

# Political Affairs Brief

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

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## Home Affairs

### UK Parliamentary Questions

#### Food: Labelling

**Mike Freer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with Ministerial colleagues on the European Parliament's proposals to require food from animals which have not been stunned prior to slaughter to be labelled with that information, with particular reference to the likely effects on faith groups of the implementation of those proposals. [12136]

**Mr Paice:** To date, no discussions have taken place with ministerial colleagues on this specific amendment proposed by the European Parliament.

**Mike Freer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the European Parliament's proposals to expand the remit of EU food labelling regulation to include the provision of labelling information on methods of animal slaughter. [12154]

**Mr Paice:** The Government are still considering their position on this and the other amendments proposed by the European Parliament.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100907/text/100907w002.htm#10090832000015>

#### Food: Labelling

**Mike Freer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's policy is on proposals at EU level to include the provision of information on food labelling about methods of animal slaughter. [13776]

**Mr Paice:** The Government are still considering its position on this and the other amendments to EU food labelling regulations proposed by the European Parliament.

**Mike Freer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had on the effects on faith communities in the UK of proposals at EU level on the requirement of labelling of food from animals which have not been stunned prior to slaughter. [13777]

**Mr Paice:** No discussions have taken place to date on this specific requirement proposed by the European Parliament.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100909/text/100909w002.htm#10090912000105>

## Faith Schools

**Mr Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education whether the proposed requirement on new faith schools to admit at least 50 per cent. of their intake without reference to faith will be on a statutory basis. [10560]

**Mr Gibb:** Children of any or no faith should all have access to high quality local education. New faith academies, that do not replace an existing faith predecessor school, will be required to admit at least half of their intake without reference to faith, and this policy will be given effect through each new academy's Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State, rather than through legislation.

The same requirement does not apply to any new maintained faith schools that are established. Establishment of local authority maintained schools usually follows proposals that are locally approved, following assessment of local need, including the demand for faith provision.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0013.htm#10090816000028>

## Academies: Faith Schools

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what steps he plans to take to ensure the provision of a balanced curriculum for pupils in academy faith schools. [10483]

**Mr Gibb** [*holding answer 22 July 2010*]: All academies, including faith academies, are required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum satisfying the requirements of section 78 of the Education Act 2002 via their funding agreement. The Academy Trust must ensure that this includes English, mathematics and science.

The provision of a balanced curriculum is set out in the funding agreement. The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) is responsible for ensuring that open academies comply with their funding agreements. A model funding agreement for outstanding schools converting to academies is available to view at: [www.education.gov.uk/academies](http://www.education.gov.uk/academies)

**Mr Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education by what mechanism he will ensure that the selection and appointment of teachers in academy faith schools is compatible with the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010. [10485]

**Mr Gibb** [*holding answer 22 July 2010*]: All new academies, as with existing academies, will be governed by the employment provisions contained in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA). The SSFA permits faith schools, including faith academies, to discriminate on religious grounds in relation to certain staff and its provisions are preserved under the Equality Act 2010. Faith academies, in line with voluntary aided schools, may apply religious criteria to the appointment of teaching staff but not to non-teaching staff unless there is a genuine occupational requirement for them to be of a particular faith.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0013.htm#10090816000007>

## Cemeteries

**Andrew Gwynne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what progress the Government have made in the implementation of those recommendations of the Eighth Report of the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee, Session 2001-02, HC 91, on cemeteries which it accepted. [12046]

**Mr Djanogly:** We are currently considering what further steps might be taken in response to the Committee's recommendations. In particular, we are reviewing the case for re-using old cemeteries and updating the existing legislation. I will write to the hon. Member with details of the action that has been taken to date.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100907/text/100907w0004.htm#10090832000025>

## Community Relations

**Nicky Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what recent discussions he has had on policies to increase public awareness of different cultures, religions and communities. [13362]

**Andrew Stunell:** My right hon. Friends the Secretary of State and the Minister for Decentralisation met leaders from the main faiths at an event hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace on 16 July 2010, where the Big Society was discussed. I met a diverse faith-based audience when I spoke at the annual meeting of the Inter Faith Network for the UK on 8 July 2010. The Government are working to help create a Big Society where everyone, whatever their background, is able to contribute to Britain's prosperity and to play their part in a proud and inclusive society.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100908/text/100908w0001.htm#1009091000044>

## Scottish Government

**Delivering for Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2010-2011**

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/324109/0104294.pdf>

### First Minister to attend Papal Mass

... First Minister Alex Salmond is to attend the Papal mass at Bellahouston Park in Glasgow on Thursday, as part of a week of celebrations marking the Pope's historic state visit to Scotland. ... [He] said: "The coming days will celebrate not only the first ever visit by a Pope to Scotland as head of state, but also the shared history of the Catholic Church and the Scottish nation. ... the mass ... will be the spiritual high point of a week which will be a celebration not just for Scottish Catholics but Scots of all faiths and none."

