

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

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House of Commons Written Answer

Post-mortems

Sarah Wollaston [67295] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average waiting time for carrying out post-mortems for (a) children and (b) adults was in the most recent period for which

Philip Lee: The information requested is not held centrally.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-09/67295/>

House of Lords Oral Committee for Privileges and Conduct

Report: The conduct of Baroness Tonge

page 4 ... The commissioner's report covered three allegations about Baroness Tonge.

3. The first allegation related to a meeting Baroness Tonge chaired and hosted in House of Lords committee room 2A on 25 October 2016 to launch the "Balfour Apology Campaign", which seeks an apology from the UK Government for the Balfour Declaration of 1917. It was alleged that the content of the meeting was antisemitic and that, by allowing this to happen, Baroness Tonge had failed to act on her personal honour, and so breached paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct. The commissioner considered that a member may fail to act on personal honour if (a) the member hosts a meeting on the parliamentary estate with the intention of promoting antisemitism or (b) the meeting is not hosted for that purpose but is taken over by those promoting antisemitism and the member does not take steps to address that. Applying that test, the commissioner found that in this case the meeting was not held with the intention of promoting antisemitism nor was taken over by those promoting antisemitism. Therefore the commissioner found that Baroness Tonge had not failed to act on her personal honour and so had not breached paragraph 8(b) of the Code of Conduct.

4. The second allegation also related to the meeting on 25 October 2016. The meeting was filmed and photographed, with the footage posted on social media. Members are required to obtain Black Rod's permission for meetings on the House of Lords' part of the parliamentary estate to be filmed and photographed. No such permission was obtained. The commissioner therefore found Baroness Tonge in breach of a rule agreed by the House on the use of facilities, and so in breach of paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct. Baroness Tonge admitted this breach and apologised to the commissioner for it.

5. The third allegation related to an event Baroness Tonge hosted on 14 December 2016 in House of Lords committee room G to discuss the book *State of Terror*. The event was catered, which means it was subject to the banqueting rules. Those rules have been agreed by the House so a breach of them constitutes a breach of paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct. One of the banqueting rules is that functions cannot be used for book launches (with certain exceptions which did not apply to this event). The commissioner found that the event hosted by Baroness Tonge did not amount to a book launch, as the book had been published two months previously, had already had two (external) launch events and was not on sale or display at the event. The commissioner therefore found that Baroness Tonge did not breach paragraph 10(c) of the Code of Conduct in respect of the event on 14 December 2016. ...

To read the full report see

<https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201617/ldselect/ldprivi/142/142.pdf>

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House of Commons Oral Answer

Margaret Ferrier: Last week the Leader of the House assured me that the Government are seeking urgent clarification from the Israeli authorities on the new law banning foreigners who call for the boycotting of illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. There has been a week of absolute silence from the Foreign Office on that issue and, on Monday, Hugh Lanning, chair of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, was the first UK citizen to be deported from Israel following the passing of that law. May we please have a statement from the Foreign Office clarifying how the application of the law will affect UK passport holders and UK foreign policy?

Mr Lidington: The straight answer is that, since the hon. Lady raised the issue with me last week, we have not yet had the detailed clarification that we are seeking from the Israeli Government. As a result, the permanent secretary at the Foreign Office is raising the matter directly with Israeli officials this week.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-16/debates/9444EAFE-076D-47DE-8645-0EC87A1369FC/BusinessOfTheHouse#contribution-078EAFEE-9F7C-4FC5-BF95-1CA7E2ACEB7F>

House of Commons Written Answer

Occupied Territories: Demolition

Ruth Cadbury [67285] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what plans are in place to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to Palestinians who will be made homeless by demolitions in the near future.

Rory Stewart: DFID's core contribution to the European Union includes support to emergency humanitarian work in Area C. The UK also supports the Norwegian Refugee Council to provide legal advice and representation to Palestinian communities at risk of losing their homes to demolition or eviction. The UK continues to raise with Israeli authorities at the highest level our serious concern at the increase in demolitions of Palestinian properties in Area C of the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, most recently when the Foreign Secretary met Prime Minister Netanyahu on 8 March 2017.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-09/67285/>

UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the Question of Apartheid: Palestine and the Israeli Occupation

<https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/israeli-practices-palestinian-people-apartheid-occupation-english.pdf>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/arbitrationandmediationservicesequality.html>

Assisted Dying Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/assisteddying.html>

Lobbying (Transparency) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/lobbyingtransparency.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Promotion of Israeli-Palestinian Peace (United Kingdom Participation)

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/promotionofisraelipalestinianpeaceunitedkingdomparticipation.html>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 6 days**

Reforming GCSEs, AS and A levels in biblical Hebrew (closing date 23 March 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforming-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-biblical-hebrew>

The UK's policy towards the Middle East Peace Process (closing date 30 March 2017)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/foreign-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/middle-east-peace-process-inquiry-16-17/>

Adoption and Children (Northern Ireland) Bill (closing date 10 April 2017)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/adoption-and-children-northern-ireland-bill>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wtucdiversity>

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