

Political Affairs Brief

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

SCoJeC

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House of Commons Adjournment Debate

Act of Settlement

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100701/debtext/100701-0021.htm#1007013200001>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Alan Meale (391) Listed places of worship grant scheme - That this House notes the contribution to UK society of religious organisations whose followers every year undertake millions of hours of unpaid work within communities and generally contribute tens of millions of pounds to other charities in addition to the large sums raised for local church work; further notes that the Listed Places of Worship Grant, the scheme which enables all listed places of worship in the UK to reclaim 100 per cent. of value added tax on repairs and maintenance, is scheduled to end in March 2011; wonders whether HM Treasury realises that approximately £110 million per year is spent on the upkeep of such buildings, with 66 per cent. of this sum being contributed by local congregations so that future generations may enjoy their use in the heart of their local communities; and calls on the Government to re-examine its approach not only to this scheme but also to the continuation beyond 2011 of the transitional Grant Aid rate relief mechanism, without the help of which many fine, historic, worthwhile and useful community properties would have been lost or today be found to be beyond repair.

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=41331&SESSION=905>

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Israel

House of Lords Debate

Foreign Policy

Debate begins at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100701-0006.htm#10070128000649>

includes:

col 1906 **Lord Hylton:** ... we should improve our understanding of the religious contexts of the Middle East. This can be quite difficult for diplomats and policy-makers

who have grown up in a wholly secular and scientific culture. They must discover that religion has given sometimes illiterate people the courage and endurance to resist enemies occupying their land. Religion is closely linked with personal honour-izzat, in Arabic. This is all too often humiliated by foreign interventions. Islam, as the majority faith, feels under attack and occupation. In the past, this arose from Russia, and now comes from Israel and the United States. This perception legitimises the idea of defensive jihad. Local grievances combine with the wider sense of persecution. Together they generate anger and hate, which in turn inspire individual terrorists ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100701-0008.htm>

col 1619 Lord Wright of Richmond: ... Palestinians are still facing daily frustration at more than 500 checkpoints and the dreaded wall is still expanding ... Even worse is the continued eviction of Palestinian residents from east Jerusalem now including four members of the Palestinian legislature ... who have been ordered to leave on the grounds that the interior ministry has revoked their permits as "residents of Israel". According to the ministry's own information, in 2008 alone, 4,577 Arab residents of east Jerusalem had their permits revoked. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100701-0009.htm>

... Senior members of Mr Netanyahu's Government have made no secret of their hope that all Palestinians can be removed from Jerusalem and, ultimately, from the West Bank. ... If, as I hope, Her Majesty's Government are serious in hoping for the creation of a Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem, something must be done urgently to stop this appalling and shameful tragedy. ... Without determined and effective American action, there is no hope of reversing this ethnic cleansing. Sadly, the quartet office in Jerusalem seems to be adopting a totally supine attitude towards these human rights violations by the occupying power. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100701-0010.htm>

UK Parliamentary Questions

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Mr Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on allegations of the proposed expulsion by the government of Israel of Palestinian Members of Parliament, Mohammed Abu Tir, Ahmed Othwan, Mohammed Tutah and Khalid Abu Arafah from their homes in Jerusalem. [4337]

Alistair Burt: The UK is extremely concerned by recent reports of Palestinians' residency permits being revoked. We can confirm that President Abbas has requested the Israeli Government to rescind their decision.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100701/text/100701w0006.htm#10070147000010>

Gaza Flotilla

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the Government of Israel about the passports, mobile telephones and cameras confiscated from United Kingdom citizens who were on board the Mavi Marmara in the recent flotilla to Gaza.[HL681]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): My honourable friend Alistair Burt has raised these specific issues with Israel's ambassador to the UK. Our ambassador to Israel and other members of our embassy in Tel Aviv have also raised the matter on a number of occasions with the Israeli authorities. It has also been raised by the EU presidency, on behalf of EU Heads of Mission, with the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

We can confirm we have received all three missing passports, which will be returned to the holders. We, and the EU, have also been informed by the Israelis that all the personal belongings have now been sent to Turkey, to the organisers

of the Flotilla (Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (Insani Yardim Vakfi), (IHH)). We understand that the Turkish authorities agree this to be correct. My honourable friend Alistair Burt explained this to the British nationals who he met on 17 June 2010.

We have also asked exceptionally our consular staff in Istanbul to follow up with IHH which still holds over 300 pieces of unclaimed luggage, including watches, phones and cameras. Our consular staff have taken photos of everything that was seen in IHH's storage, which we will shortly be distributing to the British nationals involved so they can attempt to identify any property that is theirs.

We have also been informed by the Israeli authorities that the return of magnetic and media equipment is under consideration by the Israeli Defence Forces. We will continue to press for its return and availability for use in the inquiry, as required by those conducting it.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100701w0001.htm#10070127000264>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary meets Quartet Representative Tony Blair

The Foreign Secretary William Hague has met today with Quartet Representative, Tony Blair, to discuss the situation in Gaza and the wider Middle East. Speaking after their meeting in London, the Foreign Secretary William Hague said: "Well we've had a very useful meeting primarily discussing the situation in Gaza that has been of huge concern to the wider world over the last few weeks and there has been some progress made.

We've all welcomed, Tony Blair has welcomed on behalf of the Quartet and I've welcomed on behalf of the British Government, the steps taken by the Israeli Government. I hope they will take further steps to ease the blockade of Gaza. The blockade of Gaza is unacceptable and it's unsustainable but some progress has now been made in making sure that more goods can get in to Gaza and Tony Blair really has been at the forefront of that work and is to be congratulated on what has been achieved so far."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22472441>

United Nations

'Provocative' settlement construction in Jerusalem undermines trust

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today reiterated his call for an end to the building of settlements in Jerusalem, stressing that the construction damages trust and stokes unrest in the region. ... "Jerusalem remains a permanent status issue and a way should be found for the city to emerge as the capital of both Israel and a future State of Palestine, with arrangements for the holy sites acceptable to all." ... Mr. Ban welcomed Israel's recent steps towards a new policy on Gaza and the blockade, but added that "full and swift implementation is crucial..."

The Secretary-General's message also called on Hamas "to show political responsibility by enforcing an extended ceasefire," among other moves. The continued captivity of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit "serves no Palestinian interest," he said, again calling for his release. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35218&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

**** Academies Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/010/amend/am010-a.htm>

Daylight Saving Bill

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

Face Coverings (Regulation) Bill

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

**** Identity Documents Bill**

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

Public Bill Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmpublic/identity/100701/am/100701s01.htm>

and

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmpublic/identity/100701/pm/100701s01.htm>

Public Bill Committee Proceedings

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/001/pro0010107p.3.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

**** closes in 6 days**

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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