

# 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

#### Coroners

**Jon Trickett** [64333] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of changes in the level of funding for coroners' offices on (a) the backlog of coroners' cases and (b) the incidence of the delayed release of the bodies of the deceased.

**Oliver Heald:** The Ministry of Justice does not have operational responsibility for coroner services. They are funded and run by local authorities which are independent of central government and are responsible for managing their budgets in line with local priorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-17/64333/>

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## Israel

### House of Commons Written Answers

#### Gaza: Water

**Stephen Gethins** [63583] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Palestinian authorities on water quality in Gaza.

**Tobias Ellwood:** Our Consulate General in Jerusalem frequently raises this issue with the Palestinian Water Authority, a body of the Palestinian Authority. We have serious concerns about the quality of water in Gaza, and note that the World Health Organisation has assessed that 90-95% of water in Gaza is undrinkable. UK technical assistance has aided the feasibility study of a proposed Gaza desalination plant.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-08/63583/>

### **Gaza: Health**

**Stephen Gethins** [63584] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Israeli authorities on the quality of people's health in Gaza.

**Tobias Ellwood:** While we have not raised this specific issue, we have consistently called on the Israeli Government to ease movement and access restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv most recently did so on 19 January.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-08/63584/>

### **Israel: Peace**

**Tommy Sheppard** [64916] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic and development-related steps his Department is taking to support peace groups in Israel.

**Tobias Ellwood:** The UK has regularly supported pro-peace projects run by Israeli Non-Governmental Organisations. We are currently supporting a project to empower young Israeli religious leaders to strengthen support for peace in their communities. The Department for International Development is also developing a programme of support for people-to-people projects in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which will help Israelis and Palestinians work together to achieve tangible improvements in their lives and build understanding.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-21/64916/>

## **UK Visas and Immigration**

**Updated Guidance: Occupied Palestinian Territories: country policy and information notes**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/566222/CI\\_G - OPT - Security and Humanitarian.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/566222/CI_G_-_OPT_-_Security_and_Humanitarian.pdf)

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## **Foreign Affairs**

### **House of Commons Written Answers**

#### **Churches: Middle East**

*The following two questions both received the same answer*

**Michael Tomlinson** [64101] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to fund churches running social action programmes in the Middle East.

#### **Middle East: Non-governmental Organisations**

**Michael Tomlinson** [64124] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what progress her Department is making in widening the range of NGOs that support religious minorities in the Middle East.

**Rory Stewart:** All our support in the Middle East is based on an assessment of need to ensure that vulnerable people are not discriminated against on any grounds, including religion. In the Middle East our support is focused on partners who are operating at significant scale and who have a track record of delivering aid at scale in complex situations. We do not directly fund small organisations such as churches.

Faith-based organisations are eligible to access funding mechanisms to which DFID is a major contributor, such as the Humanitarian Pooled Funds in Iraq and Syria, and we encourage them to do so. We invite a range of NGOs, including Christian organisations, to meet us regularly at DFID to exchange views and discuss the situation in the region.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-17/64101/>

and

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-02-17/64124/>

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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>

#### **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

#### **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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