

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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UK Parliamentary Questions

Anti-Semitism

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will take account of the published anti-Semitic views of any individuals seeking to enter the UK when deciding whether to grant entry to such individuals; what representations she has received on that matter since her appointment; and if she will make a statement. [2912]

Damian Green: We take seriously any form of incitement to religious or racial hatred as this threatens social cohesion and could provoke inter-community violence or tension. We will seek to prevent propagators of hate crime from entering the country.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of her Department's seminar on race hate, anti-Semitism and the internet. [3009]

James Brokenshire: While an assessment of the ministerial seminar has not been undertaken, we will analyse previous efforts at tackling hate crime on the internet in considering future policy in this area.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100621/text/100621w019.htm#10062133000005>

British Summer Time

Mr Tobias Ellwood (Bournemouth East) (Con): What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills on the introduction of single and double summer time. [3010]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (John Penrose): I am delighted to confirm that, in line with my hon. Friend's long campaign and, indeed, with the support of both the Liberal Democrats and the Labour party when it was in government, we are committed to examining this issue tremendously carefully, and I have already had conversations with my opposite numbers at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Mr Ellwood: Today is the longest day, and no one needs to be a visitor to Stonehenge or, indeed, a great reader of the Bournemouth *Echo* to realise that this is a very popular move that has cross-party support. Does my hon. Friend agree that the tourism industry at least would like such a change? Indeed, it has been calling for it for a number of years.

John Penrose: I agree that the tourism industry would like such a change, but some people have very grave and important concerns that we would do well to

listen to as well. Notably, people who live in the north of the UK, particularly in the northern parts of Scotland, are deeply worried about the issue, and we need to ensure that we take their valid concerns into account.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100621/debtext/100621-0002.htm#1006219000032>

Scottish Parliament

Annual Report

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/corporate/anrep-accts/spar/ar-10/SPAnnualReport10English.pdf>

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Israel

UK Parliamentary Questions

Palestinians: Human Rights

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received of human rights violations by members of Hamas in Gaza; and if he will make a statement. [R] [2972]

Alistair Burt: Hamas has had a poor record in Gaza from the moment it violently ousted Fatah. Human rights organisations and other non-governmental organisations in Gaza are increasingly concerned about restrictions on their own activities and on the wider curtailing of personal freedoms.

We share these concerns, including regarding violent harassment of political opponents, violent retribution-including summary executions-against those Hamas deem collaborators with Israel, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and a crack down on women's freedom.

The UK calls on Hamas to take immediate and concrete steps towards the Quartet principles, unconditionally to release Gilad Shalit, who has been held in captivity for just under four years, and to end its interference with the operations of non-governmental organisations and UN agencies in Gaza.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100621/text/100621w0008.htm#10062121000018>

Palestinians: International Assistance

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received recent reports on the alleged closure by Hamas security forces of (a) the Women and Children Society, (b) the Palestinian Mini-Parliament and (c) the South Society for Palestinian Women's Health; and if he will make a statement. [2792]

Alistair Burt: We understand that Hamas' Internal Security Unit have ordered the closure until further notice of four organisations: the South Society for Women's Health, Women Child Development Association, Bonat al-Mustagbal Association and Sharek Youth Forum which is a UN partner organisation. We also understand that these organisations had their offices raided and equipment confiscated by Hamas' Internal Security Unit on 31 May.

We call on Hamas to take immediate and concrete steps towards the Quartet principles, to release Gilad Shalit unconditionally, and to end its interference with the operations of non-governmental organisations and UN agencies in Gaza.

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on the alleged refusal of Hamas to accept aid transported from the flotilla ships; and if he will make a statement. [2915]

Alistair Burt: We understand that Israel offered to transfer some of the aid to Gaza, but that Hamas refused to accept it. However, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) report that five truckloads of the flotilla aid have now been distributed within Gaza, facilitated by the Palestinian Authority co-ordination committee.

What is important is that we focus now on the longer term issue of opening up Gaza to the humanitarian and reconstruction aid that it needs, and the flow of trade that will be essential to building up Gaza's economy, while at the same time ensuring that arms are not being transferred to Hamas in Gaza.

Ms Ritchie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on the lawfulness under international law of the Israeli interception of the Gaza convoy in international waters. [3352]

Alistair Burt: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear in his statement to the House on 2 June 2010, *Official Report*, columns 437-39WS we are seriously concerned about the seizure of British nationals in international waters, and that aspect of the Israeli operation must form a key part of the investigation into events. But until we know the facts of what happened we cannot comment further.

The announcement by the Government of Israel of an independent public Commission, including international observers, is an important step forward. Clearly the Commission must provide a full, credible, impartial and independent investigation that the international community can respect. We will be better able to judge whether this standard has been met as its work develops. It is important that the Commission is able to proceed swiftly, transparently and rigorously.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100621/text/100621w0008.htm#10062121000019>

Council of the European Union

Quartet Statement on Israel's Announcement on Gaza

The Quartet re-affirms that the current situation in Gaza, including the humanitarian and human rights situation of the civilian population, is unsustainable, unacceptable, and not in the interests of any of those concerned. The Quartet reiterates its call for a solution that addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns, including an end to weapons smuggling into Gaza; promotes Palestinian unity based on the Palestine Liberation Organization commitments and the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under the legitimate Palestinian Authority; and ensures the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza ...

The Quartet recognizes that Israel has legitimate security concerns that must continue to be safeguarded, and believes efforts to maintain security while enabling movement and access for Palestinian people and goods are critical. ...

The Quartet also calls for an end to the deplorable detention of Gilad Shalit in advance of the fourth anniversary of his capture on June 25; it further condemns the violation of Hamas' international obligation to provide him access by the International Committee of the Red Cross and demands that Hamas immediately remedy the situation. ...

To read the full press release see

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/115428.pdf

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

**** Academies Bill**

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

House of Lords Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100621-0002.htm#1006214000418>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100621-0007.htm#10062117000149>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100621-0013.htm#10062129000292>

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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Consultations ** new or updated

Reform of the coroner system (closes 1 July 2010)

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

Identity Documents Bill (Committee consideration to be completed by 8 July)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2010/06/identity-documents-bill-committee-issues-call-for-evidence/>

Equality Act: obtaining information in potential discrimination and equality of term cases (closes 13 July 2010)

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/news/new_streamlined_procedure_for.aspx

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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