

# Political Affairs Brief

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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### Council of Europe

#### **PACE President at rekindling of Hanukkah Flame in Paris**

"Light is the symbol of tolerance, education and respect for others. All these symbols that unite the Jews across the world during the eight days of Hanukkah are also the symbols and values that unite all the people across Europe ... But in the same way as the light of Hanukkah is fragile and needs a lot of care and common effort to be carried through, so do the values that we are trying to nurture. I have personally placed the need for dialogue between cultures and religions and, more generally, the fight against prejudice and the promotion of tolerance at the heart of my action as a President of the Assembly. ...

[http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/NewsManager/EMB\\_NewsManagerView.asp?ID=6137&L=2](http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/NewsManager/EMB_NewsManagerView.asp?ID=6137&L=2)

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## [Foreign Affairs](#)

### House of Lords Debate

#### **Human Rights**

*includes:*

*col 1579:* **Lord Alton of Liverpool:** ... At this time of Chanukah, the festival of lights ... it is worth remarking that, earlier this year, 52 rabbis, as part of the Yom HaShoah, the annual commemoration of the Holocaust, wrote that continuing atrocities and conflict in the Congo, "has produced a terrible humanitarian crisis ... This is a moral outrage which the international community must act to help put right". ... Modern human rights discourse is rooted in our fearsome experiences of the 20th century. The horrors and degradations of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen gave birth to the rich language of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which asserts that, "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want". ... During the Cold War years which followed [the Helsinki] declaration, it would once again be the plight of European Jews-Russia's refuseniks-and the Helsinki Final Act, promulgated in 1975, which began to challenge consciences and rouse nations.

*col 1583* **Lord Anderson of Swansea:** ... The commission is also right to point out the need for a more effective UN Human Rights Council. All too often there is a blocking group, which responds by omitting Iran from monitoring, for example, and which is, of course, overtly anti-Israel and pro-Arab. ...

*col 1586* **Lord Sacks:** ... It took great crises to make people aware of human rights. The wars of religion in the seventeenth century which led Milton and Locke to formulate the doctrine of the rights of man proclaimed, in the next century, the American and French revolutions. It was sustained reflection on the Holocaust and on the Nazi programme to eliminate whole classes of humanity-the physically and mentally handicapped, homosexuals, Roma and Sinti, and Jews-that led to the great 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was a way of saying that what happened in the Holocaust should never happen again, and that those who died should not have died in vain.

It remains a testament to the human spirit that, at that time of Cold War and tense conflict in the Middle East, the nations of the world were none the less able to come together in collective affirmation, whether through religious faith or human reason, of the inherent dignity, and the equal and inalienable rights, of all members of the human family. ... Rights depend not only on declarations but on education. Rights are lost when one group within a society, usually the dominant group, sees another group as a threat to its freedom and its own dominance. Threat becomes fear, fear becomes hate, and hate becomes dehumanisation. The Nazis called Jews vermin and lice. The Hutus of Rwanda called the Tutsis inyenzi, or cockroaches. When this happens-when we dehumanise the other-evil follows, as night follows day. The only way to stop this is through education. I am deeply concerned at the teaching of hate that exists in some parts of the world and among some groups today. That teaching is poisoning the minds of young children and other vulnerable individuals, condemning them to a future of conflict and hostility from which they themselves will lose. Hate harms the hater no less than the hated; and when I diminish others, I am myself diminished. ... Today ... is the first day of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah-the anniversary of the time 22 centuries ago when Jews fought and won their right to religious freedom. Shall we not work together-Jews, Christians, Muslims and those of all faiths-to teach the world's children to see God's image in people who are not in their image, whose colour is not theirs, whose language is not theirs, whose face is not theirs? The principle is shared, if differently expressed, by secular humanists of all kinds, for human rights begin with the way in which we teach our children to recognise the humanity of others and the dignity of difference. The rights of tomorrow are born in the education of today. ...

*col 1604* **Baroness Morris of Bolton:** ... John Ging, a most inspirational man and director of operations in Gaza for the UN Relief and Works Agency, said recently: "We have run out of words to describe how bad it is here".

A month ago, I returned from a trip to Gaza. I was enormously moved by the plight of the people, and three things I saw have made a lasting impression. The first was a visit to the al-Shifa hospital, where vital medical equipment lies idle because of a lack of spare parts, and where we met patients denied permission to leave Gaza for life-saving treatment, often without any explanation given as to why that permission had been denied. ...

The second visit to make a lasting impression was to an UNRWA food distribution centre where proud, well-educated men and women were queuing for their quarterly rations of food. Eighty per cent of the population of Gaza receives food aid, yet there has been no flood, no failure of crops and no earthquake, just a shutdown of the system ... I felt deep shame, and I pay tribute to the decency, good humour and enormous resilience of the Palestinian people, who wish to be good neighbours to Israel and who have so much to offer to the world. ... I visited a human rights class in an UNRWA school... the 15 year-old girls ... were attentive, clever and articulate, and their grasp of human rights and the attendant responsibilities to people of all backgrounds and all religions or none would put most grown-ups in the western world to shame. ...

col 1608 **Lord Wright of Richmond:** ... appalling abuse of the human rights of Palestinians in Gaza, in the occupied West Bank and in east Jerusalem. I submit that this is, in some ways, even more shocking than many of the human rights abuses to which noble Lords have drawn attention in this debate, since they are violations committed by the Government of a self-proclaimed democracy who pride themselves on the rule of law, and who should be ashamed, as many of their citizens and supporters are, to have their human rights record bracketed with the monstrous regime of North Korea. ... Israeli violation of human rights risks destroying any hope of achieving a situation whereby Israel and her Palestinian neighbour can live together in peace and mutual respect. ...

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101202-0001.htm#10120240000731>

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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/fixeterminparliaments.html>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmbills/064/amend/pbc0640112a.1241-1242.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>

Notice of amendments

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/026/amend/ml026-ii.htm>

#### **Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill**

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

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated

### **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](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](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>

### **National statistics, published by the Department of Health about the experience of black and minority ethnic patients**

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH\\_121762](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations/Liveconsultations/DH_121762)

### **Prevent Review**

(closing date not stated)

<http://preventreview.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

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