

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 Question

Circumcision

Andrea Leadsom: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the NHS funds non-medical circumcisions; and if he will issue guidance to healthcare commissioners on the priority to be accorded to such procedures. [24114]

Paul Burstow: The national health service normally only performs circumcision where medically indicated. However, a primary care trust has a duty to protect the health of the public in their area and may decide to ensure that a safe and affordable male circumcision service is available in other circumstances, where there are concerns about harm to patients. There are currently no plans for the Secretary of State to issue guidance to health care commissioners on male circumcision.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101117/text/101117w0004.htm#1011181000032>

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Israel

UK Parliamentary Questions

Israel and Palestine

Baroness Tonge: To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the behaviour by Israeli settlers towards Palestinians, particularly in light of the setting fire to a school in As-Sawiya on 20 October. [HL3601]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): We are concerned by this attack reportedly by Israeli settlers and condemn all such acts of violence. We call on all parties to refrain from acts of provocation.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101117w0001.htm#10111740000207>

Gaza: Human Rights

Robert Halfon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received of human rights abuses in Gaza. [24580]

Alistair Burt: Human rights organisations and other non-governmental organisations in Gaza are increasingly concerned about restrictions on their own activities and on the wider curtailing of personal freedoms.

We share these concerns, including regarding violent harassment of political opponents, violent retribution-including summary executions-against those Hamas deem collaborators with Israel, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and a crack down on women's freedom.

The UK calls on all Palestinian militants to take immediate and concrete steps towards the Quartet principles, unconditionally to release Gilad Shalit, who has been held in captivity for just under four years, and to end its interference with the operations of non-governmental organisations and UN agencies in Gaza.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101117/text/101117w0001.htm#10111758000012>

Middle East: Armed Conflict

Robert Halfon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent reports he has received on the number of rocket attacks on Israeli citizens by (a) Islamic Jihad and (b) Hamas in 2010; and what assessment he has made of the likely implications of such attacks for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. [24581]

Alistair Burt: According to the Israeli Defence Force since 1 January 2010 there have been 122 rockets and 87 mortars launched from Gaza at the state of Israel.

We have consistently condemned such acts of terrorism. It is clear that those concerned care more about damaging the peace process than about the lives of ordinary Palestinians. Negotiations are vital for peace. We hope that leaders will stand firm in the face of such provocations.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101117/text/101117w0001.htm#10111758000015>

Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Joseph Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to prevent UK aid intended for Palestinians in Gaza from reaching Hamas. [24187]

Mr Duncan: UK aid to Gaza is primarily delivered through the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). UNRWA has a range of safeguards to ensure that its operations benefit ordinary Gazans rather than Hamas, and that its staff do not engage in political or militant activity. Other UK funding for Gaza since 2007 has supported projects implemented by established and reputable organisations, such as UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and international non-governmental organisations like Oxfam, Save the Children and Islamic Relief. We work closely with all partners on project design to ensure that UK funding complies with European Union and UK legislation on terrorist financing. The monitoring of UK-funded projects which we undertake together with implementing partners has revealed no evidence of any financial benefit to Hamas.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101117/text/101117w0001.htm#10111758000040>

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UK Minister "welcomes" Israel's intention to withdraw from Ghajjar, Lebanon

Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt has spoken following an announcement by the Israeli Security Cabinet that Israeli forces will withdraw from Northern Ghajjar in Lebanon. This is in line with their responsibilities under UN Security Council Resolution 1701. ... "I welcome this announcement. It is a positive development, and a sign of progress in the region. We call on Israel and the UN to work together to agree practical measures to implement this proposal as soon as is possible.

We continue to call on all parties to fulfil their obligations under UNSCR 1701".

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=119264682>

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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>

Bill as brought to the House of Lords from the Commons

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/029/2011029.pdf>

Report Stage, House of Lords

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101117-0001.htm#10111743000857>

**** Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill**

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

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/026/amend/am026-a.htm>

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>

End of Life Assistance Bill: Stage 1 Report

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/endLifeAsstBill/reports-10/ela10-01-vol1.htm>

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Consultations ** new or updated

**** closes today**

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

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

**** closes in 8 days**

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

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

**** Improvements to Criminal Justice Statistics** (closing date 18 February 2011)
<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/statistics-cp171110.htm>

Prevent Review (closing date not stated)
<http://preventreview.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

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