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2010/09/10155906>

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## Israel

### UK Parliamentary Questions

#### Foreign Investment in UK: Israel

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the monetary value was of foreign direct investment from Israel (a) in total, (b) in each sector and (c) in each industry sector in each of the last five years. [10558]

**Mr Hurd:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority. I have asked the authority to reply.

*Letter from Stephen Penneck, dated July 2010:*

As Director General for the Office for National Statistics, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the monetary value was of foreign direct investment from Israel (a) in total, (b) in each sector and (c) in each industry sector in each of the last five years. (10558)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces estimates for UK Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) based on survey data collected by the ONS and Bank of England. Headline figures from the annual surveys are published in a Statistical Bulletin, "Foreign Direct Investment", which is available from the UK National Statistics website. The latest figures available at the level of counterpart country are for the year 2008.

Data on the inward investment flows and positions (levels) from Israel to the UK for 2004 to 2008 are provided in the attached table. Further breakdowns by sector and industry are not available because this could be commercially disclosive.

*Net foreign direct investment in the UK by Israel: United Kingdom, 2004 - 08*

£ million

	<i>Investment flows</i>	<i>Investment position<sup>(1)</sup> (level)</i>
2004	0	233
2005	442	724
2006	40	771
2007	30	855
2008	101	765

<sup>(1)</sup> Position at the end of each year

Source:

Annual Inward Foreign Direct Investment surveys

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0008.htm#10090745000053>

### Israel

**Hazel Blears:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to support co-existence education projects in Israel. [10743]

**Alistair Burt:** Our embassy in Tel Aviv is supporting the Hand in Hand Centre for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel. Our embassy has supported a range of projects through the centre including the development of new IT facilities, a sports field and a music room. The objective of this work is to contribute to a positive educational environment for Jewish and Arab Israeli children based on equality and co-existence.

**Hazel Blears:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on social equality in Israel. [10746]

**Alistair Burt:** Our embassy in Israel continues to engage with the Government of Israel and with Israeli civil society on social equality matters in Israel. The UK has also highlighted its concerns in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report on Human Rights 2009.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0009.htm#10090751000025>

### Israel: Overseas Trade

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has made of the cost of importing and exporting goods through the (a) Kerem Shalom crossing in the latest period for which information is available and (b) Karni crossing in 2006. [11996]

**Mr Duncan:** The Department for International Development (DFID) has not made an estimate of the costs incurred in exporting or importing goods through either Karni or Kerem Shalom crossings. It would be very difficult to make an estimate of these costs and there are a number of factors which may affect the cost, such as whether or not the goods need to be stored, and by whom the goods are being imported or exported.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0009.htm#10090751000027>

### Israel: Overseas Trade

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the effects of changes to access arrangements for workers and goods entering or leaving Gaza since the announcements of Prime Minister Netanyahu on 20 June and 5 July 2010. [11998]

**Alistair Burt:** According to the UN, a total of 1,048 truckloads of goods entered Gaza in the week beginning 15 August 2010, compared to 573 trucks for the week beginning 6 June 2010.

Despite the increase of imports into the Gaza Strip in recent weeks, ongoing restrictions on the entry of construction materials, as well as on exports, continue to hamper major reconstruction and development projects.

The UK, together with the EU and Quartet, will continue to press Israel to increase the capacity of the crossings for imports and exports and to allow the movement of people which are all vital to alleviate the dire situation in Gaza.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100907/text/100907w0004.htm#10090828000094>

### Israel: Expenditure

**Robert Halfon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department paid to (a) B'Tselem, (b) HaMoked, (c) Yesh Din, (d) Ir Amim, (e) Bimkom, (f) the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, (g) the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, (h) Gisha, (i) Association for Civil Rights in Israel, (j) Peace Now, (k) Mossawa and (l) Breaking the Silence in each financial year since 2005-06; for what purposes those payments were made; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's spending on each such programme or project undertaken by each such organisation. [11499]

**Alistair Burt:** The tri-departmental Conflict Pool and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Bilateral programme funds support the Government's aim of reducing conflict in the middle east and North Africa region in order to help safeguard British national security. Our Conflict Prevention programmes in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories are jointly managed by the FCO, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence. They work to improve the political environment in support of the peace process, including tackling difficult issues such as settlements and alleged human rights violations on both sides. Our Bilateral programme strengthens our relations with countries in the middle east and North Africa region. We work with both the Palestinian Authority to enhance their capacity for tackling violence and with Israeli institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Many of the initiatives we support work to promote equality and human rights, build trust between communities, reduce violence inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories and advance peace. The NGOs we work with have helped to raise awareness of Israel's obligations under international law with regard to settlement activity and human rights violations. They also work to ensure due legal process is adhered to by Israeli authorities. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of all programmes is a requirement for all our funding commitments. Since we began supporting these programmes there have been a number of changes to Israeli civil and military judicial practice and decisions, and increased public debate on these issues.

