

# 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 Lords Written Answer

#### **Meat: Ritual Slaughter**

**Baroness Byford (Conservative)** [HL10861] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to ensure that consumers in the UK can be certain from food labelling that the meat they purchase is not Halal.

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The Government is aware that there is public concern about meat from animals slaughtered in accordance with religious beliefs being sold to consumers who do not require their meat to be prepared in this way. There are no domestic or European Regulations that require the labelling of Halal meat but where any information of this nature is provided, it must be accurate and must not be misleading to the customer.

The Government believes that consumers should have the necessary information available to them to make an informed choice about their food. This is an issue the Government is considering in the context of the UK's exit from the EU.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-22/HL10861/>

### Scottish Parliament Written Answers

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

#### **Israel-Palestine educational resources**

**S5W-19515: Neil Findlay (Labour):** To ask the Scottish Government for what reason Israel-Palestine educational resources that have been quality-approved by Education Scotland as a learning and teaching resource have reportedly been withdrawn, including whether this was at the request of any pressure group, and whether this was approved at ministerial level.

**S5W-19745 Sandra White (SNP):** To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on progress with the development and publication of educational resources on Israel-Palestine. *Initiated by the Scottish Government*

**John Swinney:** The development of educational resources on Israel/Palestine began in 2015. Following a much publicised incident involving a primary school homework exercise, a working group was established to scope out appropriate education materials dealing with the conflict. The aim was to ensure that schools were better-placed to address the question of Israel/Palestine.

An initial set of resources was made available through Education Scotland's Glow system in early 2017. The purpose was to allow teachers to post comments as part of a piloting exercise. In May 2017, and following concerns expressed by stakeholders (specifically the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities), I asked Education Scotland to remove a specific animation from the resources. The resources continued to be available on a password protected basis in order that they could be finalised to the satisfaction of all key stakeholder interests. A period of consultation and further development was then facilitated by Education Scotland. This included the opportunity in autumn 2017 for all interested stakeholders to contribute comments via meetings and in writing. The aim throughout this process was to ensure the production of a set of resources which could be agreed by all key stakeholders.

In February 2018, with no consensus amongst key stakeholders about the suitability of the resources, Education Scotland explored the potential of taking ownership of the resources in order that it could finalise them and make them available on Glow. While all eight local authorities involved in the initial development of the resources were content for ownership to be assumed by Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) indicated that they would not be content to agree to this. The EIS wrote to Education Scotland in June 2018 to make this clear. The EIS offered, as one of the initial developers and joint owners of the resources, to publish the material on its website.

Education Scotland has therefore been unable to secure ownership of these resources. Education Scotland and the Scottish Government are content to agree to the EIS's request that as one of the original developers and joint owner of the resources, it is entitled to publish them. As with any educational resource, it will be a matter for individual local authorities and schools to determine if they would like to make use of the resources.

Education Scotland will write to all of the organisations who have been involved in the period of consultation to advise of this and to thank them for their contributions.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-19515>

and

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5W-19745>

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## Israel

**See “Israel-Palestine educational resources” under “Scottish Parliament written answers” in the Home Affairs Section above.**

## United Nations

### **Delegates Argue over Objectivity, Double Standards in Human Rights Council, as General Assembly Considers Annual Report**

While many Member States commended the work of the Human Rights Council as crucial in the promotion and protection of universal human rights, others expressed concern over its subjectivity, double standards and politicization, as the General Assembly took up the intergovernmental body's report ...

Providing an overview of the report, [Vojislav Šuc, President of the Human Rights Council] highlighted Council activities ... In May, the Council held a special session on the

deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. It decided to dispatch a commission to investigate all violations in the occupied Palestinian territory. ...

Oussay Aldahhak (Syria) ... condemned an attempt to deal with the agenda of human rights in a manner that serves the purposes of the Israeli occupation. He called for an end to the crimes and serious violations of international law committed by Israel and the "illegal alliance" in Syria that has destroyed cities and uses prohibited weapons against innocent civilians.

"These crimes do not find their way into the reports of the Human Rights Council because of politicization, selectivity and double standards," he continued, noting that his Government has "sent hundreds of letters" urging the Council to take note of particular situations. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12087.doc.htm>

### **Human Rights Council Central to Tackling Most Serious Violations, Its President Tells Third Committee, as Delegates Decry 'Stark Divides', Double Standards**

When the floor opened for questions ...

The representative of United States ... [said] The overall credibility of the Council remains tarnished, he said, citing its "institutional bias" against Israel, amongst other factors. ...

An observer from the State of Palestine asked for updates on the Commission of Inquiry to ensure there would be an end to impunity and justice on the ground. ...

The representative of Syria rejected the politicization of human rights mechanisms to promote the interests of powerful States, which seek to hide violations perpetrated by occupying forces in the Golan Heights. ...

Mr. Šuc replied that he is working to make the Human Rights Council more efficient. He clarified that this is not a reform effort, because the Council functions well: its mechanisms bring results. However, there is room for improvement. He seeks to allow delegations more space and time to focus on human rights questions. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/press/en/node/264649>

### **Report of the Human Rights Council**

<https://undocs.org/en/A/73/53>

### **Addendum to the Report of the Human Rights Council**

<https://undocs.org/en/A/73/53/Add.1>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

#### **Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

#### **Online Forums Bill**

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.html>

## Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

## Scottish Parliament

### Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

**Reform of the legal requirements for divorce** (closing date 10 December 2018)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/reform-of-the-legal-requirements-for-divorce/>

**The future of civil partnership in Scotland** (closing date 21 December 2018)

<https://consult.gov.scot/family-law/the-future-of-civil-partnership-in-scotland/>

**2021 Census: Outputs Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland** (closing date 9 January 2019)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/dfp/2021-census-outputs-strategy-consultation-for-northern-ireland-document.pdf>

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