

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Holocaust](#)

[Israel](#)

[Other Relevant Information](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Consultations](#)

Home Affairs

House of Commons Written Answers

Voluntary Work: Religion

Mark Hendrick [57402] To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which applications were approved under the Together in Service programme to support multi-faith volunteering; what evaluation has been made of the effectiveness of that programme; and what plans the Government has for another Together in Service programme to support multi-faith volunteering.

Marcus Jones: Details of each of the social action projects awarded funding through Together in Service scheme can be found here:

<http://www.faithaction.net/work/together-in-service/>

Faith Action, the body contracted to run Together in Service, commissioned a full external assessment of the programme, which was completed in July 2015.

My Department continues to fund programmes which support local faith communities, and others, to undertake social action, including Near Neighbours, Mitzvah Day and Creating the Common Good.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-13/57402/>

Hate Crime

Jack Dromey [58073] To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, with reference to the evidence from his Department to the Home Affairs Select Committee, on hate crime and its violent consequences, where the £60 million funding for communities to come together has been spent by region.

Marcus Jones: We have spent over £60 million under the integration programme since 2010/11 to support projects that help create the conditions for people to live successfully alongside each other. Since April 2014, we have funded over 30 projects which reached over 644,000 people, providing 14,997 volunteering opportunities and hosting more than 17,900 events, groups and classes. We do not hold figures on the allocation of funding by region.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-16/58073/>

The evidence referred to above can be read at

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/hate-crime-and-its-violent-consequences/written/44074.pdf>

House of Commons Point of Order

Hugo Swire: ... Many will be alarmed by the recent reports of attempts by a foreign Government to “take down” Members of this House, including a senior Minister. Given the very serious implications of this matter, what measures will you take to investigate it, not least because one party to the discussions, according to the press coverage, was, or is, at least partially a paid employee of this House?

Mr Speaker: ... I am not aware of anything that has happened that is a matter for the Chair. If it transpires that something has happened that is a matter for the Chair, I will of course consider what action to take. The matter of concern is serious—I do not dispute that for one moment—but it is important to be accurate in the use of terms and language. To the best of my knowledge and belief—I do not doubt the good intentions of the right hon. Gentleman—the individual to whom he has indirectly referred has not been an employee of this House. The individual concerned was an employee of a number of institutions and people. My understanding is that she has resigned from one full-time post and from another part-time post. The part-time post, which had caused her to work administratively with a Member of the House, has ended and the pass that was available to her is being returned. I think that is a pretty full answer to the right hon. Gentleman, which it is intended to be, and I hope that it is helpful, but I do not think that it would be helpful further to dwell on the matter now. I thank him for raising the matter, which is obviously of concern to him.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-09/debates/3F06A1A2-A026-4E09-8062-1D09575F9BEF/PointsOfOrder#contribution-CE3E2AF7-28C1-4381-B175-314DC9E89248>

[TOP](#)

Holocaust

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Bob Blackman (840) Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 – That this House notes that on 27 January 2017 the UK will observe Holocaust Memorial Day on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, where an estimated 1.1 million people were murdered; commemorates the six million victims of the Holocaust, groups subjected to Nazi persecution and the victims of subsequent genocides; further notes that the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 is How can life go on?; pays tribute to the commitment of Holocaust survivors who share their experiences with young people across the country; acknowledges the importance of the Holocaust Educational Trust's work in schools across the UK and in particular the Lessons from Auschwitz project, which has so far given over 30,000 students and teachers the opportunity to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau; recognises our shared commitment to challenging Holocaust denial, distortion and denigration; further pays tribute to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust for organising this year's Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations; notes that the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment will be placed in the corridor between the Members' Cloakroom and Members' Staircase between the hours of 2pm and 4pm from 16 to 18 January and 23 to 26 January; and urges all right hon. and hon. Members to sign the Book and observe the day, so that the appalling events of the Holocaust are always understood by future generations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/840>

[TOP](#)

Israel

See also the Point of Order listed in the “Home Affairs” section above.

House of Commons Written Answer

Israel: Palestinians

Ivan Lewis [58557] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to support the creation of an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Rory Stewart: The UK is supportive of people-to-people (co-existence) programmes that bring Israelis and Palestinians together to break down barriers and build trust. Ministers are assessing options for how the UK can do more to support work in this area.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-12-20/58557/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Minister Ellwood statement on Jerusalem attack

Minister Ellwood said: I condemn the horrific terrorist attack that took place today in Jerusalem, which has left four dead and several injured. My thoughts are with the victims and their families.

There can be absolutely no justification for terrorism.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-ellwood-statement-on-jerusalem-attack>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-03295 Jackson Carlaw: UN's Disproportionate Focus on Israel – That the Parliament welcomes the reported acknowledgement by the recent UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, that the UN has had a "disproportionate" focus on democratic Israel; notes that he stated that the volume of resolutions against Israel have "foiled the ability of the UN to fulfil its role effectively"; understands that, according to Israel's ambassador to the UN, in the past decade the organisation has passed 223 resolutions condemning Israel and only eight condemning the Assad regime in Syria, despite that country spilling the blood of its own people; acknowledges that Ki-moon criticised Israel for "occupy[ing] the Palestinian people", which it considers is indicative of a language predisposed only to the Palestinian cause; criticises the passing of what it sees as the controversial Resolution 2334 which, it believes, could embolden the boycott and divestment movement and have serious ramifications for Jerusalem and Judaism's holiest site, the Western Wall, and considers that a more nuanced approach, which recognises that the Israel-Palestine conflict is not a "black and white" issue, would see the UN viewed in higher standing.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-03295>

Council of Europe

Terrorist attack in Jerusalem, Israel: Statement by Thorbjørn Jagland, Council of Europe Secretary General

"After a series of terrorist strikes in Europe, now Israel has suffered an attack with a truck

deliberately being driven into a group of people, which seems to be the latest cruel method in the arsenal of extremist killers. I deplore the coldblooded attack on four Israeli cadets and convey the sincere condolences of the Council of Europe and its member states to the government of Israel, whose parliament has observer status with the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly. Our thoughts go out to the families of the young victims and to the people of Israel."

