

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

Crime: Anti-Semitism

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps her Department has taken to combat anti-Semitism since January 2010; and if she will make a statement. [8575]

James Brokenshire: The Government take attacks on the Jewish community very seriously. As part of the 2010 Victims Fund the Community Security Trust secured funding to improve the reporting of anti-Semitic attacks in London and Manchester. This will build on the successful project it ran in North London which was welcomed by the Jewish Community. The Association of Chief Police Officers National Community Tension Team coordinates a national operation to ensure security and reassure Jewish communities during high holy days.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100715/text/100715w0001.htm#10071529000067>

Prosecutions: Anti-Semitism

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions of (a) men and (b) women in each age group under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 there have been in each police force area in each of the last five years; how many of those prosecutions related to anti-Semitic material; and if she will make a statement. [8574]

James Brokenshire: The number of defendants proceeded against for offences under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, by gender, age group and police force area, England and Wales 2004 to 2008 (latest available) can
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be viewed in the following table. The Ministry of Justice does not centrally hold information that identifies the circumstances of an offence unless the offence is separately specified in law; therefore it is not possible to identify those cases involving the dissemination of anti-Semitic material. Court proceedings data for 2009 are planned for publication on 21 October 2010.

To read the lengthy table see

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100715/text/100715w0001.htm#10071529000077>

Criminal Records: Vetting

Mr Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prevented from taking up posts involving contact with vulnerable persons as a result of information disclosed in a Criminal Records Bureau check in each of the last 10 years; and how many of those were (a) volunteers and (b) applying for a paid position. [6545]

Lynne Featherstone: Independent research carried out between 2004 and 2009 demonstrates that the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is continuing to make a difference to the protection of children and the vulnerable.

Ultimately it is for the employer to decide, after full pre-employment checks in addition to a CRB check and making a balanced judgment on the basis of all the information available to them, as to whether an individual job applicant is suitable for a particular position. The CRB is not advised of the outcome of the recruiting decision and neither the CRB nor the Home Office has any influence over this decision.

From the results of the independent research it is estimated that around 130,000 unsuitable people have been prevented from gaining access to children or the vulnerable, as a direct result of CRB checks in the past six years:

20,000 in 2004 (out of 2.6 million checks)
25,000 in 2005 (out of 2.7 million checks)
15,000 in 2006 (out of 3.2 million checks)
20,000 in 2007 (out of 3.3 million checks)
18,000 in 2008 (out of 3.7 million checks)
33,000 in 2009 (out of 4.2 million checks).

These figures are not broken down by applications for positions working solely with children or vulnerable adults or by paid or voluntary positions.

The Home Office is committed to reviewing the criminal records regime. The terms of reference for the review are currently under consideration and further announcements will be made in due course.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100715/text/100715w0001.htm#10071529000068>

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Israel

UK Parliamentary Question

Gaza

Grahame M. Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to visit Gaza. [8240]

Alistair Burt: For security and operational reasons, we do not comment on or announce visits by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary significantly in advance.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100715/text/100715w0002.htm#10071533000010>

European Commission

EU High Representative/Commission Vice-President Catherine Ashton to revisit the Middle East

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton will make her second visit the Middle East from July 17 to 19. During her trip to the region she will meet the leaders of both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, along with U.S. Senator George Mitchell and Quartet Envoy Tony Blair. HR/VP Ashton also plans to revisit Gaza. ...

During her three-day visit, HR/VP Ashton will also meet leaders from Israel, among them Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Defence Minister Ehud Barak. She will also meet senior representatives of the Palestinian Authority, including President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. HR/VP Ashton will meet with the representatives of the two EU missions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, EUBAM Rafah and EUPOLCOPPS.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.parliamenttoday.com/members/viewnews.html?id=46000>

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Foreign Affairs

UK Parliamentary Questions

Anti-Semitism

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received reports on levels of anti-Semitism in (a) Ukraine, (b) Latvia and (c) Estonia since his appointment; and if he will make a statement. [7069]

Mr Lidington: There are no significant problems with anti-Semitism in Latvia and Estonia. In recent years there have been a number of anti-Semitic incidents in Ukraine. We take a serious view of these incidents and continue to urge the Ukrainian authorities to tackle them in a determined way in accordance with Ukraine's international commitments. At the EU-Ukraine Co-operation Council on 15 June 2010, the EU urged the Ukrainian Prime Minister to continue to take further steps to combat intolerance and discrimination against national and other minorities and in particular hate crimes.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100715/text/100715w0002.htm#10071533000002>

Iran: Human Rights

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has made an assessment of the human rights situation of Jewish people in Iran since his appointment; and if he will make a statement. [7068]

Alistair Burt: I am deeply concerned about the situation of Jewish people, and a number of other minorities, in Iran. The position of the three religious minorities recognised by the constitution—Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians—remains vulnerable. Although recognised minority groups have reserved seats in the Parliament, higher positions in state institutions are reserved exclusively for Shiite Muslims.

Further, government rhetoric and actions often create a threatening atmosphere for non-Shia religious groups. I have stated publicly our support for the rights of minorities in Iran and will continue to raise this issue with the Iranian authorities.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100715/text/100715w0002.htm#10071533000014>

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Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

Academies Bill

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

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>

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 today**

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

**** Taking action on rights, support and protection of victims of crime and violence** (closing date 30 September 2010)

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_0053_en.htm

Data protection legislative framework (closes 6 October 2010)

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/dpa-call-evidence-02-07-2010.pdf>

Guidance on Concessionary Schemes for Surface Water Drainage Charges

Applies in England only (closes 22 October 2010)

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/surface-charges/index.htm>

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