

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Cabinet Office

National Citizen Service pilots – commissioning process for grants opens

... National Citizen Service will give young people the chance to learn new skills that will help them to make a positive contribution to their community. Government-backed pilots for the scheme will take place in summer 2011 and provide around 10,000 places for 16 year old school-leavers, subject to the outcome of the cross-government spending review which concludes in October 2010.

Activities are expected to include an outdoor challenge, structured tasks to develop personal skills whilst visiting and helping groups in the local neighbourhood and designing a social action project in consultation with local communities. ...

The Office for Civil Society is planning to award a small number of grant funding agreements to organisations/groups of organisations that can deliver the programme in a range of locations across England during the pilot period.

To apply ... email mailbox.nationalcitizenservice@education.gsi.gov.uk to obtain a copy of the specification and an expression of interest form. The deadline for completed forms is 12.00pm on Wednesday 25 August. Organisations successful at this stage will be notified and invited to submit a full application in September 2010.

Successful candidates will be announced in late October. ...

Six information events are running for potential bidders on 5th August in London, on 9th August in Sheffield and on 11th August in London. ...

To read the full press release see

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/100802-grants.aspx

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Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UK statement on UN Inquiry into Gaza flotilla and today's clashes on Israeli-Lebanon border

The Foreign Office has issued a statement following the UN Secretary-General's announcement of a panel of inquiry into the interception of the Gaza flotilla on 31 May, and today's clashes on the Israel-Lebanon border.

Speaking earlier today, a Foreign Office spokesperson said: "We welcome the UN

Secretary-General's establishment of a panel of inquiry into the interception of the Gaza flotilla on 31 May, and both Israel and Turkey's commitment to participate. The panel has an important role to play in investigating and resolving the dispute over the flotilla and preventing future recurrence. It is also vital that the existing national investigations proceed swiftly, transparently and rigorously to ensure full accountability.

We are very concerned by the recent rocket fire on towns in southern Israel, continuing violence in Gaza and today's violence on the Israeli-Lebanon border, all of which underline the importance, for the region as a whole, of all parties committing to a lasting peace. We condemn the violence today that led to deaths on both sides and call on Israel and Lebanon to act with restraint.

Against this backdrop a move to substantial talks by the Israelis and Palestinians is essential; we encourage both parties to engage on the core issues as quickly as possible, and refrain from action that damages the process, in particular acts of violence, settlement construction or other provocations."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22643804>

United Nations

UN official calls for return of Palestinian families one year after eviction

On the "sad occasion" of the one-year anniversary of evictions of Palestinian refugees from their homes in East Jerusalem today, a senior United Nations official called on Israeli authorities to allow families to return to their homes and to protect the rights of Palestinians.

One year ago today, 11 Palestinian families were forcibly removed from the Arab neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem, where they had lived for more than half a century, by Israeli security forces, with Israeli settlers moving into their homes. ...

"It is a matter of deep concern that Palestinians, who have already endured extreme suffering of various kinds, including multiple episodes of large-scale displacement, should remain subject to the humiliation of the kind inflicted by forced evictions and home demolitions," the official said today.

Mr. Grandi also repeated his call on Israel to defend, protect and promote the rights and freedoms of Palestinians in line with the country's obligations under international law ...

The treatment of the 11 families forced to leave Sheikh Jarrah is a reflection of the experience of Palestinians and Palestinian refugees in other parts of occupied East Jerusalem, including Silwan, Beit Hanina and the Old City, where many are constantly afraid of demolitions and evictions. Last week, armed Israeli settlers forcibly took over a building in the Old City while its Palestinian residents were attending a wedding. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35513&Cr=palestin&Cr1=>

UN urges restraint after rocket from Gaza hits Israeli city

A senior United Nations official in the Middle East has condemned the firing of a rocket from the Gaza Strip into Israel ... and urged restraint by all parties in the wake of the attack. ... "Indiscriminate rocket fire against civilians is completely unacceptable and constitutes a terrorist attack," Robert Serry, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, said in a statement. "We call on the de facto authorities in Gaza to ensure that these kinds of actions do not occur," ...

Mr. Serry stressed that violent actions must not be allowed to undermine progress in the on-going talks between Israel and the Palestinians, and urged all parties to exercise restraint and abide by international law. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=35481&Cr=Palestin&Cr1=>

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Consultations

** new or updated

Policing in the 21st century: reconnecting police and the people

(closing date 20 September 2010)

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/consultations/policing-21st-century/>

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>

**** Consultation on the change to policy direction for the Big Lottery Fund** (closes 29 October 2010)

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/consultations/7313.aspx>

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