A vibrant, independent and diverse civil society is one of Israel's great strengths and we believe that continuing British support will assist in strengthening democratic processes. By raising awareness and creating an environment where people are able to learn more about the situation and realities on the ground, the projects we support play a crucial role in creating sustainable conditions for peace. Of those NGOs referred to in my hon. Friend's question, the following have been funded through our Conflict Prevention programmes (the Middle East and North

Africa Conflict Pool-MENA CP).

*B'Tselem*

Project purpose: Using film and video documentation as a tool for accountability to improve the human rights situation in the west bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Funding: 2010-11-£135,000 (provisional allocation).

*B'Tselem & HaMoked (jointly)*

Project purpose: To support freedom of movement for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories through legal and administrative action, advocacy and public education. Funding: 2005-06-£140,000, 2006-07-£150,000.

*Yesh Din*

Project purpose: (2006 to 2008) Using legal action and public advocacy to challenge and ensure compliance with due process within Israeli military courts. Project purpose: (2008 to 2010) To challenge Israeli settlement construction and increase Palestinian access to lands in the west bank through legal actions and public advocacy. Funding: 2006-07-£55,529, 2007-08-£74,256, 2008-09-£125,000, 2009-10-£142,000, 2010-11-£83,755 (provisional allocation).

*Ir Amin*

Project purpose: To influence the nature and quality of public policy debate and ultimately Israeli policy in line with political options for a sustainable two-state solution. Funding: 2005-06-£70,000, 2006-07-£100,133, 2007-08-£60,000, 2008-09-£127,850.

*Bimkom*

Project purpose: (2006 to 2010): To provide comprehensive information on the planning situation of Palestinian villages in Area C, to support the prevention of house demolitions and improve living conditions of residents. Funding: 2006-07-£11,366, 2007-08-£45,956, 2009-10-£22,978.

*Gisha*

Project purpose: To use legal actions and public advocacy to support free movement and access to goods, and to document human rights violations in Gaza. Funding: 2008-09-£70,010.

*Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI)*

Project purpose: (2006 to 2008) To raise awareness of Israeli obligations under international law to safeguard the rights of Palestinians in Hebron, through public advocacy and legal actions.

Project purpose: (2008-2009) To raise awareness of Israeli obligations under international law to safeguard the rights of Palestinians and to reduce incidents of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Palestinians in the west bank through public advocacy and legal actions Funding: 2006-07-£42,000, 2007-08-£36,742, 2008-09-£73,000.

*Peace Now*

Project purpose: To record, highlight and challenge settlement expansion activities, through legal action, public advocacy and dialogue with Israeli officials. Funding: 2006-07-£109,990, 2007-08-£52,696, 2008-09-£117,000, 2009-10-£100,000, 2010-11-£93,000 (provisional allocation).

*Breaking the Silence*

Project purpose: To raise international and Israeli public awareness of human rights violations in the Hebron area. Funding: 2006-07-£19,144, 2007-08-£32,856, 2008-09-£26,701, 2009-10-£56,455, 2010-11-£74,434 (provisional allocation).

Two of the NGOs referred to were supported by our bilateral programme funds. They were:

*Bimkom*

Project purpose: (2005-06): To investigate planning considerations of the route of the Separation Barrier and assist Palestinian communities to raise concerns. Funding: 2005-06-£30,000.

*Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI)*

Project purpose: To increase legal aid and advocacy work in cases of alleged torture and to support adoption of a human rights-based agenda. Funding: 2006-07-£15,000, 2007-08-£29,955.

Israeli Committee against House Demolition (ICAHD) and Mossawa have not been funded by either the MENA CP or the FCO Bilateral programme fund.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w009.htm#10090751000026>

### Israel

**Robert Halfon:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department paid to (a) B'Tselem, (b) HaMoked, (c) Yesh Din, (d) Ir Amin, (e) Bimkom, (f) the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, (g) the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, (h) Gisha, (i) the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, (j) Peace Now, (k) Mossawa and (l) Breaking the Silence in each financial year since 2005-06; for what purposes those payments were made; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's spending on each such programme or project undertaken by each such organisation. [11500]

**Mr Duncan:** The Department of International Development (DFID) has not provided funding directly to any of these organisations. However DFID, along with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence provides funding to the Conflict Prevention Pool (CPP). For details of CPP support to these organisations and the UK Government's view of their effectiveness, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer provided by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, (Mr Hague) of 6 September 2010, *Official Report*, columns 219-21W.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100908/text/100908w002.htm#1009091000147>

*The answer referred to by Mr Duncan appears immediately above this.*

### Palestinians: Imports

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent estimate his Department has made of the monthly volume of imports (a) required to meet the needs of the population of Gaza and (b) the volume of imports to Gaza in the latest period for which figures are available. [12014]

**Mr Duncan:** Estimating Gaza's import need is difficult. Most international aid agencies and NGOs use a benchmark of 11,228 truckloads per month or 2,807 per week. These figures represent the average number of truckloads that entered Gaza during the first five months of 2007, before Israel imposed severe access restrictions. However this benchmark does not include imports of materials needed for reconstruction following Operation Cast Lead. Gaza's population has also grown and fuel for the power station is now delivered by truck, rather than pipeline. The United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that during the period 8-14 August 2010, 1129 truckloads of goods (55 humanitarian and 1,074 commercial) were imported into Gaza through Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings. This is 40% of the 2007 weekly average.

