

# 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

#### Racism

**Lord Ouseley:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish national data on victims of racist incidents broken down by ethnicity; and, if they intend to publish such data, when.[HL1469]

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Justice (Lord McNally):** Since 1 April 2008 police forces collect and return data centrally on victims of racist offences (VoRO), but these data have yet to be published due to concerns over the quality and comparability of the data. Further joint guidance from the Ministry of Justice and the Association of Chief Police Officers was issued to all police forces to improve the collection of this requirement in July 2009.

The intention is to publish these figures, either fully or in part, as part of the annual statistics on race and the criminal justice system report which is scheduled for publication in the summer of 2011.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100726w0002.htm#1007268000770>

#### Communities: Preventing Extremism

**Lord Sheikh:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps are being taken to increase community programmes that promote interfaith dialogue and cohesion. [HL1383]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government (Baroness Hanham):** In the present financial year my department is supporting Faiths in Action, a small grants scheme through which grants of up to £6,000 are made to support innovative local inter faith projects. Information about the programme may be found on the website of the Community Development Foundation. My department will also be making financial support available for activities in Inter Faith Week this November.

We have made these spending commitments, which total over £2 million, because we recognise that inter faith dialogue and action do much to increase community cohesion. Future financial support for cohesion and other programmes is a matter for the spending review which will conclude in the autumn. Meanwhile, the Government are working closely with the Christian churches and other faith communities to ensure that they are involved in building the big society, in which individuals and groups take responsibility for improving their communities.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100726w0001.htm#1007268000710>

## VAT: Churches

**Luciana Berger:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme beyond March 2011. [8970]

**John Penrose:** I have been asked to reply as this is a heritage issue which falls under my remit.

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme has played a significant role in supporting repairs to places of worship and I am aware that a decision regarding the scheme's future would be appreciated by all involved. However, this decision can only be taken as part of the wider discussions about Government spending priorities in the next spending round.

The Government will hold a full spending review reporting this autumn, following a fully consultative process involving all tiers of government and the private sector.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100726/text/100726w0005.htm#10072715000030>

## Raoul Wallenberg (Memorial) Bill

**Lord Alton of Liverpool:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what files they hold on the Raoul Wallenberg (Memorial) Bill of Session 1989-90.[HL703]

**Lord Taylor of Holbeach:** The Government hold no files related to the Bill. It is likely that files relating to the Bill, from the 1989-90 Session of Parliament, have been disposed of.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100726w0002.htm#1007268000772>

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## Israel

### UK Parliamentary Questions

#### Data Protection

**Lord Kilclooney:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their stance on the European Commission's proposal to allow the transfer to Israel of personal data on United Kingdom and other European citizens. [HL1162]

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford):** The EU's Article 29 Data Protection Working Party has made a positive assessment of the level of data protection in Israel and concluded Israel guarantees an adequate level of protection for international data transfers. The UK Information Commissioner sits on this group. The decision to grant adequacy is taken only once it is clear, on the basis of a detailed assessment, that the data protection and privacy laws of the third country offer safeguards comparable to those in place in the EU. The decision will be voted on by member states.

The UK supports the decision to grant adequacy. Such decisions play an important role in ensuring that UK businesses are able to transfer personal data efficiently outside the EU, while ensuring that individual citizens' data will be properly handled and their privacy respected.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100726w0001.htm#1007268000716>

#### Israel

**Hazel Blears:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support his Department is providing to projects designed to promote equality between Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel. [10744]

**Alistair Burt:** Our embassy in Tel Aviv has provided over £40,000 over the last

year to promote equality and understanding between Israel's Arab and Jewish citizens. This includes support to the Abraham Fund Initiative for projects focused on the Arabic language, increasing dialogue, raising awareness and work placement initiatives. We have also supported the Hand In Hand centre's co-education project. We will continue to press the Israeli Government to respect and promote the rights of all minorities in Israel.

**Hazel Blears:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the teaching of Arabic in Israel. [10745]

**Alistair Burt:** Our embassy in Israel regularly engages with the Government of Israel and with Israeli civil society on education matters. Our ambassador in Tel Aviv last spoke to the Israeli Minister of Education, Gidon Sa'ar, about the teaching of Arabic in Israel in September 2009. We welcome the support his Ministry have subsequently given to an Arabic teaching initiative, supported by the UK, called Language as a Cultural Bridge. This initiative enables children from Jewish and Palestinian families in schools in the Galilee to learn more about each others culture and language.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100726/text/100726w0003.htm#10072644000016>

### Israel

**Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to secure full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 799 of December 1992; and whether they will raise the matter with the Government of Israel, and in the European Union and the United Nations Security Council.[HL1304]

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford):** UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 799 relates to the deportation by Israel of some 400 Palestinian civilians to Lebanon for a period of one to two years in December 1992. We understand that all Palestinian civilians deported by Israel to Lebanon were returned to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) in 1993 in accordance with Operative Paragraph 4 of UNSCR 799. Therefore, we judge that the Israeli Government have complied with the demands of this UNSCR.

