

# Political Affairs Brief

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

## Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Holocaust](#)

[Israel](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Other Relevant Information](#)

[Consultations](#)

## Home Affairs

### UK Parliamentary Questions

#### Anti-Semitism

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary General of the United Nations on the worldwide incidence of anti-Semitism; and if he will make a statement. [R] [22010]

**Mr Jeremy Browne:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not discussed the worldwide incidence of anti-Semitism with the Secretary-General of the United Nations recently. But combating all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism, is an important part of the Government's human rights agenda. Internationally, Ministers and officials support work to tackle anti-Semitism within the EU, the UN, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and other multilateral fora.

The Government support the All Party Parliamentary Group Against anti-Semitism and its work to promote efforts by governments and parliamentarians to combat anti-Semitism through implementing the London Declaration, adopted at the London Conference in February 2009.

The cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism, made up of officials from across Whitehall and the chief executives of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Jewish Leadership Council and the Community Security Trust, is engaged in taking forward the provisions of the London Declaration. We look forward to the second Conference of the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism in Ottawa in November as an opportunity for all participants to assess the progress that they have made around the world. Sir Andrew Burns, the UK Envoy for post-Holocaust issues, will be representing the Government at the conference.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101104/text/101104w002.htm#1011046000016>

#### Topical Questions: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

**T4. [21671] Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con):** Given that the Department would like all animals to be stunned before slaughter, may we please have some food labelling regulations to mark halal and kosher products as such, so that those of us who object to ritual slaughter do not inadvertently buy such products in shops and restaurants?

**Mr Paice:** As my hon. Friend is aware and as the House fully understands, this is a highly emotive issue, and I understand the demand for labelling. As he rightly

says, the Government would like all animals to be properly stunned before they are bled to slaughter. There is a discussion at European level about food information regulations, but we do not believe that that is the right vehicle. Next year, we will consult on implementation of the European animal welfare regulations, and the labelling issue will certainly be examined as part of that. I recognise the strength of feeling to which my hon. Friend refers.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101104/debtext/101104-0001.htm#10110444000029>

#### **Academies: Faith Schools**

**Paul Uppal:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education whether religious schools which become academies are entitled to retain selective admissions criteria. [17997]

**Mr Gibb:** Existing schools with a religious designation that convert to become Academies will be able to retain their admission arrangements, including where those schools give priority to applicants on the basis of their faith. Any school converting, whether or not it has a faith designation, will be able to retain admission arrangements that select on the basis of ability or aptitude.

This reflects the underlying principle, secured through the Academies Act 2010, that schools convert to academies with the same characteristics they had prior to conversion.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101104/text/101104w002.htm#10110460000033>

[TOP](#)

## Holocaust

### UK Parliament Early Day Motion

**Tim Farron (960) From Auschwitz to Ambleside Exhibition** - That this House commemorates the three hundred Jewish children who survived the Holocaust who were flown from the Theresienstadt Ghetto to Crosby-on-Eden airfield on 14 August 1945; recognises that these children had been in the Nazi concentration camp system across Occupied Europe prior to their arrival in Britain; praises the post-World War II Government for accepting these children and aiding them in their recuperation; and celebrates the From Auschwitz to Ambleside exhibition at Windermere Library, which tells the stories of these children's lives and the support they received from the local community.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=41949&SESSION=905>

[TOP](#)

## Israel

### UK Parliamentary Questions

#### **Palestinians: Politics and Government**

**Guto Bebb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of sustainability of Hamas control in Gaza. [21843]

**Alistair Burt:** Hamas is physically, militarily and economically in control of Gaza and is increasingly using its rule to impose a reactionary social agenda. Their only significant challenge comes from even more extreme groups.

We believe that the best way to lessen Hamas' control is through promoting the

economic revitalisation of Gaza and pressing for significant progress in a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We have repeatedly called on Hamas to stop its interference with humanitarian operations in Gaza and to release Gilad Shalit.

We are also pressing the Israelis to ease restrictions on Gaza, enable the private sector to flourish, including through exports and the movement of people, and to press for a roll-over of the settlement moratorium which would allow direct talks to continue.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101104/text/101104w0002.htm#10110460000023>

### **Israel and Palestine: Deportations**

**Baroness Tonge:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the four Palestinian Members of Parliament being deported from East Jerusalem. ...

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** My Lords, east Jerusalem is occupied territory and its Palestinian population has rights under the Geneva conventions. Forcibly transferring people out of the city on the basis of political affiliation is illegal. This comes against a backdrop of other developments that appear designed to consolidate the annexation of east Jerusalem. Such actions erode trust between the parties at a crucial time in negotiations. The EU has raised the matter with the Israeli Government, while Her Majesty's ambassador to Tel Aviv has raised it with Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon.

**Lord Hylton:** My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for his reply. I should mention that I was one of three Members of your Lordships' House who visited three out of the four Palestinian elected Members when they had taken refuge with the International Committee of the Red Cross in east Jerusalem in July. The noble Lord referred to international law. If the expulsions take place, will the Government ensure that Israel suffers an appropriate penalty?

