

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

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UK Parliament Early Day Motion

John Mann (870) Adoption of a formal definition of anti-semitism – That this House welcomes the Prime Minister's announcement of 12 December 2016 that Britain will adopt a formal definition of anti-Semitism in response to the work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA); recognises that a recommendation formally to adopt a definition was first made in the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism report of 2006; further welcomes the stated cross-party support for the definition, including from the Leader of the Opposition; congratulates the IHRA and its 31 member countries for adopting the definition; supports efforts to ensure wider adoption of the definition across the continent at the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe and elsewhere; believes that a single definition will help identification of anti-Semitism; further recognises that police forces have for some time already used the definition for training purposes; welcomes the Government's update report on progress made in addressing the recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Semitism report of 2015; and calls on all political parties and other organisations formally to adopt the definition and use it to take action against anti-Semitism.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/870>

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Holocaust

Welsh Assembly Statement of Opinion

Lynne Neagle (OPIN-2017-0030) Holocaust Memorial Day 2017: How can life go on? – This Assembly: a) commends the events taking place across Wales to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 (27/01/17); b) welcomes the opportunity for people to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides, in order to create a safer, better future; c) supports the work of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust which seeks to create a future free from the dangers of hatred, division and persecution; and d) supports this year's theme of "How can life go on?" – Supporting survivors and communities to rebuild.

Israel

House of Commons introduction of Private Member's Bill

Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)

Joan Ryan: I beg to move, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require the Secretary of State to promote the establishment of an International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace to support coexistence projects and civil society programmes; and for connected purposes.

As the House knows, recent weeks have seen a flurry of activity on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: a UN Security Council resolution; a major speech by the US Secretary of State John Kerry; and a further peace conference in Paris last weekend.

The barriers to a two-state solution are well known. As a strong friend of Israel, I admit freely, but with great regret, that these include the expansion of settlements on the west bank. Settlement building is wrong. It threatens the viability of a future Palestinian state—the case for which is unarguable. It does immense damage to Israel's standing in the world, and, over time, it will put at risk that which is most precious about Israel's character: its Jewish and democratic character.

However, as Secretary of State Kerry stated clearly, this is not to say “that the settlements are the whole or even the primary cause of this conflict.”

There is also the incitement tolerated, and, in many cases, perpetrated by the Palestinian Authority. I am talking about the payment of “salaries” to those convicted of terrorist offences, and the naming of schools, streets and sports tournaments after so-called martyrs, thereby glorifying their violence. Then there is the greatest barrier of all: the rejectionist, anti-Semitic ideology of Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, which denies Israel's very right to exist, and the terrorism that inevitably flows from it.

My Bill today is not intended to downplay the importance of those barriers, although it will help to address some of the pernicious consequences arising from them. Instead, my Bill recognises that, as the example of Northern Ireland taught us, any peace process needs a political dimension, an economic dimension and a civil society dimension. Coexistence projects that bring together Israelis and Palestinians to advance the cause of mutual understanding, reconciliation and trust represent that civil society dimension. ...

Although 59% of Israelis and 51% of Palestinians still support a two-state solution, these already slim majorities are fragile, threatened by fear and distrust between the two peoples. Thus 89% of Palestinians believe Israeli Jews are untrustworthy; a feeling that is reciprocated by 68% of the latter. At the same time, 65% of Israeli Jews fear Palestinians and 45% of Palestinians fear Israeli Jews. ...

... my Bill requires the Government to promote the establishment of the proposed international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace. This has been designed by the Alliance for Middle East Peace, a coalition of more than 90 organisations building people-to-people co-operation and coexistence. The fund aims to leverage and increase public and private contributions worldwide, funding civil society projects and joint economic development that promote coexistence, peace and reconciliation. ...

We know that the coexistence projects in Israel and Palestine work. After two decades, there is now a significant body of evidence, based on academic and governmental evaluations, indicating the impact that coexistence projects can have. ...

The late Shimon Peres, one of Israel's founding fathers and most indefatigable peacemakers, once said: "The way to make peace is not through governments. It is through people."

