

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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UK Parliamentary Question

Hamis: Internet

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what assessment he has made of the effects of Hamas's al-Fatah website for children on levels of community cohesion in the UK. [309798]

Mr. Malik: The Department of Communities and Local Government has made no assessment of the effects of Hamas's al Fatah website for children on levels of community cohesion in the UK. On a wider note, last year Government launched the cross-government Hate Crime Action Plan (HCAP) which includes our Internet Hate Crime Action Plan. This will make it easier to report incitement to hatred that happens over the internet and improve our responses by updating systems and policies. That said, any criminal content, including incitement to hatred under the Public Order Act, should be reported to the local police who would be able to gather evidence of any offences and where appropriate, provide this to the Crown Prosecution Service for consideration of any proceedings.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100209/text/100209w0016.htm#100209104000015>

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Allegation of Contempt: Mr Trevor Phillips

We met on 9 February to discuss a draft Report on the Equality and Human Rights Commission. It emerged at the start of the meeting that Trevor Phillips, the Chair of the EHRC, had recently spoken to at least three Members of the Committee about the Committee's consideration of the draft Report and the publication of written evidence with the Report. In our view these discussions could constitute a contempt of both Houses in that they may be an attempt to influence the views of certain Members of the Committee shortly before it considered a draft Report directly relevant to Mr Phillips in his role as Chair of the EHRC. We recommend that the matter should be subject to investigation by the Privileges Committees of both Houses.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt200910/jtselect/jtrights/56/56.pdf>

Equalities chief Trevor Phillips faces contempt probe

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8508626.stm

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Community Relations

UK Parliamentary Motion

Andrew Dismore (850) Jewish News investigation into Facebook anti-semitism –

That this House congratulates Jewish News on its investigation into the use of Facebook to promote anti-Semitism; notes the posting of graphic details of anti-Semitic incidents perpetrated by members of the Facebook group launched by a student at Loxford School of Science and Technology, expressed in the most foul and abusive language; is appalled by the casual way that the youths responsible display their anti-Semitism; further notes that these revelations have come to light at a time when the Community Security Trust has published figures showing 924 anti-Semitic incidents during 2009, more than in any other year since records began in 1984; and calls on the Secretaries of State for Children, Schools and Families and Business, Innovation and Skills to investigate these incidents and the use of Facebook generally to promote messages of hate, and to report to Parliament on their conclusions.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=40450&SESSION=903>

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Israel

UK Parliamentary Question

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 20 January 2010, *Official Report*, column 336W, on Palestinians: international assistance, if he will instruct officials within his Department to carry out research on whether Israeli restrictions on Gaza constitute collective punishment. [314027]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The extent of Israeli restrictions, and the threat to Israel from militants in Gaza, varies constantly. Rather than focus on whether the restrictions at any given time amount to collective punishment, we have consistently pressed the Israeli government to comply with their obligations under international law and allow passage of relief supplies.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100209/text/100209w0006.htm#10020977000011>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UK welcomes stronger academic co-operation with Israel

Foreign Office Minister Ivan Lewis reaffirmed Britain's commitment to providing an additional £29,000 funding to the Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange (BIRAX) during the visit of Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, Danny Ayalon. ...

Mr Lewis said: 'I am a strong believer in continuing to enhance university and academic links between Britain and Israel, and am pleased that more people will now have the opportunity to benefit from this scheme. The UK's support for BIRAX is part of our determination to increase academic co-operation and it is a tangible example of our determination to oppose boycotts against Israel.'

In a private meeting Ivan Lewis and Danny Ayalon discussed the Middle East Peace Process, Universal Jurisdiction, Iran, and UK-Israel relations, including progress in agreeing a UK-Israel Film Treaty.

To read the full press release and watch video see

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=21734507>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

**** Children, Schools and Families Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/childrenschoolsandfamilies.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/061/amend/psc0610902a.905.html>

**** Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/constitutionalreformandgovernance.html>

Financial Motion

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100209/debtext/100209-0006.htm#10020974000002>

Committee Stage, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100209/debtext/100209-0009.htm#10020983000001>

Bill as amended in Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/068/2010068.pdf>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/004/amend/psc0040902a.907-910.html>

**** Crime and Security Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/crimeandsecurity.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/003/amend/psc0030902a.233-236.html>

**** Equality Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/equality.html>

Committee Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100209-0005.htm#10020975000504>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100209-0013.htm#100209122000155>

Bill as amended in Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldbills/035/1002035.i-vii.html>

Flood and Water Management Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/floodandwatermanagement.html>

Scottish Parliament

End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

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Other Relevant Information

Welsh Assembly

Assembly Members vote yes in historic vote on referendum

Members of the National Assembly for Wales have voted in favour of a referendum on the legislative powers of the Assembly. ...

The Government of Wales Act 2006 ("the Act") sets out the current law making process of the Assembly. The Assembly can pass legislation, known as "Assembly Measures", in matters where the UK Parliament has agreed that it should have the powers to do so.

The Act also allows the Assembly to request that a referendum should be held on whether we should move to the law making process which permits the Assembly to legislate in any devolved area without reference to Westminster.

Now the Assembly has voted in favour, the First Minister will notify the Secretary of State for Wales ... [who] has 120 days to draft a piece of legislation ... [which] would then have to be agreed by 40 Members of the Assembly and approved in both the House of Commons and House of Lords.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.assemblywales.org/newhome/new-news-third-assembly.htm?act=dis&id=166146&ds=2/2010>

Mohammed Siddique

Siddique released after terror conviction quashed

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/tayside_and_central/8504952.stm

Terror student Siddique's 'boredom' claim

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/tayside_and_central/8508087.stm

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Consultations

** new or updated

Communities and Local Government: Creating a Single Equality Scheme for 2010 – 2013 (closes 28 February 2010)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/987402.pdf>

Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 2010

(closes 15 March 2010)

http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/consultations/6605.aspx

Equality Bill: Draft Codes of Conduct (2 April 2010)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legislative-framework/equality-bill/equality-bill-codes-of-practice-consultation/#1>

Equality Bill: Draft Guidance (16 April 2010)

<http://ehrc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

Death Certification, Burial, and Cremation (Scotland) (closes 21 April 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300112/0093686.pdf>

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