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/israel-secretary-general-condemns-latest-terrorist-attack>

United Nations

UN chief, Security Council condemn terrorist attack in Jerusalem by a Palestinian

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and the Security Council have denounced the terrorist attack by a Palestinian who reportedly rammed a truck into a group of Israeli soldiers in Jerusalem yesterday.

"The Secretary-General condemns the terrorist attack by a Palestinian assailant" ... [said](#) Mr. Guterres' spokesman ...

"Violence and terror will not bring a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict -- quite the opposite, ... All those responsible for such acts must be brought to justice, condemned and disavowed. Their acts should not be allowed to deter from the need for a renewed commitment to dialogue," ...

In a [press statement](#) issued overnight, the Security Council "condemned in the strongest terms" the attack and "reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security."

"Any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed," the 15-member body reiterated in the statement, underlining the need for those responsible for this reprehensible act of terrorism to be held accountable. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55925#.WHPI1rZ96nY>

UN agency seeks \$813 million to support Palestine refugees fleeing Syria and those in occupied territory

With Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – including East Jerusalem – and those who have fled the conflict in Syria, facing humanitarian crises, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East today launched an \$813 million emergency aid appeal.

Speaking to *UN News*, Pierre Krähenbühl, the Commissioner General for UNRWA said: "Palestine refugees are among the worst affected by the conflict. Over 95 per cent of those who have remained in Syria – 430,000 – are in critical need of sustained humanitarian assistance." ...

Of the requested \$813 million, \$402 is [targeted](#) for Palestine refugees in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This would allow nearly one million refugees in Gaza to receive food aid and provide rental assistance to 6,500 families who lost their homes during the 2014 hostilities as well as repairs for more than 50,00 families whose homes have been damaged or destroyed. It would also cover food insecure refugees in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. ...

The [remaining](#) \$411 million in the request is intended to provide humanitarian assistance, protection, and basic services to 430,000 Palestine refugees inside Syria, 30,000 who have fled to Lebanon, and almost 17,000 who are now in Jordan ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=55926#.WHPI1LZ96nY>

[TOP](#)

Other Relevant Information

European Court of Human Rights

By refusing to exempt two Muslim pupils from compulsory mixed swimming lessons, the Swiss authorities had given precedence to the children's obligation to follow the full school curriculum and had not infringed the right to freedom of religion

... Mr Osmanoğlu and Ms Kocabaş refused to send their daughters ... to compulsory swimming lessons as part of their schooling, on the ground that their beliefs prohibited them from allowing their children to take part in mixed swimming lessons. ...

The Court observed that the case concerned a situation in which the applicants' right to manifest their religion was in issue. It also noted that the refusal by the authorities to exempt the applicants' daughters from compulsory mixed swimming lessons had been an interference with the applicants' right to their freedom of religion, that interference being prescribed by law and seeking to protect foreign pupils from any form of social exclusion. It also pointed out that the States enjoyed a considerable discretion ("margin of appreciation") concerning matters relating to the relationship between State and religions and the significance to be given to religion in society, particularly where these matters arose in the sphere of teaching and State education. ...

Consequently, the Court found that, by giving precedence to the children's obligation to follow the full school curriculum and their successful integration over the applicants' private interest in obtaining an exemption from mixed swimming lessons for their daughters on religious grounds, the domestic authorities had not exceeded the considerable margin of appreciation afforded to them in the present case, which concerned compulsory education. The Court therefore held that there had been no violation of Article 9 of the Convention.

To read the full press release see

<http://tinyurl.com/hagcurn>

[TOP](#)

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/arbitrationandmediationservicesequality.html>

Assisted Dying Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/assisteddying.html>

Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/culturalpropertyarmedconflicts.html>

Lobbying (Transparency) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/lobbyingtransparency.html>

Wales Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/wales.html>

[TOP](#)

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes tomorrow**

Draft Referendum Bill (closing date 11 January 2017)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00507743.pdf>

**** closes in 3 days**

Introduction of the medical examiner role and reforms to death certification (Wales)

(closing date 13 January 2013)

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/introduction-medical-examiner-role-and-reforms-death-certification>

Welsh Assembly Inquiry into Lobbying (closing date 31 January 2017)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?id=236&RPID=1507974161&cp=yes>

Consolidation and revision of the school governance regulatory framework in Wales

(closing date 17 February 2017)

<https://consultations.gov.wales/consultations/consolidation-and-revision-school-governance-regulatory-framework-wales>

Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation: increasing numbers of successful donations (Scotland) (closing date 14 March 2017)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00511160.pdf>

**** Workplace Diversity (Wales)** (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

[TOP](#)

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SCO29438