Data on import volumes entering Gaza are published online by the UN at:

<http://www.ochaopt.org/GazaCrossings.aspx?id=1010003>

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w009.htm#10090751000033>

### Palestinians: International Assistance

**Caroline Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and Egypt to comply with their obligations to facilitate access to Gaza under the Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005 and UN Security Resolution 1860; and if he will make a statement. [11535]

**Alistair Burt:** The Government have made clear that the situation in Gaza is a tragedy and unsustainable. We continue to underline the need for implementation of the steps Israel announced on 20 June and to work with all relevant parties to secure concrete change on the ground. We also reiterate, to those concerned, the need to implement their commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 1860 and the Movement and Access Agreement of November 2005.

**Caroline Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has had discussions with his Israeli counterpart on changes to access that have occurred since the new Israeli access regime for Gaza was introduced following the statements of Prime Minister Netanyahu on 20 June and 5 July 2010; and if he will make a statement. [11538]

**Alistair Burt:** The UK has an ongoing dialogue with the Government of Israel at both ministerial and official level covering a wide range of issues including Gaza. We, together with the EU and Quartet have called on Israel to ease restrictions on access and enable a return to economic normality. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has also underlined the important role the Palestinian economy, whether in Gaza or on the West Bank, will play in contributing towards a viable Palestinian state living alongside Israel in peace and security.

**Caroline Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his Israeli and Palestinian counterparts on access for people and goods to Gaza since the statements of Netanyahu on 20 June and 5 July 2010; and if he will make a statement. [11540]

**Mr Duncan:** Neither the Secretary of State nor I have had any discussions with Israeli or Palestinian Ministers regarding access for goods and people into Gaza since 20 June. Department for International Development (DFID) officials continue to raise the issue of access for goods and people with the relevant Israeli and Palestinian authorities.

**Stephen Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on restoring the customs code for Gaza. [12949]

**Alistair Burt:** The UK has an ongoing dialogue with the Government of Israel at both ministerial and official level covering a wide range of issues including Gaza. We, together with the EU and Quartet, have called on Israel to ease restrictions on access. It is imperative that all parties now work together urgently to deliver real change on the ground. This will mean building capacity at the crossings, getting vital reconstruction projects up and running and ensuring that Gazans can export as well as import goods. We have not had specific discussions on a customs code for Gaza. However, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has underlined the important role the Palestinian economy, whether in Gaza or on the West Bank, will play in contributing towards a viable Palestinian state living alongside Israel in peace and security.

**Stephen Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the compatibility of access restrictions on Gaza with the Interim Association Agreement between the EU and the Palestinian Authority. [12950]

**Alistair Burt:** Two of the objectives of the Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Co-operation between the European Union and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority are to contribute to the economic and social development of Gaza and the west bank and to encourage regional co-operation towards peace and stability. The restrictions on Gaza clearly do not contribute to the achievement of these objectives. Along with our EU partners, we have called on Israel to ease restrictions on access and enable a return to economic normality. All parties must now work together urgently to deliver real change on the ground.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0009.htm#10090751000034>

## Gaza: Humanitarian Aid

**Caroline Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he has had discussions with his Israeli counterpart on whether goods requested for import to Gaza by humanitarian agencies not listed in the publication Gaza: Dual Use Arrangements, published on 4 July 2010, have been denied access. [11539]

**Mr Duncan:** Neither the Secretary of State nor I have had discussions with the Government of Israel regarding access for goods requested by humanitarian agencies for import to Gaza which are not on the dual use list.

Department for International Development (DFID) officials continue to raise the issue of access for humanitarian goods with the relevant Israeli authorities.

**Caroline Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he has requested information from his Israeli counterpart on whether any (a) humanitarian and (b) commercial items have been refused or delayed entry to Gaza by the Israeli authorities since the Israeli Prime Minister's announcement on 5 July 2010; and if he will make a statement. [11536]

**Mr Duncan:** Neither the Secretary of State nor I have requested information from the Government of Israel regarding humanitarian or commercial items that have been refused access or have been delayed. Department for International Development (DFID) officials continue to raise the issue of access for humanitarian and commercial goods with the relevant Israeli authorities.

**Stephen Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent reports he has received on (a) the access arrangements and (b) the daily number of laden goods vehicles transiting the Karni crossing to Gaza. [12842]

**Mr Duncan:** The only goods currently permitted through the Karni crossing into Gaza are those which can be transferred via the conveyor belt. This includes grain, animal feed, and aggregates. Statistics compiled by the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) show that 604 truckloads worth of goods entered Gaza through Karni between 1 and 23 August. With Karni currently operating two days per week, this equates to an average of 86 truckloads per day. Data on import volumes into Gaza is published online by the UN at: <http://www.ochaopt.org/GazaCrossings.aspx?id=1010003>

**Stephen Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he last made representations to the Israeli authorities on reopening the Karni crossing into Gaza; and what response he received. [12947]

**Mr Duncan:** Neither the Secretary of State nor I have discussed the Karni crossing with the Israeli authorities. In early August, senior officials from the Department for International Development (DFID) discussed Gaza with General Dangot, the Co-ordinator for Government Activities in the Territories. General Dangot cited security concerns as the reason for not fully reopening Karni.

