

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Consultations](#)

[Israel](#)

Home Affairs

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Papal visit: further details announced

Details on Pope Benedict XVI's schedule for 16 to 19 September and travel information for the public celebrations have been announced.

The Pope will start his visit on Thursday 16 September by attending a State welcome ceremony at the Palace of Holyrood House in Edinburgh, where he will have an audience with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He will then travel to Glasgow to celebrate mass in Bellahouston Park.

On Friday 17 September the Pope will hold a private celebration of Mass in the Chapel of the Apostolic Nunciature in Wimbledon. He will later address civil society in the Palace of Westminster before leading a celebration of evening prayer in Westminster Abbey.

On Saturday 18 September, the Pope will hold a Prayer Vigil on the Eve of the Beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman in Hyde Park. The Pope will then travel to Birmingham on Sunday 19 September to celebrate mass for the Beatification of the Venerable Cardinal John Henry Newman in Cofton Park in Rednal. ...

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22757652>

Full itinerary <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/papal-visit/itinerary.aspx>

[TOP](#)

Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Foreign Secretary statement on Gilad Shalit

Foreign Secretary William Hague has spoken on the anniversary of the abduction of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. William Hague said: "Today marks the fourth anniversary of the abduction of Israeli soldier, Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit. My thoughts are with Gilad's parents today. I sincerely hope that they will soon be able to welcome their son home.

The UK has long called for Gilad Shalit's immediate and unconditional release and we reiterate that call today. It is also vital that Hamas allows the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Gilad immediately and ensure that he is in good health. His continued captivity without any ICRC access and with only very occasional, minimal contact with his family is utterly unacceptable. We continue to call on Hamas to renounce violence and take immediate and concrete steps towards the Quartet principles and to free Gilad Shalit without delay."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22438393>

Middle East Peace Process direct talks

Foreign Secretary William Hague has spoken after the agreement of direct talks between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Following the agreement, the Foreign Secretary said: "I warmly welcome the decision by Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to move to direct talks, and the Quartet statement earlier today. A two state solution is the only hope for lasting peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians. Today's announcement is a courageous step towards that goal. Urgent progress must now be made. We call on all parties to refrain from any activity that could undermine negotiations. The United Kingdom stands ready to do all we can to support the parties and buttress these important talks, working with the United States and our other EU and UN international partners."

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=22732025>

European Union

Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians

"I welcome the decision by Israel and the Palestinians to resume direct negotiations. This decision by the parties to engage in substantive talks represents a major step on the road towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region, something I am hopeful we can now achieve. I want to firstly commend U.S. President Barack Obama, my U.S. counterpart, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Senator George Mitchell for their hard work and determination to bring the Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table. I want to also credit my Quartet partners and Quartet Envoy Tony Blair and I would like to thank all of the EU member states for their support of this process. I also want to stress the importance of the positive outcome of the Arab League Foreign Ministers meeting of July 29.

As a member of the Quartet, and on behalf of the EU, I will continue to work with the parties to support the negotiations. We all want to see a two-state solution with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with each other and their neighbours.

The parties must work fast and hard on all the final status issues to meet the Quartet's call for a negotiated settlement within one year. To give negotiations the best chance of success, an enabling environment on the ground is essential. It is therefore imperative that both parties keep calm and exercise restraint. They should only act on the basis of international law, refraining from all provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric. Successful negotiations will also need sustained regional, international support and the continuation of the Palestinian state-building process, which the EU fully supports. I call on all concerned to fulfil previous pledges to help the Palestinian Authority.

I also want to reiterate the EU's readiness to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements aimed at ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements."

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/116227.pdf

Quartet

Statement by Middle East Quartet

The representatives of the Quartet reaffirm their strong support for direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians to resolve all final status issues. The Quartet reaffirms its full commitment to its previous statements, ... which provides that direct, bilateral negotiations that resolve all final status issues should "lead to a settlement, negotiated between the parties, that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours".

The Quartet expresses its determination to support the parties throughout the negotiations, which can be completed within one year, and the implementation of an

agreement. ... Accordingly, the Quartet calls on the Israelis and the Palestinians to join in launching direct negotiations on 2 September in Washington, D.C., to resolve all final status issues and fulfil the aspirations of both parties.

To read the full press release see

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2010/sg2161.doc.htm>

United Nations

Ban welcomes decision of Israeli, Palestinian leaders to start direct negotiations

The Secretary-General welcomes the decision by both Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to begin direct negotiations, following the statement of the Quartet and at the invitation of the US Government. The Secretary-General believes that negotiations are the only way for the parties to resolve all final status issues and he calls upon both sides to show leadership courage, and responsibility to realize the aspirations of both peoples. We should all be aware that this is an opportunity that must not be wasted. The Secretary-General underlines the importance of the international community's support to the negotiations and to the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the region in line with the Madrid terms of reference, Security Council Resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. This opportunity must be seized so that the hope of a better future for the people of the region to live in peace, security and freedom can be fully realized.

<http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=4734>

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated

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

(closes 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>

**** Equality Act 2010: The public sector Equality Duty: Promoting equality through transparency** (closing date 10 November 2010)

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/402461_GEO_EqualityAct2010ThePublicSectorEqualityDuty_acc.pdf

[TOP](#)