

Political Affairs Brief

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

Contents

[Home Affairs](#)

[Israel](#)

[Relevant Legislation](#)

[Other Relevant Information](#)

[Consultations](#)

Home Affairs

UK Parliamentary Questions

Anti-Semitism

Mr Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government what research his Department has (a) undertaken and (b) evaluated on the causes of anti-Semitism; when his Department last undertook a review of the evidence relating to (i) the causes of anti-Semitism and (ii) the number of anti-Semitic attacks drawing on (A) UK and (B) international research; and if he will make a statement. [R] [21941]

Andrew Stunell: In the last 18 months DCLG funded the European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism (EISCA) to research and publish a report on Antisemitic Discourse. The Cross-Government working group to tackle anti-Semitism meets on a quarterly basis to discuss and review the evidence emanating from the UK and abroad relating to the causes of anti-Semitism in the UK and regularly reviews the number of anti-Semitic incidents.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101108/text/101108w0001.htm#10110827000004>

Meat: Labelling

Angie Bray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to ensure that the public is made aware of the slaughter method used for meat sold by food retailers; and if she will make a statement. [22380]

Mr Paice: I appreciate that this is an issue which people feel strongly about and we will be working with interested groups to find a way to address their concerns. People should know what they are buying in shops and when they are eating out, and I will be discussing with the food industry whether labelling and point of sale information can play a greater role in giving consumers a choice.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101108/text/101108w0001.htm#10110817000036>

Downing Street

'Transparency' website

<http://transparency.number10.gov.uk/>

Home Office

Home Secretary announces Prevent review

... The review of Prevent will assess how the current strand of the government's counter-terrorism programme can work more effectively. The conclusions will inform a refreshed strategy to be published next year.

Lord Carlile of Berriew QC will provide expert, independent oversight on the review. And the Home Secretary announced he would be replaced in his role as independent reviewer of counter-terrorism powers by David Anderson QC in the new year.

The new Prevent strategy will separate work to prevent terrorism from work to promote integration, which will be led by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

... The review will, among other things:

- consider the purpose and scope of the Prevent strategy, its overlap and links with other areas of government policy and its delivery at local level
- examine the role of institutions – such as prisons, higher and further education bodies, schools and mosques – in the delivery of Prevent
- consider the role of other Prevent delivery partners, including the police and other statutory bodies
- consider how activity on Prevent in the UK can be joined up with work overseas
- examine monitoring and evaluation structures to ensure effectiveness
- make recommendations for a revised Prevent strategy

... The Home Secretary will report back on the findings of the Prevent review early next year.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/press-releases/prevent-review>

Communities and Local Government

DCLG responds to a Guardian article that incorrectly suggested the Church of England was seeking £5m to combat radicalisation

The Guardian recently published an article that incorrectly suggested the Church of England was planning to seek £5m for a new initiative to combat radicalisation. It has since clarified that the focus of such an initiative would be to promote community cohesion, and improve relations between faiths and neighbourhoods.

A spokesperson from the Department for Communities and Local Government said: "The Church of England are developing proposals that would aim to enhance the ability of people from different religious backgrounds to come together locally to learn from each other and improve their neighbourhoods. No decisions have yet been taken on what kind of Government support may be appropriate."

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/issuesandresponses/newsroom/1764253>

[TOP](#)

Israel

House of Commons Debate

Reconstructing Gaza

includes:

col 107 **Dr Julian Huppert:** ...In our visit to Gaza, we saw a population who felt under siege, trapped inside their own small strip of land, and overcrowded-an intelligent, peaceful population, desperate for education and opportunity. ... I was struck by the tolerance. We attended a human rights lesson at one of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency-run schools, where the pupils were asked about tolerance. One of the

questions was, "How should you respond to people who are not tolerant of you?" and I thought that the response from one young lady was fantastic. She said, "You should be tolerant of them to show them what they ought to be doing," ...