**Stephen Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the highest number of import and export truckloads passing through the Karni commercial crossing between Israel and Gaza between November 2005 and June 2007. [12948]

**Mr Duncan:** The United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that the period of greatest activity between November 2005 and June 2007 was 4 to 17 February 2006. An average of 414 truckloads of goods entered and 62 truckloads left Gaza through the Karni crossing each day it was operational during this period.

**Stephen Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what reports he has received of the reasons given by the Israeli government for not reopening the Karni crossing; and whether he has made an assessment of the reasons for its continued closure. [12951]

**Mr Duncan:** The Government of Israel has cited security concerns as the reason for not fully reopening the Karni crossing. The UK Government are continuing to work closely with the international community to assist in delivering practical solutions to the many access issues currently facing Gaza.

**Stephen Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent reports he has received on the truckload capacity of the Kerem Shalom crossing point for imports and exports to Gaza, excluding fuel. [12952]

**Mr Duncan:** According to the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 924 truckloads of goods entered Gaza through Kerem Shalom in the period 8 to 12 August. The highest daily amount entering Gaza was 211 truckloads on 9 August. Since the beginning of August Israel has expanded the import capacity of Kerem Shalom to 250 truckloads. However there is currently no capacity for processing exports.

Data on import volumes entering Gaza is published online by the UN at

<http://www.ochaopt.org/GazaCrossings.aspx?id=1010003>

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the levels of access to Gaza for workers and for the import of humanitarian goods since Prime Minister Netanyahu's announcements of 20 June and 5 July 2010. [12021]

**Mr Duncan:** Since the announcements made by Prime Minister Netanyahu, the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported an increase in the amount of goods entering Gaza, including humanitarian goods.

Humanitarian organisations continue to report delays in processing approvals for a number of items needed for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of vital infrastructure. Difficulties in obtaining the necessary visas or permits for the staff of humanitarian organisations to enter or leave Gaza have also been reported.

The UK is funding a United Nations team to work with the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority, UN agencies and aid agencies to facilitate the transfer of goods and the movement of humanitarian workers.

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had in the United Nations on his Department's contribution to the costs incurred by UN agencies in (a) providing food and other humanitarian assistance to the population of Gaza and (b) transporting goods to Gaza via the Kerem Shalom crossing since June 2007. [13081]

**Mr Duncan:** Neither the Secretary of State nor I have had discussions in the United Nations (UN) about the Department of International Development's (DFID) contribution to costs incurred by UN agencies in the provision of aid to Gaza, or for transporting aid through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

DFID funds a UN team who help co-ordinate and facilitate the movement of aid and other necessary items into Gaza to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0005.htm#10090738000034>

### Hezbollah

**Ian Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his (a) Israeli, (b) Egyptian, (c) Lebanese and (d) US counterpart on bilateral counter-terrorist co-operation, with particular reference to action in respect of Hezbollah. [12577]

**Alistair Burt:** The UK has ongoing dialogue with these countries on a wide range of bilateral co-operation issues, including counter-terrorism.

**Ian Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with (a) his Israeli counterpart, (b) his Egyptian counterpart, (c) his Lebanese counterpart and (d) his US counterpart on Hezbollah's military capability in southern Lebanon. [12963]

**Alistair Burt:** During my recent visit to Lebanon, I raised the issue of Hezbollah's military capability with Foreign Minister Ali Shami and with Prime Minister Hariri, underlining the need for full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, and for tackling Hezbollah disarmament.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100906/text/100906w0009.htm#10090751000019>

## Hezbollah

**Ian Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on the (a) number and (b) range of Hezbollah's missiles. [12692]

**Alistair Burt:** We are concerned by recent reports of weapons transfers to Hezbollah, including Hezbollah's own claims that it possesses significant military capabilities. We do not have specific figures but assess that since the end of the 2006 Lebanon conflict Hezbollah has replenished its holdings of short- and long-range rockets and missiles.

**Ian Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on the number of Hezbollah members (a) in Lebanon and (b) who have been trained in Iran. [12693]

**Alistair Burt:** We do not have definite figures but Hezbollah has a significant number of members within Lebanon. Open sources indicate anywhere between 10,000 and 200,000 party members, however no distinctions are made between potential Hezbollah fighters, paid party members or Hezbollah party affiliates. We do not have any numbers for Hezbollah members who have been trained in Iran.

