

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Israel](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Consultations](#)

Home Affairs

UK Parliamentary Questions

Food: Kosher and Halal Meat

Lord Stoddart of Swindon: To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to require kosher and halal slaughtered meat to be clearly labelled and presented as such.[HL4410]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Henley): We have no specific plans to require kosher or halal meat to be labelled as such. However we do believe people should know what they are buying in shops or when they are eating out, and we are discussing with the food industry whether labelling and point-of-sale information can play a greater role in giving consumers an informed choice about the food they buy. This may include information about the method of slaughter.

This is a difficult, complex and sensitive issue and as the way animals are slaughtered is primarily a welfare issue, we would wish to see this considered in the wider context of animal welfare and method of slaughter labelling.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101130w0001.htm#10113060000685>

Ritual Slaughter: EU Action

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to oppose the provision contained in amendment 205 of the European Parliament proposal to require label information on the kosher slaughter method; and if she will make a statement. [26610]

Mr Paice: Generally we believe people should know what they are buying in shops or when they are eating out and we are discussing with the food industry whether labelling and point of sale information can play a greater role in giving consumers an informed choice about the food they buy. This may include information about the method of slaughter. However, we do not consider amendment 205 of the food information regulation the correct way to address this. Instead, we would wish to see this considered in the wider context of animal welfare and method of slaughter labelling.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101130/text/101130w0002.htm#10113057000046>

Livestock: Slaughterhouses

Mr Andrew Turner: To ask the hon. Member for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, representing the House of Commons Commission, how much meat of each type

procured by the Department of Facilities was slaughtered using (a) halal, (b) non-halal and (c) unknown methods in the latest period in which figures are available. [27627]

John Thurso: In the year to March 2010, the House of Commons Catering Service knowingly purchased halal meat to the value of approximately £1,500, or 0.25% of all fresh meat purchases. This was purchased expressly to cater for specific clients' requirements.

The remaining meat purchased by the Department, at a value of approximately £590,000, was ordered and received as non-halal meat, but as stated in the reply given by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough (Sir Stuart Bell) to the right hon. Member for East Yorkshire (Mr Knight), on 16 November 2010, *Official Report*, column 761W, this included an unquantified amount of poultry slaughtered using halal methods. Suppliers have confirmed that no other type of meat supplied to the House of Commons Catering Service has been slaughtered in accordance with halal or other special requirements unless expressly ordered as such.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101130/text/101130w0004.htm#10113071000008>

Muslim Brotherhood

Robert Halfon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations she has received on the activities of the London office of the Muslim Brotherhood; and if she will make a statement. [24583]

Nick Herbert: The Secretary of State for the Home Department has received no recent representations on the activities of the London office of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Mr Offord: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent reports she has received on the activities of the London offices of the Muslim Brotherhood; and if she will make a statement. [26353]

Nick Herbert: The Secretary of State for the Home Department has not received any recent reports on the activities of the London offices of the Muslim Brotherhood.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101130/text/101130w0006.htm#10113071000080>

Downing Street

PM's message for Chanukah

Prime Minister David Cameron has wished the Jewish community in the UK and around the world a "happy and peaceful Chanukah".

The PM said "I want to pass on my very best wishes to the Jewish community here and around the world for a happy and peaceful Chanukah. "The story of Chanukah continues to be an inspiring message of the power of hope to sustain people through the toughest of times, and the strength that we can find when we come together and focus on building a brighter future.

"I wish you and your families a chanukah sameach."

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/latest-news/2010/12/pms-message-for-chanukah-57735>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary comments on universal jurisdiction

Foreign Secretary William Hague commented on the proposed amendment to the arrangements for obtaining arrest warrants in respect of universal jurisdiction.

This is included in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill which was presented to Parliament on 30 November 2010. Under the proposed change the consent of the

Director of Public Prosecutions would be required before an arrest warrant could be issued to a private prosecutor in respect of an offence of universal jurisdiction.

The Foreign Secretary said today: "The UK is committed to upholding international justice and all of our international obligations. Our core principle remains that those guilty of war crimes must be brought to justice. This government has been clear that the current arrangements for obtaining arrest warrants in respect of universal jurisdiction offences are an anomaly that allow the UK's systems to be abused for political reasons. The proposed change is designed to correct these and ensure that people are not detained when there is no realistic chance of prosecution. It is now important that the amendment is considered by Parliament in line with normal constitutional practice."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=268996682>

Foreign Secretary William Hague's Chanukah message

Foreign Secretary William Hague sends his good wishes for Chanukah to the Jewish community in Britain and across the world.

"It's a great pleasure to send warm good wishes to the Jewish community in Britain and all over the world as you celebrate Chanukah, the festival of lights. This celebration of the resilience of the Jewish faith, of light over darkness, of freedom over oppression, is no less important and no less poignant than it was two thousand years ago. Chanukah is about courage, it is about hope, looking forward of course to the future and we certainly hope for peace and for continuing to strive for peace in a region that so desperately needs it.

