

Political Affairs Digest

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

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House of Commons Oral Answer

Prime Minister's Questions

Eric Pickles: When my right hon. Friend met Mr Netanyahu earlier this week, did she impress on him that a lasting peace settlement can only be secured if young Palestinians and young Israelis can look forward to a job, a share in prosperity and a life without fear? Does she agree that that can only be achieved through face-to-face negotiations, and will she join the Israeli Prime Minister in pressing the Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority to engage in such negotiations?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend has made an important point. We continue, as a Conservative Government, to believe that the two-state solution is the right one. It means a viable Palestinian state, but also a safe and secure Israel. Of course, it is for the parties to negotiate: obviously, there are others in the international arena who are doing their work to facilitate an agreement in the middle east, but ultimately it is for the two parties to agree on a way forward.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-02-08/debates/65EEF8A3-AF8D-4389-911E-DB74DAB29F08/Engagements#contribution-5BA06750-098B-4D04-A3FB-FDD4BC43F099>

House of Commons Written Answers

Occupied Territories: Demolition

The Minister has issued a correction, highlighted below in bold, to his previous answer

Alan Brown [907180] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps she is taking to seek redress for the demolition by the government of Israel of structures in the Occupied Palestinian Territories which were built with assistance from the UK.

Rory Stewart: No structures directly funded by the UK **in recent years** have been demolished. The UK regularly raises demolitions with the government of Israel.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-11-08/907180/>

Occupied Territories: Demolition

The Minister has issued a correction, highlighted below in bold, to his previous answer

Alan Brown [53572] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development,

pursuant to the Answer of 16 November 2016 to Question 907180, on occupied territories: demolition, how many structures built with some financial assistance from the UK have been demolished by the Israeli government; and how much UK funding was provided for those structures.

Rory Stewart: As the answer to Question 907180 states, no structures directly funded by the UK in recent years have been demolished. Since 2009 approximately 180 structures funded by the European Union's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Office (ECHO) have been demolished or confiscated. The UK regularly raises its concerns about demolitions with the Government of Israel.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2016-11-17/53572/>

The answer referred to above is copied appears immediately above this question.

House of Lords Written Answers

West Bank: Water

Lord Hylton [HL5085] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will formally welcome the re-establishment of a joint Israel Palestine Water Committee for the West Bank; and what assessment they have made of this as a model for co-operation in the absence of any other peace process.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: We welcome the signing of an agreement to revive the Joint Israel Palestine Water Committee for the West Bank. If fully implemented, this agreement would be an important step toward preserving the two-state solution. We encourage further cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. This is critical to the viability of a future Palestinian state.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-30/HL5085/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL5091] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding reports of the death of a 17 year-old who was denied a permit to exit Gaza to receive lifesaving medical treatment.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this specific issue, we have consistently urged the Israeli Government to ease movement and access restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), most recently on 5 December. We are also supporting the UN Access Coordination Unit to work with the Israeli Government, Palestinian Authority and aid agencies to help facilitate humanitarian access in the OPTs.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-30/HL5091/>

Israeli Settlements

Baroness Tonge [HL5093] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel in regard to that government's announcement that a further 600 Jewish settler homes will be built in East Jerusalem.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth East (Mr Ellwood) issued a statement on 24 January regarding the announcement of plans to build 566 new settlement homes in East Jerusalem. The Minister also raised the issue of settlements with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister when they spoke on 10 January 2017.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-30/HL5093/>

The statement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-for-the-middle-east-statement-on-settlement-units-in-east-jerusalem--3>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL5094] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel following reports that Israel's High Court of Justice has decided to allow the Civil Administration in the occupied West Bank to demolish eight Palestinian villages in the South Hebron Hills affecting around 1,500 Palestinians.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: While we have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities, our Embassy in Tel Aviv has previously raised our concerns on demolitions and has repeatedly urged the Israeli authorities to provide a legal route for Palestinians to obtain building permits.

The UK's position on demolitions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is clear: demolitions cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians; are harmful to the peace process; and are, in all but the most exceptional of cases, contrary to international humanitarian law. The Fourth Geneva Convention is clear that the destruction of any real or personal property in Occupied Territory is not justified unless it is rendered absolutely necessary by military operations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-30/HL5094/>

European Union

Federica Mogherini speaks to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas

... The High Representative informed the President about the discussions at the Foreign Affairs Council on Monday, stressing the consensus on the longstanding European Union's policy on the Middle East peace process. The EU remains fully committed to work with the two parties and its international and regional partners on the two-state solution as the only way to end the conflict and move the peace process forward. The EU also expressed its opposition to the 'Regularisation Law' adopted by Israeli Knesset this week - settlements are illegal under international law and endanger the prospects for a peaceful solution of the conflict.

The High Representative and the President also discussed the EU-Palestinian relations and reconfirmed the commitment to further develop them.

To read the full press release see

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/20262/federica-mogherini-speaks-palestinian-president-mahmoud-abbas_en

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Foreign Affairs

House of Lords Written Answer

Lebanon: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge [HL5090] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Lebanon regarding reports of alleged violence against UNRWA staff and the civilian population of Ein El Hilweh Palestine Refugee camp on 15 January.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: The violence and instability in Lebanon's 12

Palestine refugee camps remain areas of concern for the UK. The violence that took place in Ein El Hilweh on 15 January was an appalling demonstration of the severe difficulties that affect daily life in the camp for both the civilian population and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) staff members. The UK values UNRWA's commitment to the welfare and development of Palestinian refugees, and the impact of violence on the safety of UNRWA staff members and their ability to deliver UNRWA services continues to alarm us. Although it is not the UK's position to routinely raise specific camp security incidents with the Government of Lebanon, Palestinian refugee issues are monitored closely and raised in our regular discussions with the Lebanese Government.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-01-30/HL5090/>

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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 8 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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