**Ian Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on Hezbollah's military capability in southern Lebanon. [12961]

**Alistair Burt:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I have regular discussions with our EU counterparts on the situation in the middle east and will raise Hezbollah if or when necessary.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100907/text/100907w0004.htm#10090828000091>

## UK Parliament Petition

### Blockade of Gaza

*The Petition of residents of Trowbridge, and others,*

Declares that the Israeli Army attacked a convoy of ships destined to deliver humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza; further declares that the six boats included over 600 peace activists from over 50 nations and 10,000 tons of humanitarian aid; notes that, in the aftermath of the attack, nine internationalists died and at least 20 were wounded; further declares that the humanitarian workers and peace activists were attempting to deliver assistance to hundreds of thousands of Palestinians; and further declares that the petitioners believe that this attack on civilians in international water attests to Israel's continued occupation of Gaza and that it is evidence of Israel's lack of commitment to a peaceful and viable solution for the Palestinian people.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to condemn Israel's blockade of Gaza, to withhold all military financing of Israel, and to stop all trade until Israel shows a commitment to non-violence and peace.

[P000857]

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100908/petntext/100908p0001.htm#10090822000012>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

### Britain's new ambassador arrives in Israel

Britain's new ambassador to Israel, Matthew Gould, and his wife Celia landed at Ben Gurion International Airport earlier today at the start of their posting to Tel Aviv. Ambassador Gould, 39, is Britain's first Jewish ambassador to Israel. ... Ambassador

Gould outlined his three goals: Explaining Israel to Britain; explaining Britain to Israel and forging a strong partnership between the two. Ambassador Gould said: "I need to try and understand Israel, talk to as many people as I can, understand what Israel is thinking and how Britain can best play a role ... I need to give a strong message from Britain that as Israel goes down the difficult path to peace, Israel isn't alone." Ambassador Gould went on to say, "I'm going to be promoting the strongest partnership I can between Britain and Israel. Britain is very clear: We regard Israel as an important strategic partner."

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressR&id=22850016>

## Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee

### **Trade Missions (Israel) (PE1308)**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/petitions/or-10/pu10-1202.htm#Col2826>

*Petition closed. For background information about the petition, written submissions (from the Scottish Government, and, jointly, FCO and BIS), and previous Committee consideration see <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/petitions/docs/PE1308.htm>*

## Trades Union Congress

### **Late composite motion: Palestine**

Congress condemns the Israeli blockades of the Palestinian territories, particularly the Gaza strip where there is a severe and ongoing deterioration in the living conditions of those living there.

The actions of the Israeli military, under the orders of their Government, in mounting a deadly assault on activists on the Mavi Marmara and other ships seeking to take humanitarian aid to Gaza, is particularly condemned.

Congress furthermore condemns the Histadrut statement of 31 May which sought to justify the Israeli action and the failure of the Histadrut to condemn settlement construction. Congress endorses the 3 June 2010 statement of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions, criticising the Histadrut and calling for an immediate end to the military blockade on Gaza and for a full independent inquiry into the attack on the Mavi Marmara.

Congress believes that the effective annexation of massive swathes of land by Israel in defiance of international law, using walls and checkpoints and destroying Palestinian homes in the process, is a deliberate strategy to undermine the viability of the West Bank and thereby the potential for an independent Palestinian state.

Congress calls on the UK Government and the EU to take much stronger political steps to ensure Israel abides by UN resolutions.

Congress instructs the General Council to work closely with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign to actively encourage affiliates, employers and pension funds to disinvest from, and boycott the goods of, companies who profit from illegal settlements, the Occupation and the construction of the Wall.

Congress instructs the General Council to bring to Congress a report on the impact of the boycott and investment withdrawal strategy, together with the outcome of the PGFTU/Histadrut discussions recently facilitated by the ITUC and TUC. Congress agrees to join unions around the world for maximum coordination internationally for active solidarity to end the siege of Gaza and for a free Palestine.

Mover: Transport Salaried Staffs' Association

Seconder: GMB

Supporters: UNISON, Public and Commercial Services Union, Fire Brigades' Union

[http://www.tuc.org.uk/the\\_tuc/tuc-18472-f0.cfm](http://www.tuc.org.uk/the_tuc/tuc-18472-f0.cfm)

## European Parliament

### **Debate: Draft bill on Israeli NGOs**

*contributions in English include:*

**Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck:** ... the new Israeli ‘NGO transparency bill’ – as it is referred to by the Israeli NGO which calls itself NGO Monitor – ... has been considerably softened, ... It is no longer required of all recipients of foreign funding for the purpose of political activities in Israel to register under the ‘political party’ register. It seems that these organisations are no longer at risk of losing their tax exemption status, and potential breaches of the law would be punished by a fine. ... The Israeli authorities and a number of Israeli NGOs may not have liked our reaction to the original bill, but, as we have seen, our actions have had effect. Having said this, the aim of the present draft still raises concern. Firstly, it seems to be directed at intimidating the EU and its Member States. In the background note that we received from the NGO which I already mentioned (Israeli NGO Monitor), we read the following, and I quote: ‘The EU and the Member States channel tens of millions of euros annually to a narrow group of highly-politicised Israeli NGOs through non-transparent processes. The degree to which European States are using NGO funding to influence Israeli political and public debates has no parallel in relations among democracies. Therefore greater transparency regarding foreign government funding is central to the Israeli democratic process and the public’s right to know.’ Needless to say a number of those allegations are absolutely untrue but they are very revealing. They reveal how strong the distrust is between a number of Israeli opinion makers and the EU and we need to do something about it. They also reveal how embattled important segments of Israeli public opinion feel; that is also a matter of concern. ...

