

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 Oral Answers

Ambassador of Israel to the United Kingdom (Meeting)

6. Richard Leonard (Central Scotland) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what issues were discussed during its recent meeting with the Ambassador of Israel to the United Kingdom. (S5O-01074)

The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop): Our discussions included Scotland's relationship with Israel, the Israel-Palestine conflict and issues relating to the Jewish community in Scotland.

I expressed the Scottish Government's concerns about the continued construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land, and the restrictions on Gaza. I also raised a number of issues that have been brought to my attention through ministerial and constituency correspondence, such as the rights of Christians, the restrictions on the gathering of the olive harvest in Palestine and other limitations on freedom of movement and other rights.

The Scottish Government will continue to encourage Israel and Palestine to work together to achieve a negotiated two-state solution to the conflict that respects the rights of all communities.

Richard Leonard: I thank the cabinet secretary for her response. In view of the Scottish Government's "Open Government Partnership Scottish National Action Plan", which notes the First Minister's claim that she wants an "outward looking Government which is more open and accessible to Scotland's people than ever before", will the cabinet secretary now publish the agenda and minutes of her meeting with the Ambassador of Israel on 18 May this year, and, for the same reasons of openness and transparency, will she publish any preceding or subsequent related correspondence?

Fiona Hyslop: I think that I was fairly open and transparent in my answer regarding what exactly was discussed at that meeting. The member has to reflect on the fact that, in relation to our discussions with ministers and ambassadors from other countries, we must respect the diplomatic space in which they can share their views with us and we can share our views with them. We will respect that.

I know that there is interest in this issue, so I have been quite clear and open about the agenda and the content of that discussion, which I have just relayed to the member.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10999&i=100501#ScotPa riOR>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-06014 John Finnie: Amnesty International Calls for UK to Ban Imports from Illegal Israeli Settlements

That the Parliament notes the launch of a new campaign by Amnesty International, which calls on the UK to ban the import of all goods produced in illegal Israeli settlements; understands that this campaign has been launched to mark the 50th anniversary of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip; notes the belief that hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of goods produced in Israeli settlements built on occupied Palestinian land are exported internationally each year, despite most countries around the world having officially condemned the settlements as illegal under international law, and calls for an end to the illegal settlements.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-06014>

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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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