

Political Affairs Digest

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

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Downing Street

Passover 2017: Theresa May's message

As the festival of Passover begins, I want to send my very best wishes to Jewish communities in the UK and around the world for a very happy and peaceful Pesach.

As Jewish families come together to relive the story of escape from slavery in ancient Egypt, it gives all communities an opportunity to join with you in thanks for the liberty and freedom that we all hold dear.

The history of the Jewish people and the horrors of the Holocaust highlight what happens when freedom is lost and anti-Semitism is allowed to flourish. That is why we are establishing a national Memorial to the Holocaust, together with an accompanying education centre, next to Parliament at the heart of our democracy. For in remembering the Holocaust, we will also reaffirm our national commitment to fighting hatred and prejudice in all its forms in the world today.

The freedom to practice your religion, without anxiety or prejudice, is one of the fundamental tenets of our society and as Prime Minister I will defend your rights to practice your faith without fear. As I have said before, without its Jewish community, Britain would not be Britain.

Your community makes an enormous contribution to the UK and has excelled in every field helping create a successful and prosperous country.

So let me wish you and your family a Chag Kasher V'Sameach.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/passover-2017-theresa-mays-message>

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Holocaust

UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation

Holocaust memorial designs exhibition in Wales

An exhibition of the shortlisted designs for a [National Holocaust Memorial and education centre](#) is on display in the [Wales Millennium Centre](#) from Friday 8 April until Friday 21 April 2017.

The new National Holocaust Memorial and accompanying education centre will stand in Victoria Tower Gardens in Westminster, London. This striking new structure will honour victims and survivors of Nazi persecution and will act as a national voice against hatred in our world today. People in Wales can have their say on the designs and how to make sure those who live further away from the memorial's physical location in London can benefit from it.

The [international design competition](#) sought to harness the very best architectural talent to create an emotionally powerful and sensitively designed memorial. 92 design teams expressed an interest in the project, with a [shortlist of 10](#) invited to submit concept designs on display as part of this exhibition.

Consultation with the public in Wales, those working in the field of Holocaust remembrance and education, as well as technical experts will play a crucial role in informing the final decision of the jury. Visitors are invited to give their views as part of the exhibition.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/holocaust-memorial-designs-exhibition-in-wales>

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House of Lords Written Answers

Israel: Gaza

Baroness Tonge [HL6339] To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding lifting the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have frequent discussions with the Government of Israel about the need to ease restrictions on Gaza. We most recently raised the issue of movement and access restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with the Israeli authorities on 13 March.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-27/HL6339/>

Israel: West Bank

Baroness Tonge [HL6340] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the increased number of days of closure of the checkpoints between Israel and the West Bank for the Jewish Festival of Purim.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this specific issue, we have consistently urged the Israeli government to ease movement and access restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, most recently on 13 March.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-27/HL6340/>

Israel: Elections

Baroness Tonge [HL6341] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the amendment to the basic law passed by the Knesset on 14 March disqualifying candidates from running in a parliamentary election if they deny Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities. Whilst we are clear that politics requires a range of voices and free debate, the UK will continue to reject any efforts to de-legitimise or undermine Israel.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-27/HL6341/>

Khalida Ghosheh

Baroness Tonge [HL6342] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel regarding the arrest of Palestinian novelist Khalida Ghosheh.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we understand that Khalida Ghosheh was released on bail on 11 March.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-27/HL6342/>

Israeli Settlements: Crimes of Violence

Baroness Tonge [HL6343] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations are they making to the government of Israel regarding the report from Rabbis for Human Rights, that Palestinian farmers from Burin and Madma were attacked on 22 March by Israeli settlers during a ploughing day co-ordinated with the Israeli forces which was then cancelled.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this specific issue with the Israeli authorities, we have repeatedly raised our concerns about incidents of settler violence and intimidation, and have stressed the importance of thorough investigations and accountability, as well as the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-27/HL6343/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL6389] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 23 March (HL6002), and in the light of reports by Amnesty International and Defence for Children International—Palestine drawing attention to the treatment of Palestinian children following their arrest by Israeli forces, what action they intend to take to protect those children.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We will continue to raise our concerns over the treatment of Palestinian minors, particularly those in Israeli military detention, with the Israeli authorities on a regular basis.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-28/HL6389/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-13/HL6002/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Sheehan [HL6455] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will make representations to the government of Israel about registering more Palestinian, or Palestine Red Crescent Society, ambulances with the Jerusalem Municipality to enable back-to-back ambulance transfers at checkpoints to become unnecessary.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this specific issue, we have consistently called on the Israeli Government to ease restrictions that reduce access to medical care for Palestinians. The Palestine Red Crescent Society reported in 2015 that 84% of transfers from West Bank to East Jerusalem hospitals underwent back-to-back transfers.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-29/HL6455/>

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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>

Lobbying (Transparency) Bill

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

**** Independent review of hate crime legislation** [in Scotland] (closing date 12 May 2017)

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/hate-crime/2f6c8d5f/>

Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law (closing date 18 July 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

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

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