

Political Affairs Digest

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

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Holocaust

House of Lords Written Answer

World War II: Genocide

Lord Hylton [HL5735] To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the extent and duration of public consultation prior to the decision to site the National Holocaust Memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens; and what was the cost of that consultation.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: A nationwide public consultation was conducted in 2014 by the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission, which received almost 2500 responses. The resulting recommendation to establish a new National Memorial to the Holocaust with a co-located education centre, prominently located in central London, was welcomed by all main political parties. The costs of this exercise were not recorded separately.

The cross-party United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation, which advises Government in taking these recommendations forward, then, over an 18 month period, conducted a search of London for the best possible site for such an important project. More than fifty sites were considered and the Foundation found that by far the most fitting, prominent and powerful location for the new memorial and education centre was alongside parliament in Victoria Tower Gardens, a site owned by Government.

The Foundation is now consulting with local residents, as well as members of the public all around the United Kingdom, on the choice of design team to take the project forward. As with all developments, the project will be subject to the full democratic planning process and all the appropriate consultations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-03-01/HL5735/>

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Israel

House of Commons Business

Margaret Ferrier: Yesterday, the Foreign Office updated its current foreign travel advice for Israel with the following information:

“The Israeli Parliament passed a law on 6 March 2017, which gives authority to deny entry to foreign nationals who have publicly called for a boycott of Israel and/or settlements, or who belong to an organisation which has called for a boycott.”

Given the impact that the new law will have on British passport holders, including Members of both Houses, and given that no other guidance has been issued by our Government beyond that information, may we have a statement from the Foreign Office on how the application of the law will affect UK passport holders and UK foreign policy?

Mr Lidington: At the risk of stating the obvious, Israel, like every other country, is ultimately responsible for determining its own rules on immigration and on visits, but we are seeking urgent clarification from the Israeli authorities as to what the application of the new policy might be. In the meantime, we have updated the travel advice in order to give people as much information as we have at present. If any British citizen feels uncertain about a possible visit to Israel, we suggest that they contact the embassy. We will give clearer advice as soon as we get it from the Israelis.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-09/debates/1F318214-EE74-4C54-9889-FB73EB360E1E/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-54BBBC6D-66B6-4301-B6D7-0880CA6AAE1D>

Joanna Cherry: On a connected matter, in preparation for Fairtrade fortnight, I have had to make representations to the Home Office to overturn arbitrary decisions refusing visas to Palestinians wishing to visit Fairtrade organisations in my constituency. Organisations such as Palcrafts, Hadeel, Zaytoun and the Scottish Fair Trade Forum have all invited Palestinians involved in the production of Fairtrade products to the UK for Fairtrade fortnight. Unfortunately, some—including representatives of Canaan Fair Trade, which I visited on the west bank last year—have had their visas refused. Given that the Government and the Department for International Development are eager to improve British-Palestinian trade links, may we have a debate about how the Home Office’s intransigence in dealing with visas is hampering fair trade with Palestine?

Mr Lidington: No one would want to see genuine business visitors delayed or having a visa application refused but, as I said in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Jeremy Lefroy), there are checks that we expect the immigration service to carry out to ensure that our immigration rules are properly observed and that we are protected against the real risk of terrorism. Potential visitors coming from an area where terrorism is rife will clearly be subjected to those checks. I do not know what happened in the individual cases described by the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry), but if she has concerns about them, she is right to take them up with the Immigration Minister directly.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-09/debates/1F318214-EE74-4C54-9889-FB73EB360E1E/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-0643301F-5227-467C-963C-1D131E7B5388>

House of Commons Written Answers

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Joan Ryan [66573] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, with reference to her announcement on 16 December 2016 on future UK support to the Palestinian Territories, whether any of the teachers and other essential education public servants on the vetted list whose salaries are paid by her Department are (a) employed at, (b) oversee and (c) are responsible for the administration of the (i) Dalal Mughrabi High School for Girls in Gaza, (ii) Dalal Mughrabi High School for Girls at Al-Shuyoukh, Hebron, (iii) Dalal Mughrabi Elementary School for Girls near Hebron, (iv) Shadia Abu

