

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Holocaust

Scottish Parliament Motion

S3M-7036 Jackson Carlaw: School Trips to Auschwitz—That the Parliament considers it crucially important to ensure that the Holocaust never slips from public consciousness; applauds the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust, among other organisations, for the role that it plays in educating young people about the Holocaust, and welcomes the Scottish Government’s announcement that school trips to Auschwitz, as organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust, are to be exempted from budget cuts resulting from efforts to eradicate the United Kingdom’s record debts.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/business/motions/Default.aspx?motionid=19799>

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Israel

Middle East Quartet

The Quartet expressed its strong support for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which can resolve all final status issues within one year. ... Noting that mutual trust and confidence are critical to successful negotiations, the Quartet reiterated its call on Israel and the Palestinians to promote an environment conducive to progress, including by refraining from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric. The Quartet noted that the commendable Israeli settlement moratorium instituted last November has had a positive impact and urged its continuation. ...

... the Quartet reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian Authority's August 2009 plan for building the institutions of a Palestinian state within two years. ... [and] took particular note of statement in the Economic Monitoring Report of the World Bank that “If the Palestinian Authority maintains its current performance in institution-building and delivery of public services, it is well-positioned for the establishment of a state at any point in the near future.”

The Quartet called for Israel to take further steps to facilitate Palestinian state-building and economic growth. The Quartet welcomed measures Israel has already taken to improve day-to-day life for Palestinians, including the easing of restrictions on movement in the West Bank and improved Gaza access...

The Quartet condemned in the strongest possible terms continuing violence against Israeli and Palestinian civilians, in particular the 31 August 2010 attack near Hebron, for which Hamas claimed responsibility while threatening additional attacks. ... The Quartet reiterated its call for the immediate release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. ...

To read the full press release see

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/116664.pdf

United Nations

Israeli and Palestinian probes into Gaza conflict not sufficient, say UN experts

A United Nations monitoring committee said today that Israeli and Palestinian investigations into the deadly conflict in the Gaza Strip that ended early last year have so far been inadequate. ... "The investigations, however, remain incomplete in some cases or fall significantly short of meeting international standards in others," he added in a news release.

The Committee, which issued its report today, said that while it received no response to its numerous requests for cooperation and access to Israel and the West Bank from the Israeli authorities, it did receive cooperation and assistance from the Palestinian side. "A lack of cooperation from Israel has hampered the Committee's assessment of investigations into serious violations of war crimes ... "Israel has published a lot of information on their investigations, but its refusal to cooperate with the Committee made it impossible to assess whether inquiries met international standards."

Despite the lack of cooperation, the Committee was able to draw some conclusions based on official submissions and numerous interviews with military experts and Palestinian witnesses with knowledge of Israeli investigations. "Israel conducted investigations into many incidents, but only four resulted in criminal indictments, one of which led to a conviction for a credit card theft," Mr. Tomuschat noted.

... the Committee met with members of the independent Commission set up by the Palestinian Authority to investigate alleged human rights violations committed by public officials in the West Bank. "The Committee concluded that those investigations conformed with international standards. However, the Commission was unable to investigate fully allegations of serious violations of war crimes occurring in Gaza due to difficulties the Commission faced in accessing the Gaza Strip," the experts stated.

The UN Committee was however able to assess the work of two Committees of Inquiry established by Hamas, the de facto authorities in Gaza. The first, made up of Hamas officials, "made no serious effort to address the allegations raised by the Fact-Finding Mission," it stated. The second body provided information on measures taken to redress violations in Gaza, but failed to substantiate assertions that political prisoners had been released and criminal prosecutions had taken place, the experts added.

The UN Committee will present its report to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council on 27 September.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36017&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>

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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>

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>

Scottish Parliament

**** End of Life Assistance Bill**

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

Stage 1 evidence to Committee

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/endLifeAsstBill/or-10/ela10-0502.htm#Col77>

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Other Relevant Information

Papal Visit

Chief Rabbi's address at the religious leaders meeting with the Pope

<http://www.chief Rabbi.org/ReadArtical.aspx?id=1678>

Pope's address to religious leaders

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2010/09/17/papal-visit-2010%C2%A0popes-address-to-religious-leaders-%E2%80%93-full-text/>

Pope's speech in Westminster Hall

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2010/09/17/papal-visit-2010-the-popes-speech-in-westminster-hall-full-text/>

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Consultations

** new or updated

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

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-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

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>

**** Charity Commission: Proposed withdrawal of paper forms for Annual Returns, Registration applications, and forthcoming Charitable Incorporated Organisations** (closes 2 December 2010)

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About_us/About_the_Commission/ols_consultation_intro.aspx

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