The forcible transfer of people out of the OPTs for political reasons is illegal and in contravention of the provisions on deportation of civilians in Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

**Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether, when the United Kingdom established diplomatic relations with Israel, recognition was offered to a constitutionally Jewish state or to a state composed of all its citizens.[HL1403]

**Lord Howell of Guildford:** The Government accorded de jure recognition to the State of Israel in 1950 subject to two caveats. First, the Government could not offer de jure recognition to Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem. Secondly, the Government could not regard the boundaries of Israel (as well as those of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon) as the definitive boundaries. The UK's statement of recognition was not specific on the question of whether Israel should be a Jewish state, or a state for all its citizens.

The Government have made clear that we want to see a secure and universally recognised Israel living alongside a sovereign and viable Palestinian state, based on the borders of 1967, with Jerusalem the future capital of both states and a fair settlement for refugees.

**Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Israel about the applicability of the laws of Israel to east Jerusalem and about the jurisdiction of the courts of Israel there.[HL1404]

**Lord Howell of Guildford:** In line with UN Security Council Resolution 478 we do not recognise Israel's de facto annexation of east Jerusalem. We consider east Jerusalem to be occupied territory and as such Israel is subject to obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. We do not recognise the applicability of

Israeli law and jurisdiction to east Jerusalem, except where that application is compatible with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Israeli Government are aware of our views on these issues and they are shared by many members of the international community. The UK has a strong record of lobbying hard on issues relating to east Jerusalem; including on house demolitions, evictions and settlements construction, which we consider illegal and harmful to the peace process. We most recently raised Israeli policies in east Jerusalem with the Israeli Government on 14 July 2010 when our ambassador to Tel Aviv called on Deputy Foreign Minister Ayalon.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100726w0001.htm#1007268000749>

### Israel and Palestine

**Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East has been compensated for damage to its primary school in Silwan allegedly caused by Israeli excavations.[HL1271]

**Baroness Verma:** The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has neither requested nor received any compensation for damage caused by the collapse of a building at the Silwan Elementary School for Girls. UNWRA has said it does not have enough information to say for certain what caused the building to collapse. The school has now reopened as the repairs necessary to get the requisite administrative permit have been made. However, building work is outstanding and the laboratory remains closed.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100726w0001.htm#1007268000750>

### Palestinians: International Assistance

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 516W, on Palestinians: international assistance, what steps he is taking to seek to (a) enable exportation of permitted goods and (b) encourage the Israeli government to remove building materials from the list of banned items; and if he will make a statement. [10978]

**Alistair Burt:** I agree that there is a pressing need to alleviate the economic situation in Gaza. It is in Israel's long-term interests to create an environment where Gaza's economy can flourish. We have been clear that Israel should allow greater movement of goods both into and out of Gaza, while recognising Israel has real security concerns. My EU colleagues and I will continue to push for the export of goods and services from Gaza.

Israel has agreed to let in construction materials for use in building projects, such as the rehabilitation or reconstruction of schools and clinics, which have been approved by the Palestinian Authority and which will be overseen by the UN or international aid agencies. We understand Israeli concerns about the end use of dual-use items. However, although 31 such projects have been accepted in the last week by Israel, Israeli implementation procedures remain cumbersome and slow. We will continue to lobby Israel to streamline the process to ensure that that essential reconstruction work is not held up.

**Mr Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2010, *Official Report*, column 516W, on Palestinians: international assistance, what discussions he plans to have (a) at EU level and (b) with the (i) Israeli and (ii) Palestinian government on delivering real change; and what priorities he has set for his policy on Gaza. [10992]

**Alistair Burt:** Our key priorities are:

to ensure that Israel implements the commitments it has made regarding access and to allow exports out of Gaza;

to put into place workable monitoring systems for dual use items; and

that the Palestinian Authority has sufficient capacity to prioritise and

facilitate the entry of goods into Gaza;

and that non-governmental organisations are ready and work together.

We will discuss these priorities at the regular EU Foreign Affairs Council, as well as at the official level at frequent EU working groups. We also continue to discuss the need for concrete progress on Gaza at ministerial and official level with both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100726/text/100726w0003.htm#10072644000018>

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## **Relevant Legislation** \*\* New or updated

### **UK Parliament**

#### **\*\* Academies Bill**

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

Committee Stage, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100726/debtext/100726-0002.htm#10072611000001>

Committee Proceedings

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/057/pro0570726p.41-46.html>

Third Reading, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100726/debtext/100726-0004.htm>

#### **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>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated

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

(closing date 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**

(closing date 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>

### **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>

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