

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 Written Answer

Imad Hamato

Ian Austin [68238] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Palestinian Authority on President Abbas' appointment of Imad Hamato as dean of the Al-Azhar institutes.

Tobias Ellwood: While we have not raised this specific issue with the Palestinian Authority, we regularly push the Palestinian leadership to tackle language that could incite violence or hatred, including anti-Semitic language. The UK abhors and condemns the use of anti-Semitic or any racist language.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-16/68238/>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary statement on plans for a new settlement in the West Bank

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said: The UK strongly condemns the Israeli government's decision to found a new settlement deep in the West Bank; the first such government decision for over 25 years. I am also disappointed that Israel plans to expropriate additional West Bank territory as 'state land', and press forward with plans for almost 2,000 housing units in spite of significant international concern.

These announcements are contrary to international law and seriously undermine the prospects of two states for two peoples. As a strong friend of Israel, and one prepared to stand up for Israel when it faces bias and unreasonable criticism, I urge Israel not to take steps such as these, which move us away from our shared goal of peace and security and make it harder to achieve a different relationship between Israel and the Arab world.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-on-plans-for-a-new-settlement-in-the-west-bank>

European Union

Statement by Federica Mogherini on the latest decisions by the Israeli government regarding the settlements

The Israeli government's decisions on 30 March to establish a new settlement deep

inside the West Bank, to issue tenders for almost 2,000 settlement units and to declare further land deep inside the West Bank as "state land" all threaten to further undermine prospects for a viable two-state solution, which remains the only realistic way to fulfill the aspirations of both sides and achieve just and lasting peace on the basis of a negotiated agreement between both parties.

The European Union reiterates that all settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. The European Union calls on Israel to end all settlement activity and to dismantle the outposts erected since March 2001 in line with prior obligations.

The European Union takes note of reports that Israel intends to restrict significantly future settlement construction in view of advancing Israeli-Palestinian peace. Affirmative steps are badly needed in order to reverse the negative trends that are imperilling the two state solution and thereby create a political climate conducive to resuming meaningful and credible negotiations. We expect declarations of intent to be followed by actions on the ground.

The European Union reaffirms its strong support for a just, sustainable and comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and peace and stability in the region, and will continue to work towards that end with both its Israeli and Palestinian counterparts, all other relevant stakeholders in the region - in particular in the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative, as we discussed at the recent Summit of the League of Arab States in Jordan - and with the rest of the international community.

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/23938/statement-federica-mogherini-latest-decisions-israeli-government-regarding-settlements_en

United Nations

Guterres voices 'disappointment and alarm' after latest Israeli settlement announcement

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today reiterated his support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, voicing concern about the latest decision to build a new settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

"The Secretary-General took notice with disappointment and alarm of the decision by Israel to build a new settlement," according to a statement from his spokesman.

"He condemns all unilateral actions that, like the present one, threaten peace and undermine the two-state solution," the spokesman added.

The UN and the international community have for years urged the establishment of a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security.

Mr. Guterres today reiterated the call adding that "that there is no Plan B."

The settlement noted also that settlement activities are illegal under international law and present an obstacle to peace.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56470#.WOEko3R945s>

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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>)

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**

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

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

Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law (closing date 18 July 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

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

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