We did not see a huge humanitarian crisis ... but that is largely down to the excellent work of UNRWA ... UNRWA does amazing work ... we were very impressed by the range and quality of provision, from housing for refugees to schooling for their children, from women's centres to summer camps. ... We heard of a crisis in UNRWA-led education, which is far more liberal than that in the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Authority schools and even includes a course on the holocaust. ... The money for eight much-needed new schools and two extensions has been obtained, the plans have been prepared and the contracts have been let, but the materials struggle to get in. While we were there, of the 48 trucks bringing in materials for the schools, 47 were turned back for no clear reason. ... [however] on Friday I heard from the Israeli embassy that approval had been granted for the eight schools, the two extensions and for two clinic centres, and that building materials will be allowed into Gaza in accordance with the building work. ...

... Israel does of course have a legitimate reason for wanting to control materials that could be used to make rockets, but it falls apart on closer examination. ... The taxes that Hamas levies on imports through the tunnels provide a significant income to that organisation, helping to fund its activities and to buy up land and businesses throughout Gaza. ... We found it ironic and deeply concerning that Hamas and related private individuals can have all the materials they need to build anything, from apartment blocks to bunkers, while the only effective constraints appear to be on the UN, non-governmental organisations and legitimate businessmen. ...

The press rarely highlights the fact that Egypt maintains a blockade on people movement in Gaza, just as Israel does, largely out of fear of the spread of Hamas ideology. ... it was fascinating to discover how broad the Hamas support base is, along with the spectrum that it covers, from reformers to hard-liners. It was also interesting to see how some of the more extremist Islamic groups there consider Hamas to be far too moderate. Those groups have been involved in many recent attacks on Israel, and Hamas has where possible put them down brutally. ...

I would highlight the leadership in human rights provided by Jaber Wishah of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. He was jailed by Israel for his part in fighting against the Israelis, and he spent many years in jail, but while he was there he decided to renounce violence, and he now dedicates himself to fighting fearlessly for human rights throughout Gaza, courageously reporting infringements by Palestinian and Israeli alike against people from any background. ...

col 118 **Alistair Burt:** ... we do not advise unauthorised travel to Gaza. ... there are recognised channels to go through, which include the United Nations. We encourage that. ... However ... there are opportunities taken where the political point of breaking the blockade appears to be almost as important as any of the humanitarian aid behind it, with sometimes tragic consequences ...

I would like to reiterate the call for Hamas to release Gilad Shalit, because it is clearly unacceptable that he remains in captivity after four years. ...

... I worry that a given situation remains unresolved because, in reality, it suits all parties, rather than those most affected, to leave it be. For Israel, Gaza is a heavy security risk-a dagger potentially pointing at its heart, through Hamas. It is a place of missed opportunities, following-Israel believes-the generosity of its withdrawal. For Hamas, Gaza is a counter to Fatah-an element in its war with Fatah, as much as in its role of resistance to Israel. For Egypt, Gaza is a conundrum too-part of the need to resolve the Palestinian situation, but where, in authority, it finds a political entity to which it is opposed, and in whose success it has no more vested interest than Israel. In the middle are the people-the children; ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101108/debtext/101108-0003.htm#10110831000002>

Palestinians: Overseas Students

Mark Menzies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what schemes his Department has in place to provide students from United Nations Relief and Works Agency schools in Gaza and the West Bank an opportunity to study at UK universities. [22446]

Mr Duncan: The Department for International Development (DFID) does not have any schemes specifically for students from the west bank and Gaza to study at UK universities. There are, however, two schemes to which Palestinian postgraduate students can apply to study in the UK for further qualifications. The Chevening scholarship scheme funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provides talented graduates and young professionals from developing countries with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) with the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council fund the Dorothy Hodgkin Postgraduate Awards for outstanding students from the developing world to study for PhDs in high-rated UK research facilities.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101108/text/101108w0001.htm#10110825000014>

Overseas Students: Palestinians

Mark Menzies: To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills what routes are available for students resident in the West Bank and Gaza to study at UK universities. [22447]