**Štefan Füle, Member of the Commission:** ... Israel has an unquestionable tradition of a free, open, and vibrant civil society playing a positive role in many sectors, including monitoring human rights, both in Israel and in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as well as highlighting environmental and cultural issues. The EU has been cooperating with Israeli non-governmental organisations for many years and has a keen interest in continuing this fruitful cooperation, in particular since many Israeli NGOs have a reputation for professional excellence in their fields. This is why we followed with concern the debate in the Knesset on the bill on the ‘disclosure of funding from abroad’. ... in our view, the reporting obligations imposed on NGOs would still become unnecessarily stringent, not least because the current administrative requirements for NGOs in Israel already ensure adequate transparency of public funding. ...

**Richard Howitt, on behalf of the S&D Group:** ... in the week when there is the resumption of direct peace talks and on the day which marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year ... I deeply regret that the Israeli Knesset still intends to impose onerous and unacceptable reporting restrictions on all human rights organisations in receipt of foreign funds, including funds from the European Union. ... Such restrictions on international aid for human rights NGOs exist in countries including Burma, Tunisia and Rwanda. They should not be introduced in a country like Israel, and they are contrary to Israel’s obligations to support freedom of association under the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation. There are too few voices for peace and human rights on both sides of the conflict in the Middle East. Those who do speak out are often overwhelmed by others who seek the path of violence. ...

**Chris Davies, on behalf of the ALDE Group:** ... I refer to the letter from the Israeli Ambassador, Mr Curiel, to the chair of our Human Rights Subcommittee. It was my intention to welcome, and indeed endorse, his declaration that we should be prepared to support the principle of transparency in the funding of organisations. We would expect that here, and why not in Israel too. Then my eyes turned to one of the last paragraphs of his letter, where he expressed his resentment to any comparison being made between pluralistic Israeli civil society and some other countries. He uses these words: ‘Embarking

on such a wrong path may lead us all to dwell on Europe's own credentials past and present'. If that is not a reference to the Holocaust, I do not know what is. The implications are clear: you Europeans do not have the right to criticise Israel because of your past. You have blood on your hands. I was not responsible for the actions of the Nazis. I was not born at the time, most of the rest of us here were not born then, and this European Union was established to try and ensure that evil of that kind never took place again. I resent the idea that we have to turn a blind eye to Israel's appalling behaviour – in Gaza, the economic blockade, the occupation of Palestinian territory and infringements of human rights – all too often. I resent the idea that we should be forced not to ask why a people which suffered so much in previous centuries should now inflict such suffering upon the Palestinian people today.

*(Applause)*

**Charles Tannock, on behalf of the ECR Group:** ... like all sovereign states, Israel has an absolute right to supervise, monitor and regulate as it sees fit the activities of domestic and international NGOs which operate on its territory, ... Today's debate therefore appears suspiciously like another Israel-bashing exercise by the usual suspects, of the kind in which this Parliament indulges all too often ...

**Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE):** ... above all, what impressed me in that hearing in the subcommittee was the good spirit in which the Israeli and Palestinian NGOs work with one another. I think we should find new ways to support their cooperation, because that could play a very important role in the peace process. ...

**To read the full transcript of the debate see**

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20100908+ITEM-012+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

**Debate: Situation of the Jordan River with special regard to the Lower Jordan River area**

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20100908+ITEM-013+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

**Resolution adopted**

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0314+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

## United Nations

**Broad global support needed to underpin Israeli-Palestinian direct talks, says Ban**

Broad international support, including the participation of the United Nations and the diplomatic Quartet, is crucial for the success of the direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians that kicked off last week ... "Negotiations are the only way for Israel and the Palestinians to resolve all final status issues and realize their aspirations," he stressed. ... The Secretary-General today also called on the international community to "continue pushing for further measures to ease closures and address the needs of the population" of Gaza.