So happy festival of lights, Hag Urim Sameach."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=264182682>

[TOP](#)

[Israel](#)

UK Parliamentary Questions

Israel

Lord Hylton: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are involved in negotiations with the Government of Israel regarding withdrawal from military positions in the village of Ghajar; whether they are aware of such involvement by any third party; and whether they foresee any consequential issues between Syria and Lebanon.[HL4358]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): We welcome Israel's recent announcement of their intention to accept proposals put forward by the UN and UN Interim Force in Lebanon to withdraw Israeli Defence Force troops from the northern part of Ghajar.

We have not been involved in negotiations, but have regularly called on all parties to fulfil their obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions, including 1701, and will continue to do so. Israel and the UN should now work together to agree practical measures to implement this proposal as soon as is possible.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101130w0001.htm#10113060000694>

Israel and Palestine

Lord Hylton: To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Palestinian Authority on the issue of text-books used in schools, of an anti-Israel or anti-Jewish nature; and with what result.[HL4068]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): We take seriously any reports of text-books being used to promote anti-Semitism. We also recognise this is a controversial area. However, recent independent studies have shown that the Palestinian Authority has made real

improvements to its text-books over the last decade and found no evidence of anti-Semitism. But at least one study has shown that both Israeli and Palestinian text-books could do better and teach something positive about the other side. We support that message.

We condemn all instances of violence and discrimination against individuals and groups because of their race, faith or belief.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101130w0001.htm#10113060000695>

Gaza

3. Mr Jim Cunningham (Coventry South) (Lab): Whether he has had recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on the application of international law in respect of Gaza. [27078]

The Attorney-General: I have had no discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on that matter.

Mr Cunningham: What is the position under international law when Israel intercepts ships carrying aid for Gaza? Can the Attorney-General tell me what the legal position is there?

The Attorney-General: The Foreign Secretary deplored the loss of life during the interception of the Gaza flotilla. He also stressed the need to establish the facts about the incident, without which, if I may say so to the hon. Gentleman, it is impossible to ascertain what laws if any might have been breached and, especially, what was done during the operation to prevent deaths and injuries. My right hon. Friend therefore welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General's establishment of a panel of inquiry into the interception and both Israel's and Turkey's commitment to participate. It is also vital that existing national investigations proceed swiftly, transparently and rigorously to ensure accountability.

Simon Hughes (Bermondsey and Old Southwark) (LD): What discussions and activities does the Attorney-General engage in with either Foreign Office Ministers here or Law Officers in other countries to ensure that countries such as Israel comply with their international law obligations and with United Nations decisions?

The Attorney-General: I certainly consult, and discuss matters with, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary as and when problems arise, and the hon. Gentleman will bear in mind also that my right hon. Friend has legal advisers in his Department who can help him with his work. The United Kingdom takes very seriously international law obligations and the maintenance of international standards of behaviour, and I can therefore reassure the hon. Gentleman that it is a matter with which the Government will continue to engage.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101130/debtext/101130-0001.htm#10113037000039>

Gaza

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they view Gaza as still being "occupied" by Israel under the terms of the Geneva Convention and the rules of "de facto control".[HL4184]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): Although there is no permanent physical Israeli presence in Gaza, given the significant control that Israel has over Gaza's borders, airspace and territorial waters, the UK judges that Israel retains obligations under the fourth Geneva Convention as an occupying power.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101130w0001.htm#10113060000687>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Human rights defender from Gaza advocates for women

“Women are being discriminated against because of deeply embedded cultural biases still prevalent in Palestinian society, which are then reinforced by the government, as well as the community,” according to Zeinab-Al-Ghonaimy, a human rights defender and lawyer from Gaza.

Ms. Al-Ghonaimy says that she was motivated to become a human rights defender by growing up female in Palestinian society, since she often witnessed women suffering discrimination. In 2006 she was an independent candidate for the Palestinian Legislative Council. Following this she committed herself to representing women in the courts. Now, as the director of the Center for Women’s Legal Research and Counseling, Al-Ghonaimy defends women’s rights in the Gaza Strip. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/HRDefenderGazaadvocatesforwomen.aspx>

[TOP](#)

Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

** Daylight Saving Bill

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

Research paper

<http://www.parliament.uk/briefingpapers/commons/lib/research/rp2010/RP10-078.pdf>

Face Coverings (Regulation) Bill

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

** Fixed Term Parliaments Bill

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

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/064/amend/pbc0640112m.1233-1239.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>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/026/amend/su026ia.htm>

Committee Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101130-0001.htm#10113039000890>

**** Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill**

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

Bill

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/116/11116.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/116/en/2011116en.pdf>

Part 4, clause 15, "Restriction on issue of arrest warrants in private prosecutions" relates to universal jurisdiction

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](#)

Consultations

** new or updated

**** closes tomorrow**

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%20us/About%20the%20Commission/ols%20consultation%20intro.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

Charity Commission for England and Wales: Views on Future Strategy

(closes 14 January 2011)

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/RSS/News/pr_strategic_review.aspx

Improvements to Criminal Justice Statistics (closing date 18 February 2011)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/statistics-cp171110.htm>

National statistics, published by the Department of Health about the experience of black and minority ethnic patients

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_121762

Prevent Review (closing date not stated)

<http://preventreview.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

[TOP](#)