Ghazaleh School for Girls in Gaza, (v) Shadia Abu Ghazalah High School for Boys in Jabaliya, (vi) Kalil Al-Wazir [Abu Jihad] Elementary School for Girls in Hebron, (vii) Abu Jihad High School for Boys in Arabe, Jenin, (viii) Abu Jihad High School for Boys in Hebron, (ix) Amin Al-Husseini Elementary School in El-Bireh, (x) Salah Khalaf Elementary School in Gaza, (xi) Salah Khalaf Junior High School in Gaza, (xii) Salah Khalaf Elementary School for Boys in Al-Yamoun, (xiii) Martyr Ahmed Yassin School for Boys in Jenin, (xiv) Abu Ali Iyad High School for Girls in Qalqilya, (xv) Martyr Nash'at Abu Jabara High School for Girls in Tulkarem, (xvi) Abu Ali Mustafa Elementary School for Boys in Jenin, (xvii) Abu Ali Mustafa Elementary School for Girls in Jenin, (xviii) Hassan Salameh Elementary School in Gaza, (xix) Hassan Salameh Junior High School for Girls in Gaza, (xx) Mustafa Hafez Elementary School for Boys in Khan Younis, (xxi) Mustafa Hafez School in Gaza, (xxii) Martyr Izzat Abu Al-Rubb High School in Jenin, (xxiii) Martyr Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam High School for Boys in Qaa'bad, (xxiv) Martyr Izz Al-Din [Al-Qassam] Elementary School in Jenin and (xxv) Martyr Saddam Hussein School in Yaabad.

Rory Stewart: UK funding contributes to the salaries of all vetted health and education Palestinian Authority public servants on the EU PEGASE list, including PA teachers in the West Bank regardless of which school they are employed in. No UK funding goes to public servants working in Gaza, including in schools.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-06/66573/>

The announcement referred to above can be read at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/future-uk-support-to-the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Palestinian Authority

Ian Austin [66575] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what her policy is on whether the parade held in Ramallah on 8 January 2017 constitutes a breach of her Department's partnership principles by the Palestinian Authority.

Rory Stewart: HMG is not aware of a parade held in Ramallah on 8 January 2017 that could constitute a breach by the Palestinian Authority of our partnership principles. We are aware of provocative actions by some Palestinians during the so-called 'Martyr's Day' celebrations around that time. Such action makes a culture of peace and mutual respect more difficult to achieve and the UK deplores incitement on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. HMG has a regular dialogue with the PA in which we reiterate the need to prepare their population for peaceful coexistence. We consider that the track record of President Abbas and Prime Minister Hamdallah shows their commitment to non-violence.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-06/66575/>

Foreign Travel Advice: Israel

... The Israeli Parliament passed a law on 6 March 2017, which gives authority to deny entry to foreign nationals who have publicly called for a boycott of Israel and/or settlements, or who belong to an organisation which has called for a boycott. You should contact the [Israeli embassy](#) for further information. See [Entry Requirements](#). ...

To read the full advice see

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

UN Human Rights Council: Religious Freedom

Alan Brown [66585] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to fulfil its UN Human Rights Council election pledge to stand up for freedom of religion or belief.

Alok Sharma: Her Majesty's Government remains firmly committed to the promotion and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in all countries. We regularly discuss issues related to FoRB with foreign governments. For example, we raise our concerns when practices and laws discriminate against people on the basis of their religion or belief. We also raise individual cases. We work to sustain consensus on the adoption and implementation of the key UN Resolutions sponsored by the European Union and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation at the UN Human Rights Council. We support projects through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Magna Carta Fund for Human Rights and Democracy. In October 2016, the FCO hosted a groundbreaking international conference to highlight the relevance of FoRB to global efforts to counter violent extremism.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-06/66585/>

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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

**** closes in 4 days**

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>

Reforming GCSEs, AS and A levels in biblical Hebrew (closing date 23 March 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-biblical-hebrew>

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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