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35880&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>

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## Foreign Affairs

### UK Parliament Early Day Motions

**Simon Hughes (713) Proposed Burning of the Koran** - That this House condemns the proposed actions of American pastor Terry Jones who intends to burn copies of the holy text of the Koran on the anniversary of 9/11 which this year coincides with the festival of Eid; is concerned that such an incendiary act will only serve to alienate the peace-loving majority of the Islamic community; believes that images of such events provide propaganda for extremist groups which could put British citizens at risk in Afghanistan and around the world and reverse much of the excellent work they have done to build stronger relationships with the Muslim world; and affirms the commitment of this House and also all right-thinking residents of the United Kingdom to uphold the values of tolerance and respect for all faiths in this country and across the globe.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=41673&SESSION=905>

**Greg Mulholland (700) Dove World Outreach Center Church and burning of the Qur'an** - That this House condemns the outrageous and disgraceful proposal by the Dove World Outreach Center Evangelical church in Gainesville, Florida to hold a burn the Koran day; believes the event to be one that will fill all right-thinking, tolerant people of all faiths and none with utter disgust; also believes that holding the event on the ninth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks is highly disrespectful to 9/11 victims and their families, which included Muslims as well as people of other faiths and none and to others; is appalled by the Dove World Outreach Center's ignorance of the beliefs and values of Islam and by this despicable attack on Islam's faith and sacred text; calls on all true Christian churches to condemn this unacceptable and provocative act of religious hatred, remembering that both Christianity and Islam have the same Abrahamic roots; and further calls on the Government to express its condemnation of the event and support any actions taken by the American administration in reaction to the event and help to prevent a potential violent backlash for troops in Afghanistan.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=41673&SESSION=905>

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office

#### **Foreign Secretary comments on burning of the Qur'an**

After US pastor Terry Jones threatened to burn copies of the Qur'an on the anniversary of 9/11 in Florida the Foreign Secretary made the following statement:

“The burning of the Qur'an would be offensive not just to Muslims but to all supporters of religious freedom and tolerance worldwide. Eid is a time of celebration, charitable giving and family gathering. To seek to mar it in this calculated way would be selfish and provocative in the extreme. We hope that the individuals involved will reconsider and refrain from carrying out this act. This is of course a matter for the US authorities and we are in full agreement with the US administration's reaction.”

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22842436>

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## Relevant Legislation

\*\* New or updated

### UK Parliament

#### **Daylight Saving Bill**

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

## Face Coverings (Regulation) Bill

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

## \*\* Fixed Term Parliaments Bill

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

Report: Political and Constitutional Reform Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmpolcon/436/43602.htm>

## Identity Documents Bill

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

## \*\* Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill

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

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/063/amend/pbc0630809a.135-137.html>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/063/amend/pbc0630910a.143-144.html>

## Scottish Parliament

### \*\* End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

Stage 1 oral evidence session

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/endLifeAsstBill/or-10/ela10-0402.htm>

papers, including written evidence, for next Committee meeting

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/endLifeAsstBill/papers-10/elap10-05.pdf>

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## Other Relevant Information

### Quilliam

#### **Ed Husain speaks at annual conference of Union of Jewish Students**

... Quilliam Co-Founder and Co-Director, Ed Husain, addressed the annual conference of the Union of Jewish Students ... [on] 'Bridging the gap between Muslim and Jewish students'. ... He also warned about allowing relationships on campuses in the UK to be defined solely by events taking place in the Middle East, advocating the opening of a public space in which people can criticise Israel's policies without conflating this with advocating the destruction of the state itself. ... This session was followed by a smaller 'roundtable' discussion about the differences between Islam and Islamism. ... largely focused on matters such as differences of opinion amongst Islamists, what traditionally trained scholars have done to oppose Islamism and to what extent is Islamist anti-Semitism based on a literalist interpretation of Islamic texts.

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/index.php/component/content/article/688>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated

### **Policing in the 21st century: reconnecting police and the people**

(closes 20 September 2010)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/policing-21st-century/>

### **Taking action on rights, support and protection of victims of crime and violence**

(closes 30 September 2010)

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/news/consulting\\_public/news\\_consulting\\_0053\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_0053_en.htm)

### **Data protection legislative framework** (closes 6 October 2010)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/dpa-call-evidence-02-07-2010.pdf>

### **General Medical Council (GMC) Equality Scheme 2011 – 2014** (closes 15 October 2010)

[https://gmc.e-](https://gmc.e-consultation.net/econsult/consultation_Dtl.aspx?consult_id=140&status=2&criteria=)

[consultation.net/econsult/consultation\\_Dtl.aspx?consult\\_id=140&status=2&criteria=](https://gmc.e-consultation.net/econsult/consultation_Dtl.aspx?consult_id=140&status=2&criteria=)

### **Guidance on Concessionary Schemes for Surface Water Drainage Charges**

*Applies in England only* (closes 22 October 2010)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/surface-charges/index.htm>

### **Consultation on the change to policy direction for the Big Lottery Fund** (closes 29 October 2010)

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/7313.aspx>

### **Equality Act 2010: The public sector Equality Duty: Promoting equality through transparency** (closing date 10 November 2010)

[http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/402461\\_GEO\\_EqualityAct2010ThePublicSectorEqualityDuty\\_acc.pdf](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/402461_GEO_EqualityAct2010ThePublicSectorEqualityDuty_acc.pdf)

### **\*\* Equality Duty: Detailed Proposals - Consultation on Public Sector Equality Duty Draft Regulations and Order** (Scotland) (closes 26 November 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/324431/0104438.pdf>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charity SCO29438