

# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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#### Scottish Parliament Motion

**S5M-05645.1 Jackson Carlaw: Human Rights Violations in Palestine** – As an amendment to motion S5M-05645 in the name of Ivan McKee (Human Rights Violations in Palestine), leave out from "understands" to end and insert "notes that 2017 marks the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, when the UK Government gave official approval to the Zionist movement's aspiration for Jewish self-determination in the land of Israel; further notes that it also marks 69 years since Israel was invaded by its Arab neighbours, despite the adoption of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine in 1947 and subsequent Israeli declaration of independence; understands that, following the UN's decision to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states in 1947, over 800,000 Jews were expelled from countries in the middle east and north Africa; believes that, while up to 200,000 Arabs were absorbed into Israel after the war of independence in 1948, an additional 750,000 were displaced during the fighting, which the Palestinian people of today refer to as the "Nakba", meaning "catastrophe"; thanks the Ambassador of Israel to the UK, Mark Regev, on what it sees as his continued work in increasing links between Scotland and Israel, and calls for the resumption of direct peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians without preconditions in order to achieve a lasting peace, with a secure Israel existing alongside a viable Palestinian state."

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-05645.1>

**The Motion to which the above is an amendment can be read at**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-05645>

#### Church of Scotland

##### **General Assembly Call for 'Just Peace' in Holy Land**

The Church of Scotland General Assembly has called for a 'just peace' in Israel/Palestine, and condemned the expansion of illegal settlements on Palestinian land ... However, it stopped short of endorsing economic sanctions against Israel, after one of the Church's ministers in Jerusalem said that would amount to 'reckless endangerment' of its institutions and activities in the Holy Land. ...

Changes to the deliverance which hardened the language of condemnation of illegal Israeli actions and recognised the suffering of the Palestinian people were accepted, as well as one expressing 'deep concern in regard to Hamas's continued declaration ... that

Israel does not have the right to exist’.

However, part of a counter-motion from the Rev Tom Gordon which called for ‘the adoption of economic measures to pressure the state of Israel to comply with international law’ was rejected. The Rev Paraic Reamonn, minister of St Andrew’s Jerusalem, said that it could cause the Church to fall foul of Israeli laws against organisations calling for economic sanctions: “It could put all of our organisations in Israel at risk. I could be denied entry to Israel.”

**To read the full press release see**

[http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news\\_and\\_events/news/recent/general\\_assembly\\_c\\_all\\_for\\_just\\_peace\\_in\\_holy\\_land](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/recent/general_assembly_c_all_for_just_peace_in_holy_land)

**Embracing Peace and Working for Justice: A Joint Report of the World Mission Council and Church and Society Council on the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration**

[http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/39577/A\\_Joint\\_Report\\_o\\_n\\_the\\_Centenary\\_of\\_The\\_Balfour\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/39577/A_Joint_Report_o_n_the_Centenary_of_The_Balfour_Declaration.pdf)

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **OHCHR: Gaza Death Sentences Illegal**

OHCHR oPt has expressed its deepest concern at three death sentences issued by a military court in Gaza on 21 May 2017. Carrying out these sentences would amount to an arbitrary deprivation of life in violation of international law.

The three men were convicted of involvement in the killing of Hamas leader Mr. Mazen Al Faqhaa on 24 March 2017 and tried on charges of "collaboration with an enemy party" and "murder or accessory to murder". The special "field military court" was constituted solely for this trial, the first such instance since the Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2007.

The conviction and sentence of a "field military court" are final, allowing no possibility of appeal or plea for clemency, in violation of international law. International law sets very stringent conditions for the application of the death penalty, including meticulous compliance with international fair trial standards. These trials do not appear to meet these minimum standards.

We urge authorities in Gaza not to carry out the death sentences of these three men, to refrain from carrying out further executions and to curb the practice of trying civilians before military courts.

OHCHR opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances. We call on the State of Palestine to immediately establish an official moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21653&LangID=E>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

**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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