

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Holocaust](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Israel](#)

[Consultations](#)

Holocaust

Communities and Local Government

New award to honour British heroes of the Holocaust

Britons who saved the lives of Jews and other persecuted groups during the Holocaust are to be honoured for their actions. This is the first time such recognition has been bestowed by the State as a tribute to those civilians who undertook extraordinary acts of courage and self sacrifice, in order to help others. The award was announced last year by Prime Minister Gordon Brown on a visit to Auschwitz. Today, he paid tribute to those British citizens at a reception at Downing Street.

The Prime Minister said: "It is right that we reflect and learn from the past as we go forward in the future. That is why I was pleased to create a new award to recognise those amazing British individuals who through extraordinary and selfless acts of bravery protected and rescued Jews and others in the Holocaust. These individuals are true British heroes and a source of national pride for all of us. They were shining beacons of hope in the midst of terrible evil because they were prepared to take a stand against prejudice, hatred and intolerance. We pay tribute to them for the inspiration they provide now and for future generations to come." ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1499842>

[TOP](#)

Israel

UK Parliamentary Questions

Israel: EU External Trade

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his European counterparts on the provision of EU concessions to the State of Israel following the European Court of Justice ruling that Israeli goods made in Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank cannot be considered Israeli; and if he will make a statement. [320609]

Mr. Ivan Lewis [*holding answer 4 March 2010*]: The European Court of Justice's recent ruling in the case of C-386/08 (Brita-GmbH) concerned the procedures which a EU member state's customs authority should follow in a case where imported goods are shown as being of Israeli origin, and preferential customs tariff treatment is claimed under the EC-Israel Association Agreement, but where there

is reason to suppose that the goods in question did in fact originate in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs).

This ruling has no effect on the Government's policies, since the Court's ruling confirms the correctness of the policy already in place and I have had no discussions. There are no inconsistencies between the Court's ruling and the technical advice concerning the labelling of produce grown in the OPTs that was issued by DEFRA on 10 December 2009.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100308/text/100308w0007.htm#10030848000026>

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a specific assessment of the extent of damage caused by Israeli armed forces to projects in Gaza which have been (a) constructed and (b) financed with UK assistance since the Oslo Peace Accords. [320972]

Mr. Michael Foster: The UK Government have no plans to make such an assessment. Given current circumstances in Gaza, it would not be possible to gather the necessary data.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100305/text/100305w0008.htm#10030529000080>

Gaza

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress is being made in the reconstruction of United Nation schools in Gaza following the destruction during "operation cast lead" a year ago. [HL2238]

Lord Brett: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) reopened all of their 221 primary and secondary schools a week after the end of the conflict. With funding from the Department for International Development (DfID), the Mines Advisory Group inspected and cleared unexploded ordnance from the UNRWA schools, allowing 220,000 children to return to school. However, limited progress has been made in physically repairing or rebuilding UNRWA school buildings damaged during Operation Cast Lead, due to restrictions on the import of materials such as cement. The UK continues to press the Israeli Government for full, safe and unhindered access for aid, reconstruction material and aid workers.

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees operation in Gaza. [HL2240]

Lord Brett: The UK is a major donor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Including our share of EU funding, the UK is UNRWA's second largest bilateral donor. In 2009 we provided £31 million in funding to UNRWA; £20 million in core funding, of which one-third is spent in Gaza; £6 million to the 2009 Gaza emergency appeal; and £5 million specifically to improve education services in Gaza.

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made in the restoration of sewage disposal in Gaza. [HL2241]

Lord Brett: The first phase of the World Bank funded North Gaza Emergency Sewage Treatment project, to divert sewage away from the hazardous Beit Lahiya site, was completed in January following the Government of Israel's approval to import into Gaza the final tranche of required materials. The second phase, to address the long-term needs of wastewater treatment for northern Gaza, is due to start in April. However, this will depend on whether Israel permits the required construction materials to enter Gaza. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) recently reported that 6 kilometres of sewers have been repaired since the end of the conflict, as well as some wastewater facilities.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100308w0003.htm#10030843001051>

Department for Business Innovation and Skills

British Council and Department for Business Innovation and Skills launch higher education scholarships for Palestine

HESPAL, an initiative created by the British Council in partnership with BIS, with additional support from Consolidated Contractors Ltd, The Pears Foundation, The Arab Palestinian Investment Company and Sir Trevor Chinn will help to create the next generation of senior academics equipped to provide international quality standards in Palestinian Higher Education as well as increase sustainable links between Palestinian and UK Universities.

The scholarship programme will see up to 10 academics each year from Palestinian Universities sponsored to complete a year's postgraduate study at one of the partner Universities in the UK with a focus on particular areas of study including: finance, business, education, IT, physics, chemistry, engineering, agriculture, water management, Law and International Development. ...

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/clientmicrosite/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=411747&NewsAreaID=2&ClientID=431>

[TOP](#)

Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

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

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

Second Reading, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100308-0011.htm#10030854000239>

Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill

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

**** Crime and Security Bill**

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

Report Stage, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100308/debtext/100308-0005.htm#10030818000001>

Report Stage Proceedings

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmbills/073/pro0730308p.345-351.html>

Equality Bill

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

**** Draft Census Order**

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2010/draft/pdf/sdsi_9780111007907_en.pdf

Motion to approve (*certain sections only – excludes both the Religion and Ethnicity questions*)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/business/motions/Default.aspx?motionid=18528>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated

**** closes in 6 days**

Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 2010

(closes 15 March 2010)

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

2011 Census Statistical Outputs (England and Wales) (closes 26 March 2010)

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/consultations/open-consultations/2011-output-consultation---main-statistical-outputs/index.html>

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

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

Equality Bill: Draft Guidance (closes 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>

Call for Evidence on the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill (12 May 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/endLifeAsstBill/currentInquiries.htm>

Humanitarian Assistance Strategic Guidance (closes 14 May)

http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultations/HA_strategic_guide_draft.pdf

2011 Census Statistical Outputs (Scotland) (closes 14 May 2010)

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/preparations/consultation-and-research/formal-consultations/spring-10-consultation.html>

[TOP](#)

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charity SCO29438