

# Political Affairs Brief

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*  
**Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**  
**SCoJeC**

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## Home Affairs

### UK Parliamentary Questions

#### Arrest Warrants

**Dr. Starkey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what account was taken of each of the criteria in the Government's code of practice on consultation in preparing his Department's consultation on arrest warrants-universal jurisdiction. [323262]

**Claire Ward:** The question of arrest warrants for universal jurisdiction offences is not the subject of a consultation exercise. Given the importance of the issue, however, the Government thought it right to seek views from a small number of interested parties.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100322/text/100322w0004.htm#1003228000002>

#### Counter-terrorism

**1. Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory (Wells) (Con):** What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's efforts to counter Islamic extremism. [322938]

**12. Tony Baldry (Banbury) (Con):** What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. [322952]

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Alan Johnson):** ... Since 11 September 2001, 230 people have been convicted of a terrorism-related offence and more than a dozen terrorist plots have been disrupted. The Prevent strand of Contest is aimed at addressing the causes of terrorism by challenging the ideology of violent extremists, supporting vulnerable individuals and building community resilience.

**Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** Does the Secretary of State accept that Islamism is a threat because of its refusal to accept the separation of religion and the state, its social intolerance, particularly as regards the status of women, and its attempted subversion of moderate Islam? ...

**Alan Johnson:** ... the threat comes from violent extremism. There are people with all kinds of views with which we may disagree, but it is when those views turn into violent extremism that counter-terrorism kicks in and those views become unacceptable. ... Where sharia law has been introduced in some small experiments in local communities it does not, in any way, subvert or detract from the law of this country. ...

... the Prevent strand of our counter-terrorism strategy has about 1,000 projects, where work is being undertaken with 40,000 people in various communities. ...

**Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington) (Lab):** Does the Home Secretary agree that if by "Islamism" one means people who support the religion of

Islam, that is not, in itself, a threat? ... The danger of trying to tar the entire Muslim community with the same brush is that that undermines our efforts to engage with the community, and to fight terrorism and crime.

**Alan Johnson:** ... It is essential that we in no way give the impression that our counter-terrorism policy is anti-Muslim, because it is not; it is very much pro-Muslim and pro the vast majority of the Muslim community, who believe in peace, justice and freedom. ...

... giving people in Muslim communities, particularly younger Muslims, the arguments and empowering them so that they can try to argue back against what are sometimes very forceful arguments coming from much older people in their community must be an important part of our counter-terrorism strategy. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100322/debtext/100322-0001.htm#1003229000012>

### **Entry Clearances: Married People**

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of entry clearance applications for settlement as a spouse in the UK submitted to the British consulate in Tel Aviv were granted prior to the transfer of the processing of such applications to the British embassy in Istanbul; what proportion of applicants were of (a) Israeli and (b) non-Israeli background; and if he will make a statement. [321849]

**Mr. Woolas:** Between April 2007 and March 2008, 152 applications for spouse/civil partner settlement, or leading to settlement visas, were processed at the British consulate in Tel Aviv, with an issue rate of 98 per cent. The processing of such applications was transferred to the British embassy in Istanbul on 7 April 2008.

84 per cent. of the applicants were Israeli nationals, and 16 per cent. were non-Israeli nationals, as defined by the applicant's passport.

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of entry clearance applications for settlement as a spouse in the UK submitted to the British consulate in Tel Aviv between June 2008 and May 2009 and processed by the British embassy in Istanbul were granted; what proportion of applicants were of (a) Israeli and (b) non-Israeli background; and if he will make a statement. [321850]

**Mr. Woolas:** Between June 2008 and May 2009, 103 applications for spouse/civil partner settlement, or leading to settlement visas, were submitted to the British consulate in Tel Aviv and processed by the British embassy in Istanbul, with an issue rate of 94 per cent.

