

# 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

### UK Parliamentary Question

#### Crime: Anti-Semitism

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if she will commission a report from the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis on the number and location of anti-Semitic incidents in London since December 2008; and if she will make a statement. [8576]

**James Brokenshire:** The Home Office is committed to tackling all hate crime. Data on anti-Semitic hate crime is collected by the Metropolitan police and provided to the Association of Chief Police Officers National Community Tension Team to ensure that current threats are closely monitored. We have no plans to commission a separate report from the Metropolitan Commissioner on this issue.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/text/100719w0001.htm#10071914000071>

### Department for Culture, Media and Sport

**The Operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption and related planning matters for places of worship in England: Guidance**

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/OPSEEGuidance.pdf>

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## Israel

### UK Parliamentary Questions

#### Israel

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take during the next 12 months at the UN on recognition by the UN of Israel as a Jewish state; and if he will make a statement. [R] [8690]

**Alistair Burt:** A number of issues related to the Middle East are discussed on a monthly basis at the UN. We will continue to push for the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1860 which calls for all the parties and the international community to achieve a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in

peace with secure and recognized borders. This has consistently been the UK position and the only long-term solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict.

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to develop relations with the government of Israel since his appointment; what steps he plans to take on this matter in the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [R] [8746]

**Alistair Burt:** The UK is in constant touch and dialogue with the Israeli Government.

We remain determined to do everything possible to work towards a two state solution that achieves a viable and sovereign Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel, with its right to live in peace and security recognised by all its neighbours. The proximity talks that are under way are more important than ever to help pave the way towards a comprehensive peace in the region.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister underlined our commitment in his conversations with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President Abbas, and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has also made this clear in the House.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/text/100719w0003.htm#10071932000011>

### Palestinians

**Andrew Gwynne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with (a) his US counterpart, (b) his Israeli counterpart and (c) the Palestinian Authority on measures to strengthen Palestinian Authority security forces in the West Bank. [8538]

**Alistair Burt:** Enhancing and strengthening the Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) continues to remain a top priority for both the Palestinian Authority and the UK Government.

We work closely alongside the PASF and provide technical assistance aimed at improving the efficiency and professionalism of the security sector as a whole including the civilian police and emergency services; and direct class-room based training for the PASF. In addition to this the UK has separate activity supporting policing, justice and the rule of law in the Palestinian Territories.

We also work closely with the United States Security Co-ordinator (USSC) General Dayton. The USSC provides advice and guidance to support PASF efforts at reform, within the context of the Roadmap and the two-state solution.

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has (a) taken since his appointment and (b) plans to take in the next 12 months at the UN to deter Hezbollah rearmament; and if he will make a statement. [8688]

**Alistair Burt:** During my visit to Beirut and Damascus from 12-14 July 2010, I pressed the Governments of Syria and Lebanon to stop the re-arming of Hezbollah. We continue to support the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, and to press for the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 including through using our position on the UN Security Council.

**Mr Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received of stockpiling by Hezbollah of (a) weapons and (b) missiles in South Lebanon; what recent discussions he has had with the government of Lebanon on this issue; and if he will make a statement. [8689]

**Alistair Burt:** We are concerned by recent reports of weapons transfers to Hezbollah, including Hezbollah's own claims that it possesses significant military capabilities. We continue to monitor information from all available sources, but lack definitive figures. During my recent visit to Lebanon I raised the issue with Lebanese PM Hariri and expressed the need that UN Security Council Resolution 1701 is implemented in full, and that the issue of Hezbollah disarmament be dealt with as a priority.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/text/100719w0003.htm#10071932000016>

## Palestinians: International Assistance

**Mr Slaughter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Israeli government to pay compensation for (a) loss of property, (b) damage to property, (c) physical injuries sustained and (d) psychological damage caused to British citizens on board the Gaza Freedom Flotilla and during their subsequent detention by Israeli authorities. [8554]

**Alistair Burt:** We do not normally pursue any loss or theft of property either through seeking its return or through any legal claim. However, in light of the circumstances of this incident, we have exceptionally tried to assist the British nationals in seeking clarification on, and the return of, their possessions.

Should those involved wish to recover property that had allegedly been stolen, or seek compensation, we would advise the individual, or group, to appoint a local legal representative in Israel. They are best placed to advise them on the appropriate way forward in the country they are claiming in, or against. To assist them we are able to provide a list of English speaking, local lawyers based in Israel. We would of course also advise them to speak to the providers of their travel insurance.

