

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary speaks on flotilla inquiry

Foreign Secretary William Hague has described Israel's announcement of an investigation into the interception of the Gaza flotilla on 31 May as "an important step forward". The Foreign Secretary added "clearly it is very important that it is a truly independent enquiry and a thorough investigation that the international community can respect". The Government of Israel has announced that the investigation will involve two international participants. The Foreign Secretary has welcomed the involvement of Northern Irish Nobel Peace Prize winner David Trimble. Lord Trimble will be joined by Ken Watkin, a former judge advocate general of the Canadian armed forces.

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22367648>

Supreme Court

British – Israeli Legal Exchange 2010

From 7-10 June 2010, the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom (UKSC) was delighted to host the seventh triennial British-Israeli Legal Exchange. ... In welcoming the Israeli delegation on 7 June **Lord Phillips**, President of the UKSC said: "We have much in common with your Court. We apply a law that has its basis the common law and we have no written Constitution, although we have laws that have constitutional impact. In recent times the activities of those who are hostile to our regimes have posed particular problems to Courts dedicated, as both our Courts are, to upholding the rule of law." ...

To read the full press release see

http://www.supremecourt.gov.uk/docs/pr_1006.pdf

European Council

Council conclusions on Gaza

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The EU deeply regrets the loss of life during the Israeli military operation in international waters against the Flotilla sailing to Gaza and condemns the use of violence. The Council believes that an immediate, full and impartial inquiry into these events and the circumstances surrounding them is essential. To command the confidence of the international community this should include credible international participation.

... the EU reiterates its call for an immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza including goods from the West Bank. The Council calls for a solution that addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns including a complete stop to all violence and arms smuggling into Gaza.

The Council deplores the continuing acts of rocket fire. All those responsible must take immediate and concrete steps to cease and prevent such violence. The Council calls on those holding the abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit to release him without delay. Hamas must also unconditionally allow ICRC access and end its interference with the operations of NGOs and UN agencies in Gaza. ...

To read the full press release see

www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/NewsWord/EN/.../115158.doc

International Committee of the Red Cross

Gaza closure: not another year!

... the dire situation in Gaza cannot be resolved by providing humanitarian aid. ... The whole of Gaza's civilian population is being punished for acts for which they bear no responsibility. The closure therefore constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law. ...

Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is about to enter his fifth year in captivity. Hamas has continued to rebuff the ICRC's requests to let it visit Gilad Shalit. In violation of international humanitarian law, it has also refused to allow him to get in touch with his family. The ICRC again urges those detaining Gilad Shalit to grant him the regular contact with his family to which he is entitled. It also reiterates that those detaining him have an obligation to ensure that he is well treated and that his living conditions are humane and dignified. ...

To read the full statement see

<http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/palestine-update-140610>

United Nations

UN rights chief unveils members of independent probe into Gaza conflict

The top United Nations human rights today announced the composition of the independent committee tasked with monitoring Israeli and Palestinian investigations into the deadly conflict in the Gaza Strip that ended early last year. ... Christian Tomuschat, a renowned international jurist and expert on international human rights and international humanitarian law, will be one of the three members of the committee. He is a Professor Emeritus at Humboldt University in Berlin, and has also served as a member of the UN Human Rights Committee, president of the International Law Commission and chair of the Guatemalan Historical Clarification Commission.

... Mary McGowan Davis, has more than two decades of experience as a justice of the Supreme Court of the State of New York and as a federal prosecutor in the criminal justice sector of New York City. Having extensive experience in international humanitarian law and in transitional justice, she has also mentored and trained lawyers in Afghanistan, Iraq, Mongolia and Rwanda.

... Param Kumaraswamy, [is] a renowned jurist and human rights expert, who served for nearly 10 years as the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers. A former President of the Malaysian Bar Association, he is a member of several organizations, including the International Commission of Jurists. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35011&Cr=gaza&Cr1=>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

**** Academies Bill**

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/academieshl.html>

Bill as introduced

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/001/2011001.pdf>

Explanatory Notes

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/001/en/2011001en.pdf>

Amendment papers

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/001/amend/am001-b.htm>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/001/amend/am001-c.htm>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/001/amend/am001-a.htm>

Identity Documents Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/identitydocuments.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

High Court

Judgment in the case of his Holiness Sant Baba Jeet Singh Ji Maharaj (claimant) and (1) Eastern Media Group Ltd and (2) Hardeep Singh

the case was rejected because

... the courts will not attempt to rule upon doctrinal issues or intervene in the regulation or governance of religious groups. That is partly because the courts are secular and stand back from religious issues while according respect to the rights of those who are adherents or worshippers in any such grouping. It is also partly because such disputes as arise between the followers of any given religious faith are often likely to involve doctrines or beliefs which do not readily lend themselves to the sort of resolution which is the normal function of a judicial tribunal. They may involve questions of faith or doctrinal opinion which cannot be finally determined by the methodology regularly brought to bear on conflicts of factual and expert evidence. ...

To read the full judgment see

<http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/QB/2010/1294.html>

European Network Against Racism

Annual Report 2009

http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/AnnualReport2009_LR.pdf

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Consultations

** new or updated

**** closes tomorrow**

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>

**** closes in 3 days**

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)

<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>

Welsh Assembly Review of Standing Orders (closes 16 July 2010)

http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-bc-home/bus-committees-third-bc-comm/bc3_inq_so.htm

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