91 per cent. of the applicants were Israeli nationals, and 9 per cent. were non-Israeli nationals, as defined by the applicant's passport.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100322/text/100322w0012.htm#10032227000026>

## **UK Parliament Ministerial Statements**

### **Countering International Terrorism**

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Alan Johnson):** ... The greatest security threat we face continues to come from al-Qaeda and related groups and individuals. The nature of this threat has changed over the last 12 months. Al-Qaeda's leadership has come under severe pressure in Pakistan and NATO's presence across the border continues to deny them a safe haven in Afghanistan. However, an increase in the capability of some al-Qaeda affiliates and associated groups, highlighted by the attempted Detroit airline attack, demonstrates the evolving and diffuse threat we continue to face.

Contest explains how contemporary terrorist organisations aspire to use chemical, biological, radiological and even nuclear (CBRN) weapons. The availability of information on the internet, changing technology and the theft and smuggling of CBRN materials

make this aspiration more realistic than it may have been in the past. . . .

During 2009 thousands of people, including British citizens, have been killed or injured in terrorist attacks around the world. There have been no attacks, successful or unsuccessful, by international terrorist groups or individuals associated with them in the UK over the past 12 months. This reflects the resources and capabilities that we have put in place to deal with the threat. The Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, responsible for setting the UK threat level, currently assess that the UK threat level is severe meaning an attack is highly likely and could happen without warning at any time.

Our response continues to be based at all times on principles that reflect the core values of the UK including human rights, the rule of law, legitimate and accountable government, justice, freedom, tolerance and opportunity for all.

We recognise that our response must continue to be founded on partnerships across the spectrum from local, national to international. Communities, local authorities, Departments, agencies, devolved Administrations, and overseas partners all play vital roles in the successful delivery of Contest.

We judge that to date Contest has achieved its aim-to reduce the risk to the UK and to its interests overseas from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100322/wmstext/100322m0003.htm#10032212000024>

### **National Security Strategy**

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Gordon Brown):** ... This work is overseen by the new Cabinet Committee on National Security which was established in 2007, which includes all the relevant Ministers, police chiefs, as well as the heads of the agencies, the Chief of Defence Staff, and others. It has met very frequently on Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as a wide range of other issues. It is supported by the new national security secretariat in the Cabinet Office. The secretariat also co-ordinates national security policy work across Government, including contributing to the Defence Green Paper published in February, and the International Development White Paper "Building our Common Future", published in 2009. The national security forum established in 2009 ensures that Government work on national security is informed by independent expertise, and the new Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy, which will take evidence from Ministers later today, has improved parliamentary oversight.

As a result of this comprehensive whole-of-Government approach, we are better equipped to respond effectively to the immediate threats we face, including terrorism, conflict, serious organised crime and civil emergencies. ...

Building on the successful work of the Serious Organised Crime Agency, established in 2006, we published an updated strategy for tackling organised crime in July 2009, strengthening the shared assessment of harm and risk across SOCA, the police and other agencies, and set up a new strategic centre for organised crime in the Home Office to drive activity across Government. A new Ministerial Committee devoted specifically to organised crime will meet for the first time this month. ...

Last summer, we published the first ever cyber security strategy and, in September, established the office for cyber security and the cyber security operations centre. These new structures co-ordinate efforts across Government to ensure both that public sector systems are fully protected, and that citizens and businesses can take full advantage of the huge opportunities presented by cyberspace while reducing the risks that it poses to the UK, including from foreign actors or criminal, negligent or reckless activity. ...

We are publishing today the 2010 edition of the National Risk Register (first published in 2008), ... It reflects our latest assessment of the risks of terrorism, natural hazards, and man-made accidents which may significantly affect human welfare in the UK. Alongside this, we are publishing updated Crisis Response Arrangements ... and beginning a public consultation on community resilience. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100322/wmstext/100322m0004.htm#10032212000032>

## Communities and Local Government

Literature review of attitudes towards violent extremism amongst Muslim communities in the UK

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1513842.pdf>

Preventing Support for Violent Extremism through Community Interventions: A Review of the Evidence Rapid Evidence Assessment - Full Final Report

