

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Office for Security and Counter Terrorism

Countering international terrorism: CONTEST Annual Report

<http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/contest/CONTEST-annual-report-20102835.pdf?view=Binary>

The UK's Strategy for countering the use of CBRN by terrorists

<http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications/publication-search/cbrn-guidance/strat-countering-use-of-CBRN2835.pdf?view=Binary>

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Israel

Scottish Parliament e-Petition

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to cancel the Israels Contribution to Medicine, Science and Technology exhibition scheduled to run in the Scottish Parliament from 27-29 April 2010.

This exhibition is nothing more than a shameless PR exercise to promote Israel in a positive light while the Report by the UNs Judge Goldstone calls for Israel to be taken to the International Criminal Court for its war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Israel has bombed Palestinian hospitals, fired shots at ambulances, denied medical treatment to seriously ill Palestinians and detained women in labour at checkpoints forcing them to deliver there. ... Israeli armed forces directly and intentionally attacked al-Quds hospital in Gaza City and the adjacent ambulance depot with white phosphorous shells.

The consequences of the Israeli attacks against civilians were aggravated by their subsequent refusal to allow the evacuation of the wounded or to permit access to ambulances. Hospitals and ambulances were targeted by Israeli attacks.

To celebrate Israeli technology at this time is to collude in the routine testing of new weapons on the imprisoned Palestinian people, the dropping of white phosphorous on built-up areas of Gaza, the denial of spare parts to water purification plants designed to cause illness and suffering, and the technological edge that enables Israel to kill over

1,400 people in Gaza at little risk to those carrying this out. ... Hosting this exhibition in the Scottish Parliament potentially implicates all of us in a whitewashing of Israeli crimes. Cancellation will send a clear message that Scots oppose the heinous crimes of Israel so meticulously flagged up by Judge Goldstone.

For the reasons given above the exhibition offends many people who were shocked and angry at Israel's attack on Gaza last year and Israel's continuing blockade of Gaza and illegal occupation of Palestinian land. I consider that Israel's Foreign Ministry is engaged in whitewashing the crimes of the state of Israel by launching a project named Brand Israel this exhibition is part of that exercise. ...

To read all information submitted by the petitioner see

http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/view_backgroundinfo.asp?PetitionID=383

European Parliament

Palestine: bridge building for development

Tony Blair will join senior UN figures and MEPs on the Development and Foreign Affairs committees on Monday afternoon to discuss development issues in Palestine.

To read the agenda see

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201003/20100319ATT70958/20100319ATT70958EN.pdf>

United Nations

In Middle East, Ban hails 'heroism and quiet courage' of Gazans

"Every day they show heroism and quiet courage and this is an inspiration," Mr. Ban said while visiting the Khan Younis section of Gaza. The people of the area, he said, "are striving to provide for their families amid unacceptable, unsustainable conditions." ... He reiterated that Israel's policy of closure is "not sustainable and it is wrong." ... "I urge all Gazans to choose the path of non-violence, Palestinian unity, and international legitimacy," he said, also calling for a prisoner exchange so that both Palestinian prisoners and Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit can be released. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34146&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>

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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>

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>

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>

Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/prosecutionoffencesact1985amendment.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_9780111008379_en.pdf

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Other Relevant Information

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Fight against cyber hate must be stepped up without infringing on free speech, director of OSCE rights body says

More efforts are needed to combat crimes motivated by hate on the Internet, but care must be taken not to infringe on the freedom of expression, said Ambassador Janez Lenarcic, the director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), at the opening of an expert meeting on combating cyber hate in Warsaw today. "The Internet has become a platform for organized hate groups to recruit followers, command and control, organize attacks, and intimidate and harass opponents," said Lenarcic.

He stressed that there needs to be a balance between the right of individuals to freely express and exchange their views and the right to be protected from potential harm emanating from statements inciting intolerance against people based on their race, colour, language, nationality, religion or sexual orientation. ... Solutions should include a combination of legal limitations, voluntary regulation of admissible content by internet service providers and independent monitoring and reporting mechanisms such as complaints bureaus or hotlines ...

To read the full press release see

http://www.osce.org/odihr/item_1_43178.html

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Consultations

** new or updated

**** closes in 4 days**

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>

Arrest warrants – universal jurisdiction Note by the Ministry of Justice

(closes 6 April 2010)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/docs/arrests-warrants.pdf>

Draft clause: Prosecution of certain extra-territorial offences: England and Wales

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/docs/private-prosecutions-draft-clause.pdf>

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>

Reform of the coroner system (closes 1 July 2010)

Includes questions as to when it may be appropriate to carry out a non-invasive post-mortem examination, for example by means of MRI scan.

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/reform-coroner-system.htm>

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