Mr Willetts: UK universities recruit students from all around the world including from the Palestinian Territories. In 2008/09, the latest year for which data is available, the Higher Education Statistics Agency recorded 75 students from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza studying at UK higher education institutions. Policy on admissions rests with individual universities. Places for students outside the European Union are not publicly funded and nor are the numbers controlled centrally. This means that universities are free to set their own limits although they must satisfy themselves that applicants meet the necessary entry requirements for their courses.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is supporting the Higher Education Scholarships for Palestine Programme (HESPAL) which will see 10 academics a year from Palestinian universities complete a year's postgraduate study at a UK partner university. The programme is managed by the British Council and funded jointly by private sponsors, participating universities and the Government.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101108/text/101108w0006.htm#1011096000054>

Gaza: Human Rights

Michael Ellis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of freedom of speech and the treatment of journalists in the Gaza Strip. [19983]

Alistair Burt: The UK is concerned by the treatment of Gazan journalists in recent months. This includes a violent attack against one journalist.

We recognise the rights of Palestinians under international law to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

We will support effective international efforts to address impunity for attacks on journalists and practices which curtail the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101108/text/101108w0003.htm#10110832000052>

Palestinians: International Assistance

Richard Graham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the government of Israel on the importation of building materials into Gaza. [20674]

Alistair Burt: The UK welcomes the measures Israel announced in June to improve the flow of goods into Gaza. According to the UN in May, prior to the Israeli announcement, there were 2,794 trucks allowed into Gaza compared to 3569 in September. However, this still falls significantly short of the required amount and we believe that more needs to be done to ensure full implementation and deliver real change on the ground. We continue to discuss these issues with the Government of Israel and the UN Relief and Works Agency.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101108/text/101108w0003.htm#10110832000053>

[TOP](#)

Relevant Legislation ** New or updated

UK Parliament

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>

Fixed Term Parliaments Bill

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

Identity Documents Bill

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

Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill

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

Scottish Parliament

Certification of Death Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/58-CertDeath/index.htm>

End of Life Assistance Bill

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/38-EndLifeAssist/index.htm>

[TOP](#)

Other Relevant Information

Charity Commission

Charity trustees asked for views on regulator's future

Charity trustees have been invited to share their views on the Charity Commission's future. The call comes after the regulator's funding was cut by 33% in real terms as part of the government's review of public spending. The Commission has announced that the

cuts are likely to lead to a loss of 140 full time equivalent posts. ...

Dame Suzi Leather, Charity Commission chair, said: "I urge trustees to have their say on how charities are regulated in the years ahead. As the people ultimately responsible for running charities, trustees have a direct interest in the future of the Commission. The strategic review is likely to see the Commission changing quite considerably and it is important that process is informed by the needs and concerns of trustees." ...

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/RSS/News/pr_ccnews32.aspx

[TOP](#)

Consultations

** new or updated

**** closes tomorrow**

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

Certification of Death (Scotland) Bill (closes 18 November 2010)

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/hs/inquiries/CertificationOfDeathBill/CallForEvidence.htm>

Equality Duty: Detailed Proposals - Consultation on Public Sector Equality Duty Draft Regulations and Order (Scotland) (closes 26 November 2010)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/324431/0104438.pdf>

The Future of the Citizenship Survey (closing date 30 November 2010)

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1756366.pdf>

Charity Commission: Proposed withdrawal of paper forms for Annual Returns, Registration applications, and forthcoming Charitable Incorporated Organisations (closes 2 December 2010)

[http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About us/About the Commission/ols consultation intro.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About%20us/About%20the%20Commission/ols_consultation_intro.aspx)

Equality Act 2010 - Performance of the Public Sector Equality Duties in Wales (closes 17 December 2010)

<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/equality/equalityact2010/?lang=en>

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Draft Code of Practice on Further and Higher Education (closes 31 December 2010)

http://live.ehrc.precedenthost.co.uk/cgi-bin/generate.pl?page_id= sx0666i4b&save=screen

**** Charity Commission for England and Wales: Views on Future Strategy**

(closes 14 January 2011)

http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/RSS/News/pr_strategic_review.aspx

[TOP](#)