed to stop and reverse the current trends. ...

... the Israeli Parliament has legislated on the legal status of land within the occupied Palestinian Territory, which is an issue that remains beyond its jurisdiction. Should it be implemented, the law would further entrench a one-state reality, a reality of unequal rights, perpetual occupation and conflict. For these reasons, the High Representative has called on Israel to refrain from implementing the law. On 8 February the High Representative discussed the situation in a phone call with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. She told him that the European Union will continue to work with the two parties, but also with international and regional partners, on the two-state solution. ...

... High Representative Mogherini ... stressed very clearly ... that any move of the US Embassy to Jerusalem could have a very negative and destabilising impact in the entire Middle East ... She confirmed that the European Union stands by the international consensus on Jerusalem embodied in United Nations Security Council Resolution 478 of 1980. ...

**Victor Boștinăru (on behalf of the S&D Group):** ... it is essential to say, loud and clear, today that the European Union and the world will not give up on the peace process between the Israelis and Palestinians. ... The two-state solution, with the state of Israel and the state of Palestine living side by side in peace and security, and mutual recognition of the 1967 borders with the mutually agreed land swaps and Jerusalem as a capital of both states, remains the only hope for peace and the cornerstone of our political position and action. ...

On settlement construction, this is a clear violation of international law. The S&D Group opposes and condemns the adoption of the law which retroactively legalises some 4 000 settler homes built on privately owned Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank. This law goes against the vision of a just and lasting peace and against the values of our partnership with Israel. ...

**Constantine Papadakis (NI):** *[translation from Greek]* ... the State of Israel is a terrorist State ...

**James Carver (EFDD):** Madam President ... Mr Papadakis has just called the State of Israel a terrorist state. Will you be taking action in regard to that?

**President:** ... I took note of it and that we will have a debate on it in the Bureau. ...

**Geoffrey Van Orden (ECR):** ... given the conflict and oppression that afflicts so many countries in the greater Middle East, I must say I find it extraordinary that this Parliament should be debating a resolution that puts in the dock the one example in the region of exceptional stability, democracy, freedom of religion and economic vitality. ...

**Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL):** ... the Middle East peace process and the two-state solution has been suffocated. It is buried alive under the concrete slabs of thousands of illegal Israeli settlements. They are war crimes under the Fourth Geneva Convention. ... Every time Israel announces new settlements or demolishes more Palestinian homes, the international community just wags its finger and the EU merely condemns. ... We must suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which is predicated on EU law, and Member States must implement the labelling guidelines for settlement goods. ...

**Petr Mach (EFDD):** ... Of course, it is okay to criticise any country and to wish anything, but one should be fair, and the EU is not fair in its policy towards Israel. First, we should recognise that Israel is our best friend and closest ally in the Middle East. Second, the EU should recognise that, in this Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are competing claims over the West Bank, and it makes no sense to stand on the Palestinian side of the conflict. The EU should recognise that both Palestinians and Jews live in the area and the EU should be neutral at least.

And third, the conflict cannot be resolved from the EU, in the EU or by the EU without Israel and without Palestinians. This conflict can be resolved only through direct talks between Israel and Palestinians. Therefore, the EU should not discriminate against Israelis in this conflict. Since the EU has abolished all tariffs on Palestinian goods from the West Bank, it should abolish tariffs on Jewish goods as well. ...

**James Carver (EFDD):** ... My issue is ... with the rhetoric and anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic statements that continue to emanate from parts of this Chamber. ... Israel has understandable security concerns, and indeed concerns for its very survival. Many neighbours call for her destruction at the very time that Hamas sits on Israel's borders fomenting death and destruction. There are constant terrorist attacks against Israel's civilian population and a recognised rise of anti-Semitism around the world, not least in this place. Thus, Israel pursues policies to safeguard her people and interests, and until until a Palestinian authority can be trusted and Hamas desists from pushing an agenda of extinction, it is unreasonable to expect the Israeli Government to enter into agreements with a dysfunctional enemy. ...

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20170214+ITEM-014+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

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## **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>

## Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

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

## Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)

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

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

### **\*\* closes tomorrow**

**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>

### **\*\* closes in 5 days**

**Measurement framework for equality and human rights** (closing date 21 February 2017)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-measurement-framework/measurement-framework-consultation>

**Racism at work** (closing date 27 February 2017)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RacismAtWork>

**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>

**The UK's policy towards the Middle East Peace Process** (closing date 30 March 2017)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/middle-east-peace-process-inquiry-16-17/>

**Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill** (closing date 10 April 2017)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/adoption-and-children-northern-ireland-bill>

**Workplace Diversity (Wales)** (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

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