He knew that, even in the most challenging of times, we must never give up on the search for peace. By supporting my Bill, the House can underline its support for that search.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That Joan Ryan, Ian Austin, Mrs Louise Ellman, Stephen Kinnock, Catherine McKinnell, Stephen Twigg, Chris Davies, Sir Eric Pickles, Will Quince, Paul Scully, Craig Tracey and Mr Alistair Carmichael present the Bill.

Joan Ryan accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time on 24 March and to be printed (Bill 126).

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-18/debates/89C645E3-674E-488C-8223-D4C20634C1ED/PromotionOfIsraeli-PalestinianPeace\(UnitedKingdomParticipation\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-18/debates/89C645E3-674E-488C-8223-D4C20634C1ED/PromotionOfIsraeli-PalestinianPeace(UnitedKingdomParticipation))

House of Commons Written Answers

Gaza and West Bank: Overseas Aid

Richard Burden [59569] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the level of access available to humanitarian organisations operating in (a) Gaza and (b) the West Bank.

Rory Stewart: The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) recently stated that during 2016 there was a serious deterioration in access to Gaza for humanitarian organisations, due to the increased rate of permit denials for humanitarian staff applying to enter Gaza. In the West Bank, humanitarian access continues to be hampered by movement and access restrictions, but we have not received reports that there has been a significant change in levels of access over the last year.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-11/59569/>

Occupied Territories: Non-governmental Organisations

Richard Burden [59584] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what discussions she has had with non-governmental organisations funded by her Department that promote human rights and economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as part of her review of funding in that region.

Rory Stewart: The Secretary of State's full examination of DFID's programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) is an internal process intended to scrutinise current programming and make recommendations that will ensure maximum impact and value for money to the UK taxpayer. DFID regularly engages with human rights and economic development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that receive indirect funding through our access to justice and private sector development programmes. Discussions with these NGOs inform DFID's analysis of humanitarian and development needs in the OPTs, which forms the basis of our programming decisions.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-11/59584/>

Gaza: Reconstruction

Richard Burden [59585] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the pace and number of home reconstructions in

Gaza through the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism.

Rory Stewart: The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) recently assessed that since April 2016 the pace of reconstruction of homes destroyed or damaged during the 2014 conflict has slowed due to increased restrictions on the entry of building materials into the Gaza Strip, prolonging the vulnerability of more than 10,000 families who are still displaced. UNOCHA also assessed that by November 2016, 39 percent of the 17,800 housing units destroyed or severely damaged in the 2014 conflict had been rebuilt.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-11/59585/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Overseas Trade: Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge [HL4489] To ask Her Majesty's Government, following UN resolution 2334 (2016) concerning the illegality of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Occupied Territories, what action they will take in respect of trade between those settlements and the UK; and whether they intend to impose penalties on UK individuals, firms and companies trading in those settlements.

Lord Price: The UK and Israel have a strong and important trading relationship and we are firmly opposed to boycotts or sanctions. But we do not recognise the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including the settlements, as part of Israel and indeed the settlements are not covered by the current EU-Israel Association Agreement which governs our trade with Israel.

A just and lasting resolution that ends the occupation and delivers peace for both Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. The UK remains focused on achieving a two-state solution and we continue to believe that the best way to achieve this is through negotiations between the parties.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-10/HL4489/>

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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>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

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

** Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)

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

First Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-18/debates/89C645E3-674E-488C-8223-D4C20634C1ED/PromotionOfIsraeli-PalestinianPeace\(UnitedKingdomParticipation\)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-01-18/debates/89C645E3-674E-488C-8223-D4C20634C1ED/PromotionOfIsraeli-PalestinianPeace(UnitedKingdomParticipation))

** Wales Bill

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

Third Reading, House of Lords

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-01-18/debates/81540F03-3A6C-4C96-A873-3CB2ABF7658E/WalesBill>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

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>

Racism at work (closing date 27 February 2017)

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

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>

Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill (closing date 10 April 2017)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/adoption-and-children-northern-ireland-bill>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

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

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