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** My Lords, the question of what an appropriate penalty is is a matter for delicate negotiations. We wish the current negotiations between the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to succeed and we wish to do nothing that will disrupt the chances of them succeeding, but it might be helpful to the House if I read a short part of Article 49 of the fourth Geneva convention, which states: "Individual ... transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory ... are prohibited, regardless of their motive".

It adds: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies".

**Lord Ahmed:** My Lords, is the noble Lord aware that the Israeli Government are planning to demolish in Jerusalem the entire area of Silwan, a Palestinian area near the holy places? Is he also aware that anyone who opposes this illegal act is labelled extremist and anti-state? Does he agree that breaching Geneva conventions and international law includes throwing people out of their homes and expelling them from their cities? The Israelis cannot expect respect from the United Kingdom when they do not respect international law.

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** My Lords, the Government are extremely concerned about some of the developments in east Jerusalem at present.

**Lord Dykes:** My Lords, are the British Government concerned that-ironically, given that the Israeli Government are worried about the possible detention of Israeli military officers in the UK if they visit here-literally thousands of Palestinian detainees are still held in Israeli jails, including many from east Jerusalem, most of them without due, proper or thorough legal process? That detention is equivalent pro rata to twice our prison population. This scandal has gone on for many years. Most people do not bother to take an interest in it. Will the British Government now deal with this urgently with the Israeli Government and make the strongest representations about early releases?

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** My Lords, the noble Lord raises the question of

universal jurisdiction, on which the Government will bring forward proposals early in the new year. This is not simply a matter that relates to Israel. Members will remember occasions when attempts were made to secure private arrest warrants against Henry Kissinger and the Chinese Trade Minister. On the number of people in Israeli jails, when we are attempting to build agreement for a two-state solution it does not help to have elected representatives of the Palestinian Authority in Israeli jails.

**Lord Janner of Braunstone:** Does the noble Lord acknowledge that both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority have serious and legitimate security concerns over the presence of Hamas leaders in east Jerusalem?

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** My Lords, we recognise that both sides have a range of legitimate security concerns. We also recognise that Hamas is a problem. On the other hand-I know that the noble Lord has said on occasions that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East-these were elected representatives of the Palestinian Authority. If we wish to encourage the growth of two democratic states alongside each other, sometimes we may have to accept elected representatives who are not exactly the sort of people we would like.

**Baroness Deech:** Will the Minister acknowledge that the influence of the British Government over Israel has diminished to a very low point, in part because of the apparent hostility attaching to the fact that Israeli officials are unlikely to be able to visit this country without fear of arrest, as well as because there appears to be a lack of comprehension of the existential threat that Israel faces, of which, possibly, these four MPs may be a part, as members of Hamas, which is still dedicated to the destruction of Israel?

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** My Lords, Her Majesty's Government are fully aware of the security needs of the Israelis and their neighbours, but we differ with some members of the current Israeli coalition on how best to develop a long-term secure Israeli state in a secure and peaceful Middle East.

**Lord Phillips of Sudbury:** My Lords, is the Minister of my mind in thinking that it is difficult to reconcile the existential threat, as the noble Baroness just called it, that Israel fears with a continued policy of rampant colonisation of the West Bank, which is not just illegal but is as provocative of extremism within Palestine and the Middle East as it conceivably could be?

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** Perhaps I might say that in previous Questions the noble Baroness, Lady Tonge, has suggested that 62 per cent of the West Bank is now controlled by settlements. The noble Lord, Lord Pannick, has suggested that the figure is actually 5 per cent. The Government's best estimate, based on local NGOs, is that some 42 per cent of the West Bank is currently controlled by Israeli settlements.

**Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean:** My Lords, we on these Benches recognise the security threats posed to the state of Israel, as the noble Lord has acknowledged on behalf of the Government, but, as he said in his Answer, the deportations of these four Members are illegal under international law. He said that representations have been made by the EU and by our ambassador. Was the Foreign Secretary able to raise this issue directly during his recent visit and has the Israeli ambassador been invited to the Foreign Office to discuss the matter?

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** My Lords, I have not heard from the Foreign Secretary exactly what he has been saying while he has been there, but before he left he assured us that human rights issues would be a major element in all his discussions in the region. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101104-0001.htm#10110446000789>

[TOP](#)

## 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>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/064/amend/pbc0640411a.1131.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

#### **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>

[TOP](#)

## Other Relevant Information

### Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

#### **Education ministry officials to discuss combating anti-Semitism through education at OSCE/ODIHR meeting in Vienna**

Education ministry officials and experts from across the OSCE region will meet on Monday in Vienna to discuss how to best combat anti-Semitism through education ... The meeting aims to identify successful approaches, share good practices, and discuss challenges in the field of combating anti-Semitism through education. ...

[http://www.osce.org/odihr/item\\_1\\_47480.html](http://www.osce.org/odihr/item_1_47480.html)

[TOP](#)

## Consultations \*\* new or updated

#### **\*\* closes in 5 days**

**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)

**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>

**The Future of the Citizenship Survey** (closing date 30 November 2010)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1756366.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](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](http://live.ehrc.precedenthost.co.uk/cgi-bin/generate.pl?page_id= sx0666i4b&save=screen)

[TOP](#)

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