

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Social Services: Finance

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [1727] To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what guidance has been published to ensure that local authorities offer financial support to specialist care providers that cater for the religious and cultural needs of their clients.

**Marcus Jones:** The department has published no such guidance. Local authorities are best placed to understand the needs of their communities and to commission services in a way which is most effective for those communities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-28/1727/>

#### Social Services: Minority Groups

**Matthew Offord (Conservative)** [2457] To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to create a centrally-held funding source to local authorities who provide care and support to people from religious minorities requiring care from specialist providers.

**Marcus Jones:** The Government periodically assesses resourcing requirements for local government as part of each Spending Review. It is for local authorities to best determine how to meet the needs of their communities which would include how best to commission specialist provision if necessary.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-03/2457/>

#### Islam: Marriage

**Roger Godsiff (Labour)** [1647] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will assess the merits of requiring Imams carrying out the Islamic marriage ceremony to ensure that a civil ceremony has already taken place.

**Dominic Raab:** The Government acknowledges concerns raised about marriage ceremonies that do not give rise to legal rights, and is committed to careful consideration of the issue. That is one of the reasons why the Prime Minister, in her previous role as Home Secretary, launched the independent Sharia review in May last year. These concerns are central to the review, and the Government is

considering the issue in light of the report by Dame Louise Casey on opportunity and integration, published in December.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-06-28/1647/>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Trade Agreements: Israel

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [2644] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether progress has been made on securing a trade agreement between the UK and Israel for when the UK is no longer part of the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

**Mark Garnier:** As we leave the European Union, we are seeking to replicate all existing EU free trade agreements and other EU preferential arrangements so as to ensure continuity in our trade and investment relationships with third countries. The Prime Minister met the Israeli Prime Minister in February and agreed to establish a joint trade working group. In March, my noble Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy visited Israel to chair the first meeting of the working group. We continue to liaise closely with the Israeli Government on maximising future trade opportunities and ensuring a smooth transition for business, as we leave the EU.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-03/2644/>

#### Overseas Trade: Israel

**Jim Shannon (DUP)** [2645] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps he is taking to encourage and facilitate trade cooperation between the UK and Israel in the (a) agricultural technology and (b) high-tech sector.

**Mark Garnier:** The UK and Israel have a strong and important trading relationship, and we are committed to strengthening that relationship. We have a dedicated team based in our Embassy in Tel Aviv which actively promotes trade cooperation between UK and Israeli companies. We have also established a UK-Israel Tech Hub, which helps to create partnerships between British companies and world class Israeli innovators across a wide range of tech sectors, including agriculture.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-07-03/2645/>

### House of Lords Written Answers

#### Israel: school children

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL136] Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding disruptions and dangers experienced by school children at the hands of Israeli settlers and armed forces.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have raised our concerns about incidents of settler violence and intimidation with the Israeli authorities and highlighted the need for Israeli security forces to provide appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population. An official from our Consulate General in Jerusalem regularly meets the British Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme volunteers to hear

about their experiences of monitoring checkpoints and providing protective presence to children on their way to and from school.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-22/HL136/>

### **Hamas and Fatah**

**The Lord Bishop of Southwark** [HL151] Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage political reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We support the Palestinian people in realising self-determination through an independent, sovereign, and unified Palestinian state based on the 1967 border with land swaps as appropriate. We have made it clear that we will engage with any Palestinian government that shows through their words and actions that they are committed to the rejection of violence and pursuit of a negotiated peace.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-22/HL151/>

## **UNESCO: 41<sup>st</sup> Session**

### **Two new sites inscribed on World Heritage List**

The World Heritage Committee meeting in Krakow has inscribed Hebron / Al Khalil Old town (Palestine) and W-Arly-Pendjari Complex (Benin, Burkina Faso) on the World Heritage List during its morning session. The Committee simultaneously added the site of Hebron / Al Khalil to the List of World Heritage in Danger. ...

#### **Hebron / Al Khalil Old town**

The use of a local limestone shaped the construction of the old town of Hebron / Al-Khalil during the Mamluk period between 1250 and 1517. The centre of interest of the town was the site of Al mosque -Ibrahim / the tomb of the Patriarchs whose buildings are in a compound built in the 1st century CE to protect the tombs of the patriarch Abraham / Ibrahim and his family. This place became a site of pilgrimage for the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The town was sited at the crossroads of trade routes for caravans travelling between southern Palestine, Sinai, Eastern Jordan, and the north of the Arabian Peninsula. Although the subsequent Ottoman Period (1517-1917) heralded an extension of the town to the surrounding areas and brought numerous architectural additions, particularly the raising of the roof level of houses to provide more upper stories, the overall Mamluk morphology of the town is seen to have persisted with its hierarchy of areas, quarters based on ethnic, religious or professional groupings, and houses with groups of rooms organized according to a tree-shaped system. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://en.unesco.org/news/two-new-sites-inscribed-world-heritage-list>

*The transcript of the debate is not yet available*

**Addendum 2 Evaluations of Nominations of Cultural and Mixed Properties:  
Nomination submitted for processing on an emergency basis Palestine [C 1565]  
Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town**

<http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2017/whc17-41com-inf8B1-Add2-en.pdf>

**State of Israel: State of Conservation Report 2016 Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls (148)  
Update: January 2017**

<http://whc.unesco.org/document/158552>

**The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Palestine Status Report: The state of conservation of the old City of Jerusalem and its Walls**

<http://whc.unesco.org/document/158554>

**State of Palestine State of Conservation Report for Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines – Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir– Palestine (1492)**

<http://whc.unesco.org/document/156099>

**State of Palestine State of Conservation Report For Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem**

<http://whc.unesco.org/document/156100>

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## Foreign Affairs

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### **Freedom of religion or belief**

**The Lord Bishop of Coventry** [HL107] Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to create an ambassador-level champion for freedom of religion or belief.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Her Majesty's Government remains firmly committed to the promotion and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). We continue to actively seek ways to improve the efforts of overseas posts working to support religious freedom. Through our bilateral meetings, we raise individual cases and highlight practices and laws that discriminate against people on the basis of their religion or belief. In 2017/18 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will spend approximately £750,000 on six FoRB projects across a range of countries, including Pakistan and Iraq. Whilst the Government has not created an Ambassador-level champion for FoRB, I have this issue a key priority for my team as the Minister responsible. I will seek to review this proposal on a periodic basis.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-06-21/HL107/>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### Scottish Parliament

#### **Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105269.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law** (closing date 18 September 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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