

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Scottish Courts

Some time ago the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) reported a series of antisemitic postings on the comment pages of the "Scotsman" website. The worst of these was:

"Jews are not fit to breathe our air. They must be attacked wherever you see them: throw rocks at their ugly hooked-nosed women and mentally ill children, and light up the real ovens."

The Press Complaints Commission responded that, since the editor had chosen not to moderate comment columns on the newspaper's website, he did not have any responsibility under their Code of Practice, and, furthermore, that their Code only prohibits offensive comments about an individual on account of their race or religion; it does not prohibit offensive remarks about a race or religion in general.

However, SCoJeC received very considerable support in its complaint from Scottish Ministers and MSPs, more than half of whom wrote to the editor to protest.

Moreover, the case was followed up by the police and Crown Office, with the result that a charge under the Public Order Act, with a religious aggravation, was laid against Mohammed Sandia in Edinburgh Sheriff Court in October 2009. At that time he plead not guilty. The case was continued until today, when he appeared in court again, this time submitting a guilty plea. Sentencing has been postponed until 10 November to allow the court to obtain community reports.

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Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Office notes concern at sentencing of Abdallah Abu Rahma

On 11 October Abdallah Abu Rahma was sentenced to 12 months in prison. The Foreign Office has issued a statement commenting on this development.

"We are concerned by the Israeli military court's decision on 11 October to sentence Abdallah Abu Rahma to 12 months in prison. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv has raised these concerns with the Israeli government. British diplomats, along with those from other EU member states, have attended all the hearings in Abdallah Abu Rahma's case. We are concerned that his continued detention on charges of incitement and organising and

attending demonstrations is intended to prevent him and other Palestinians from exercising their legitimate right to non violent protest against the annexation of Palestinian land to Israel."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=23015701>

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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>

Supplement to Votes and Proceedings

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/063/pro0631210p.51-56.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/063/amend/pbc0631210a.367-368.html>

Scottish Parliament

Certification of Death Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/58-CertDeath/index.htm>

End of Life Assistance Bill

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

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Consultations ** new or updated

**** closes in 2 days**

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

Certification of Death (Scotland) Bill (closes 18 November 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/hs/inquiries/CertificationOfDeathBill/CallForEvidence.htm>

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

Equality Act 2010 - Performance of the Public Sector Equality Duties in Wales (closes 17 December 2010)

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/equality/equalityact2010/?lang=en>

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Draft Code of Practice on Further and Higher Education (closes 31 December 2010)

http://live.ehrc.precedenthost.co.uk/cgi-bin/generate.pl?page_id= sx0666i4b&save=screen

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