

# 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

### Welsh Assembly e-petition

Calling upon the National Assembly to urge the Welsh Government to ban the practise of slaughtering animals without pre-stunning them.

*Petition collecting signatures until 1-3-2011*

[http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions/epetition-list-of-signatories\\_all.htm](http://www.assemblywales.org/gethome/e-petitions/epetition-list-of-signatories_all.htm)

### Institute for Public Policy Research

**Exploring the Roots of BNP Support**

<http://www.ippr.org.uk/members/download.asp?f=/ecomm/files/Exploring%20the%20Roots%20of%20BNP%20Support.pdf&a=skip>

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## Israel

### Scottish Parliament Motion

**S3M-6106 Patrick Harvie: Exhibition on Israeli Technology**—That the Parliament notes the intended exhibition at Holyrood by the organisation, Scottish Friends of Israel, due to take place in the last week of April 2010, which will aim to promote Israel's contribution to medicine, science and technology; recognises the deep feelings of anger that exist at the record of the Israeli Government's treatment of Palestinians over decades and in particular the military action taken in recent years; is concerned that the planned exhibition could give the false impression that the Scottish Parliament as a body condones the record of the Israeli Government or wishes to promote the interests of that government; believes that the prolonged, brutal and unacceptable mistreatment of the Palestinians should be the central issue that the Parliament addresses in any events that relate to the Israel/Palestine situation, and invites those involved in organising the exhibition to reconsider their decision.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/business/motions/Default.aspx?motionid=18765>

## Scottish Parliament Petitions

The Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee has considered

[PE1308](#) calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to review its policy with respect to trade missions or trade initiatives by publicly funded bodies to Israel and to direct or influence Scottish Trade International to end any ongoing initiatives with Israel.

and

[PE1324](#) calling on the Scottish Parliament to cancel the 'Israel's Contribution to Medicine, Science and Technology' exhibition scheduled to run in the Scottish Parliament from 27-29 April 2010.

The Official Report (verbatim record) has not yet been published, but, in summary, the Committee, most of whom are members of the Cross-Party Group on Palestine, was unanimously critical of Israel, repeatedly referring to it as a "criminal state", condemning Israeli action in Gaza, and insisting that relations with Israel should not be "normalised" until Israel "behaves itself". Unusually, two MSPs (not members of the Committee) acted as co-petitioners for PE1308, and gave evidence in favour of the petition.

The Committee decided to write to the Scottish and UK Governments, the STUC, and Scottish Development International to urge the above views in relation to PE1308, and to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body to request that, since, in their view, an exhibition such as referred to in PE1324 ought not to be allowed, policy on MSP-sponsored exhibitions should be reviewed.

## United Nations

### **Independent UN rights expert warns Israeli orders may breach Geneva Convention**

Two orders by the Israeli military relating to movement in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) may breach the fourth Geneva Convention and violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), an independent United Nations human rights expert said today.

"The orders appear to enable Israel to detain, prosecute, imprison and/or deport any and all persons present in the West Bank," said Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Mr. Falk said his concern was based on Israel's new definition of the term 'infiltrator.' The term is defined as "a person who entered the Area unlawfully following the effective date, or a person who is present in the Area and does not lawfully hold a permit."

"Even if this open-ended definition is not used to imprison or deport vast numbers of people, it causes unacceptable distress," the UN independent expert said in a statement, noting that "it is not at all clear what permit, if any, will satisfy this order."

Mr. Falk said that "a wide range of violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law could be linked to actions carried out by the Government of Israel under these orders, with particular gravity in the event that young persons become victims of their application."

He added: "Illustrative of the potential for cruel abuse is a provision of the order requiring the person deported to pay the costs of his or her deportation, and suffer confiscations of property if unable to pay." ...

Meanwhile, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that in the West Bank, rioting and other incidents over the past month resulted in four Palestinians killed and 349 injured. Forty-four injuries were reported among Israeli forces. The Gaza Strip also saw a significant increase in the number of casualties, with four deaths and 39 injuries, as well as damage to civilian homes and agricultural property. Most of the violence resulted from a series of air strikes launched by the Israeli Air Force ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34406&Cr=Palestin&Cr1=>

## Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

### UN human rights chief urges halt to Gaza executions

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Friday urged the de-facto Gaza authorities not to carry out further executions and to abolish the use of the death penalty. ... "I am deeply concerned by recent statements by senior Hamas officials that several death sentences may be carried out soon. ... It is extremely disappointing that Hamas is contemplating a return to the use of the death penalty, despite the fact that no officially-sanctioned death sentences have been carried out in Gaza since 2005. The High Commissioner said she was alarmed by unconfirmed reports that several more prisoners may be executed soon. OHCHR has received information that on Wednesday Hamas authorities called the families of a number of individuals sentenced to death, saying that they could make their last visit to their sons. It is believed that the two people who were executed were part of this group of prisoners. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=34385&Cr=death+penalty&Cr1=>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* New or updated

### 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)

Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/eet/or-10/ee10-1202.htm#Col3448>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated

#### \*\* *closes today*

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

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

**FAWC Strategic Plan** (10 May 2010)

<http://www.fawc.org.uk/pdf/letter100322.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>

**Amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001** (closes 15 July 2010)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/cons-2010-pathogens-toxins/consultation-paper2835.pdf?view=Binary>

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