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1513881.pdf>

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## Israel

### UK Parliamentary Question

#### Israel: Exports

**Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proportion of Israel's exports to the European Union that are fully or partially made in the Palestinian Occupied Territories; and what is their response to the recent ruling of the European Court of Justice that such goods fall outside the European Union-Israel Association Agreement, and are therefore subject to duty. [HL2645]

**The Financial Services Secretary to the Treasury (Lord Myners):** HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not have access to the European Union-wide information necessary to assess the proportion of Israel's exports to the European Union that originate either fully or partially in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. HMRC welcomes the recent judgment of the European Court of Justice, which confirms the action the department has taken, and will continue to take, to immediately refuse claims to preferential rates of duty under the provisions of the EU-Israel agreement, where it is established that the goods concerned have originated in a settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100322w0003.htm#10032215001749>

### Foreign and Commonwealth Office

#### Foreign Secretary outlines response to abuse of British passports in Hamas assassination

The Foreign Secretary David Miliband has announced that a member of the Embassy of Israel has been asked to withdraw from the UK following the misuse British passports in the assassination of a senior Hamas official in Dubai this January. On 17 January the Prime Minister announced an investigation in the use of counterfeit British passports in the killing of Mahmud al-Mabhuh in Dubai on 19 January. The Serious and Organised Crime Agency has been leading a full investigation into the fraudulent use of British passports in Dubai, in close co-operation with the Emirati authorities.

Speaking in the House of Commons at 15.30 today the Foreign Secretary said:

"With your permission Mr Speaker I will report to the House on the investigation announced on the 17th of February by the Prime Minister in to the use of counterfeit British passports in the killing of Mr Mahmud al-Mabhuh in Dubai on 19 January. The UK is continuing to support inquiries underway in a number of countries including in the United Arab Emirates itself. However, at the end of last week the Serious Organised Crime Agency reported to the Home Secretary on their investigation. Its report has now

been studied by the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and myself, and presented to the Cabinet this morning.

"In the last twenty four hours I have spoken to the Foreign Ministers of the other countries whose passports were involved. Their investigations are continuing.

It would not be right, Mr Speaker, to release the report in full, for legal and other reasons, but it is right that the House knows a summary of the conclusions that SOCA have reached and the action we will be taking in response.

"First, for the avoidance of any doubt I should make clear to the House that in the case of each of the twelve passport holders to whom SOCA spoke, they found no evidence to suggest that any of those individuals were anything other than wholly innocent victims of identity theft.

Second, it should not need saying, but I must add in the strongest possible terms that the United Kingdom had absolutely no advance knowledge of what happened in Dubai nor any involvement whatsoever in the killing.

"Mr Speaker, SOCA conducted an extremely professional investigation. The Israeli authorities met all the requests SOCA made of them. SOCA were drawn to the conclusion that the passports used were copied from genuine British passports when handed over for inspection to individuals linked to Israel, either in Israel or in other countries. They found no link to any other country.

"Given that this was a very sophisticated operation in which high quality forgeries were made, the Government judges it is highly likely that the forgeries were made by a State intelligence service. Taking this together with other inquiries and the link to Israel established by SOCA, we have concluded that there are compelling reasons to believe that Israel was responsible for the misuse of the British passports.

"The Government takes this matter extremely seriously. Such misuse of British passports is intolerable. It presents a hazard for the safety of British nationals in the region. It also represents a profound disregard for the sovereignty of the United Kingdom. The fact that this was done by a country which is a friend, with significant diplomatic, cultural, business and personal ties to the UK, only adds insult to injury. No country or Government could stand by in such a situation.

Mr Speaker, Israel is a democratic country with remarkable achievements to its name in a dangerous part of the world. That makes international cooperation even more important. Britain has worked and will continue to work closely with Israel on a range of issues, notably the Iranian nuclear threat. But that cooperation must be based on transparency and trust.

"The Government is therefore taking a number of steps, based on the evidence of what has occurred in this case, to make clear its deep unhappiness at what has happened, and to seek to ensure this abuse does not happen again.