If any British national has concerns about mistreatment while in detention we are able, with their permission, to raise it with the relevant authorities and ask for an independent investigation. I raised this with the returnees when I met them on 17 June 2010, and asked them to write to us with the details of any mistreatment.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/text/100719w0003.htm#10071932000017>

## Gaza

**Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the points made in the International Committee of the Red Cross's news release of 14 June concerning Gaza.[HL1012]

**Baroness Verma:** On 5 July the Government of Israel announced new measures to increase the range and volume of goods entering Gaza. This includes materials for reconstruction projects approved by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and overseen by international organisations. We hope this will enable essential public infrastructure, including sanitation networks, to be built or repaired. The UK Government will continue to press Israel to deliver on commitments it has made.

We share the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC's) concerns regarding healthcare, particularly low levels of essential drugs and medical supplies. Intra-Palestinian co-ordination must be improved and delays caused by security screening of drugs and supplies must be reduced. We agree that restrictions on the use of agricultural land and limits on fishing near Gaza affect the economy and livelihoods of ordinary Gazans. The UK continues to press Israel to ease these restrictions. We also agree that the detention of Gilad Shalit, and Hamas's refusal to allow the ICRC to visit him, is unacceptable and continue to call for his immediate release.

**Lord Hylton:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the Government of Israel and through the quartet and the European Union about the shortage of electricity in Gaza and its implications for public health in the summer.[HL1014]

**Baroness Verma:** Shortages of electricity in Gaza have been caused both by Israeli restrictions on the amount of fuel supplied to Gaza, and recent disagreements between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Gaza Electricity Distribution Company (GEDCO). We recognise that shortages have implications for the provision of healthcare in Gaza and for the general health of the population. The UK Government have made clear to the PA and GEDCO that we wish to see a sustainable, long-term arrangement that safeguards electricity provision for ordinary Gazans. We continue to press the Government of Israel over restrictions

of goods entering Gaza and welcome the announcement of 5 July to ease restrictions of certain goods. We will monitor carefully the implications of this announcement for the supply of fuel to Gaza.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/100719w0001.htm#10071917000763>

### **Lebanon: Peacekeeping Operations**

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on the security situation in South Lebanon, with particular reference to (a) recent attacks on United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon patrols in the region and (b) Israeli military activity along the Lebanese border. [9066]

**Alistair Burt:** The security situation in southern Lebanon remains calm but fragile. We remain extremely concerned by the recent attacks against UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) peacekeepers on 29 June, 3 July, and 4 July. The UK joined with other Security Council members in agreeing a press statement which condemned such attacks and made clear the need for UNIFIL to be afforded the freedom of movement and security necessary to fulfil its mandate. Prior to this period however, as the UN Secretary General makes clear in his latest report (13th) on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1701, the security situation has been relatively quiet. I represented my concerns to the Lebanese Government during my visit to the region on 13-14 June 2010 and we hope for no repeat of this incident in the future.

We are aware of reports of Israeli military activity along the border with Lebanon as well as repeated violations of Lebanese airspace by Israeli overflights, which continue to occur. We call on both Israel and Lebanon to comply in full with UNSCR 1701 and to work to maintain the existing stability.

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his most recent assessment is of the ability of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon to carry out its peacekeeping duties in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701. [9067]

**Alistair Burt:** The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) plays a vital and positive role in maintaining peace and security in southern Lebanon. However it faces a number of challenges, underlined by the recent attacks on 29 June, 3 July, and 4 July against its peacekeepers.

The UK has joined with other (P5) Security Council members in agreeing a press statement which condemned such attacks and made clear the need for UNIFIL to be afforded freedom of movement and security necessary for it to fulfil its mandate.

I also represented these concerns to the Lebanese Government, during my visit to the region on 13-14 June 2010 and we hope for no repeat of this incident in the future.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/text/100719w0003.htm#10071932000014>

### **Hezbollah**

**Andrew Gwynne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's policy of exploring contacts with Hezbollah. [8590]

**Alistair Burt:** Our embassy in Beirut held very limited contacts with Hezbollah politicians before May 2010. We will be reviewing this issue, along with our wider Lebanon policy, in a careful and considered manner.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/text/100719w0003.htm#10071932000009>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* New or updated

### UK Parliament

#### **\*\* Academies Bill**

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

Second Reading, House of Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/debtext/100719-0001.htm#10071915000001>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/057/amend/pbc0571907a.61-67.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

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