

# Political Affairs Digest

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

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### **Voluntary Work: Discrimination**

**Daniel Zeichner** [62447] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if she will amend the Equality Act 2010, or bring forward new legislation, to protect volunteers from encountering discrimination in the workplace.

**Caroline Dinenage:** Volunteers are not covered by the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) because they do not meet the definition of an employee under the Act, a position confirmed by the Supreme Court in the case of *X v Mid Sussex Citizens Advice Bureau* [2012]. We have no plans to change this.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-31/62447/>

*A summary of the judgment referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2011-0112-press-summary.pdf>

*and the judgment can be read at*

<https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2011-0112-judgment.pdf>

### Northern Ireland Executive

#### **Minority Ethnic Development Fund 2017/18**

The Minority Ethnic Development Fund provides support for voluntary and community organisations working with minority ethnic people and groups. The aim of the Fund is to assist minority ethnic and local community organisations to promote good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds.

#### **Guidance Notes**

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/medf-guidance-notes-2017-18.pdf>

#### **Application Form**

<https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/execoffice/medf-2017-18-application-form.PDF>

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## House of Commons Written Answers

### Israel: Bedouin

**Lyn Brown** [62452] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representation he has made to the Israeli Government on the protection of homes of villagers in Umm al-Hiran.

**Tobias Ellwood:** We have highlighted the significant interest in this issue in the UK with the Israeli authorities, and called on the Israeli authorities and Bedouin community to work together to find a solution that meets the needs and respects the rights of the people affected. This should include a robust planning process that adequately consults and addresses the needs of Israel's Bedouin communities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-31/62452/>

### Israel: Bedouin

**Lyn Brown** [62456] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle the situation in Umm al-Hiran, South Israel.

**Tobias Ellwood:** The UK is concerned by recent reports of violence in the Negev Bedouin village of Umm al-Hiran in Israel. We continue to encourage the Israeli authorities and Bedouin communities to engage in dialogue to agree a satisfactory solution to the issue, respecting the equality of all of Israel's citizens.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-31/62456/>

### Israel: Bedouin

**Lyn Brown** [62587] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Israeli Government on protecting the human rights of Bedouin villagers living in Israel; and if he will make a statement.

**Tobias Ellwood:** We continue to encourage the Israeli authorities and Bedouin communities to engage in dialogue to agree a satisfactory solution to the issue, respecting the equality of all of Israel's citizens. This should include a robust planning process that adequately consults and addresses the needs of Israel's Bedouin communities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-31/62587/>

### Israel: Bedouin

**Lyn Brown** [62588] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the cessation of the demolition of the village of Umm al-Hiran in southern Israel.

**Tobias Ellwood:** We understand that the Israeli authorities have issued a demolition order against the village. We continue to encourage the Israeli authorities and Bedouin communities to engage in dialogue to agree a satisfactory solution to the issue, respecting the equality of all of Israel's citizens.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-31/62588/>

### Overseas Trade: Occupied Territories

**Barry Sheerman** [62461] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will publish and promote a stronger set of guidelines to businesses and banks to ensure they respect international law and human rights in their dealings with

Israeli businesses operating in occupied territory.

**Tobias Ellwood:** In December 2013 we placed advice online to raise awareness of the key security and political risks which UK businesses may face when operating abroad, including in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This includes guidance on Israeli settlements. There are currently no plans to update this guidance.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-31/62461/>

*The advice relating to Israel referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-israel/overseas-business-risk-israel--3>

*The advice relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territories referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-palestinian-territories/overseas-business-risk-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

### **Overseas Trade: Israeli Settlements**

**Barry Sheerman** [62462] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, if he will support measures by the UN Human Rights Council to draw up a database of all UK firms involved in trade or financial dealings with illegal settlements in coordination with the EU and UN.

**Tobias Ellwood:** The UK, alongside our EU partners abstained on a vote about proposals for a database at vote at the UN Human Rights Council in March 2016 . The database has not yet been finalised.

In December 2013 we placed advice online to raise awareness of the key security and political risks which UK businesses may face when operating abroad, including in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This includes guidance on Israeli settlements. We are advising British businesses to bear in mind the British Government's view on the illegality of settlements under international law when considering their investments and activities in the region.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-31/62462/>

*The advice relating to Israel referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-israel/overseas-business-risk-israel--3>

*The advice relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territories referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overseas-business-risk-palestinian-territories/overseas-business-risk-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

## **European Union**

### **Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on the "Regularisation Law" adopted by the Israeli Knesset**

The European Union condemns the recent adoption of the "Regularisation Law" by the Israeli Knesset on 6 February. This law crosses a new and dangerous threshold by legalising under Israeli law the seizure of Palestinian property rights and effectively authorising the confiscation of privately owned Palestinian land in occupied territory. The law may provide for "legalising" numerous settlements and outposts previously considered as illegal even under Israeli law, which would be contrary to previous commitments by Israeli governments and illegal under international law.

In passing this new law, the Israeli parliament has legislated on the legal status of land within occupied territory, which is an issue that remains beyond its jurisdiction.

Should it be implemented, the law would further entrench a one-state reality of unequal rights, perpetual occupation and conflict.

The EU, also in line with recently adopted UN Security Council resolution 2334, considers Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal under international law and condemns the recent settlement announcements. As identified in the recommendations of the report by the Middle East Quartet, such settlements constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten the viability of a two-state solution.

The EU urges the Israeli leadership to refrain from implementing the law and to avoid measures that further raise tensions and endanger the prospects for a peaceful solution to the conflict, so as to reaffirm unequivocally through actions and policy its continued commitment to a two-state solution in order to rebuild mutual trust and create conditions for direct and meaningful negotiations.

[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/20104/statement-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-regularisation-law-adopted\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/20104/statement-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-regularisation-law-adopted_en)

## United Nations

### **Secretary-General ‘Deeply Regrets’ Adoption of ‘Regularization Bill’, Warning of Far-reaching Consequences for Israel**

... The Secretary-General deeply regrets the adoption of the so-called “Regularisation bill” on 6 February by the Knesset. This bill is in contravention of international law and will have far-reaching legal consequences for Israel. It reportedly provides immunity to settlements and outposts in the occupied West Bank that were built on privately-owned Palestinian land.

The Secretary-General insists on the need to avoid any actions that would derail the two-State solution. All core issues should be resolved between the parties through direct negotiations on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions and mutual agreements. The United Nations stands ready to support this process.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sgsm18429.doc.htm>

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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>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 9 days**

**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>

**Measurement framework for equality and human rights** (closing date 21 February 2017)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-measurement-framework/measurement-framework-consultation>

**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>

**The UK's policy towards the Middle East Peace Process** (closing date 30 March 2017)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/middle-east-peace-process-inquiry-16-17/>

**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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