"Mr Speaker, I met Foreign Minister Lieberman on the 22nd of February. At that stage our investigation was only just starting. I told him then of our deep concern at the incident, and made clear my expectation that Israel would cooperate with the investigation. I met Minister Lieberman again in Brussels yesterday. I set out the findings from the SOCA report; our intended actions; and our determination to see that this affair should never be repeated. I handed over a letter seeking a formal assurance from him that in the future the State of Israel would never be party to the misuse of British passports in such a way.

"Mr Speaker, diplomatic work between Britain and Israel needs to be conducted according to the highest standards of trust. The work of our Embassy in Israel, and the Israeli Embassy in London, is vital to the cooperation between our countries. So is the strategic dialogue between our countries. These ties are important and we want them to continue. However, I have asked that a member of the Embassy of Israel be withdrawn from the UK as a result of this affair, and this is taking place.

"Right Honourable and Honourable Members will be concerned about the fate of the British passport holders concerned. As one of them said, to go to bed a citizen and wake up as a wanted terrorist is shocking. We have provided consular assistance to the twelve people whose identities and passports were misused. As part of this, we offered

them all new biometric passports, which are being rolled out to the whole British population and are considerably more difficult to counterfeit, so should give them the confidence they need that they can still travel safely on their British passports. Eleven of the twelve have so far been issued with new biometric passports.

"To alert other British nationals to the risks that their passports might be misused in the same way, I am today amending our travel advice for Israel to make clear the potential risk, and to set out the steps they can take to minimise that risk.

"Mr Speaker, the Middle East is not a place for woolly or wishful thinking. The Israeli people crave and deserve legitimacy and security. The United Kingdom will not compromise its support for this. But the actions in this case are completely unacceptable and they must stop.

"I commend this Statement to the House."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=21939020>

## European Parliament

### **Middle East: MEPs hear Blair and businessmen on peace prospects**

Tony Blair's optimistic view of Middle East peace prospects met with some scepticism from MEPs at a public hearing on Monday. But private sector-led economic growth could nonetheless contribute significantly to the peace process, argued Israeli and Palestinian business representatives.

Development Committee Chair Eva Joly (Greens/EFA, FR), was critical of Tony Blair's performance so far as Quartet Representative. "Why not declare two states unilaterally?", she asked. "The only solution which will last is the one negotiated", said Mr Blair, adding that such a unilateral declaration could be "more valuable to people making this gesture than to those affected by it". ...

"Could Hamas engage in a journey leading to peace and democracy?", asked Richard Howitt (S&D, UK). "If there is a strong momentum behind the process that gives us a realistic prospect of seeing peace", then it could, said Mr Blair, adding that Hamas would have to decide whether to support it or to stand apart, but that "the majority of people in Gaza and West Bank back the two state solution". ...

... Mr Blair replied that "Europe has a yearning to play a political role" but should instead focus on what it can do best, which is contribute to the capacity building of a future Palestinian state, by consolidating the rule of law and the strengthening the Palestinian security forces. In this way, Israeli security concerns can be met too, thus helping to build mutual confidence, added Mr Blair. Veronique De Keyser (S&D, BE) disagreed, instead advocating a "dual approach to security", i.e. including a responsibility to protect the Palestinians, too.

**To read the full press release see**

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/025-71097-081-03-13-903-20100322IPR71095-22-03-2010-2010-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/025-71097-081-03-13-903-20100322IPR71095-22-03-2010-2010-false/default_en.htm)

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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>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldbills/039/amend/ml039-i.htm>

## **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](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2010/draft/pdf/sdsi_9780111008379_en.pdf)

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## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated

### **\*\* closes in 3 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](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>

**\*\* Revised Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (England and Wales only)** (closes 15 June 2010)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1671&external=no&menu=1>

**\*\* Continuing need for a controlled activity category in the Vetting and Barring Scheme (England and Wales only)** (closes 17 June 2010)

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/index.cfm?action=consultationDetails&consultationId=1710&external=no&menu=1>

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