

Political Affairs Digest

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

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Welsh Government

First Act of Assembly term receives Royal Assent

Legislation introducing the first Welsh tax in almost 800 years has received Royal Assent. ... First Minister Carwyn Jones said: "This Act is a significant step in our devolution journey – for the first time in almost 800 years we will have our own taxes. It will bring additional responsibility as we become responsible for raising a proportion of our own money and an opportunity to make a real difference to public services in Wales." ...

To read the full press release see

<http://gov.wales/newsroom/finance1/2017/59092658/?lang=en>

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Israel

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-05807 Jackson Carlaw: Jerusalem Day Jubilee – That the Parliament notes that 2017 marks the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, with celebrations scheduled for 23 and 24 May; understands that Jerusalem Day is a national holiday in Israel, commemorating the reunification of Jerusalem following the 1967 Six-Day War; acknowledges that, following their rejection of the 1947 UN Partition Plan, Transjordan and an alliance of other Arab states invaded Israel; is aware that Transjordan invaded and took control of the Old City and East Jerusalem, although in terms of the UN Partition Plan, Jerusalem was to be corpus separatum (separated body) with special status under an international regime; understands that under Jordanian control and occupation, no Israeli Arab or Jew was allowed to visit their holy site, synagogues were destroyed and desecrated, and the Christian population fell from 25,000 to 9,000, and wishes all those celebrating Yom Yerushalayim a thoughtful day.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-05807>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Zeid urges Israel to respect the human rights of detainees

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein on Wednesday

expressed serious concern as the mass hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons entered its 38th day without resolution, and the health of hundreds of participating prisoners began to deteriorate significantly. ...

Both Israeli and Palestinian human rights organisations have corroborated many of the complaints of the prisoners and have called on the Israeli authorities to improve the conditions of Palestinian prisoners. According to reports, the Israel Prison Service has evacuated at least 60 hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners to hospitals because their medical condition had worsened, while another 592 hunger strikers have recently been moved for observation to infirmaries set up in the prisons.

“I am especially alarmed by reports of punitive measures by the Israeli authorities against the hunger strikers, including restricted access to lawyers and the denial of family visits,” Zeid said. “The right of detainees to access a lawyer is a fundamental protection in international human rights law that should never be curtailed.” ...

The Israeli practice of administrative detention is in breach of the key safeguards of Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The widespread use of administrative detention, with hundreds held every year also raises concerns that Israel does not respect the principle of the exceptional nature of administrative detention under international humanitarian law. In 2000, Israel reportedly held 12 Palestinians in administrative detention. Today, that figure has risen to some 500 Palestinian prisoners who are being held without charge or trial in administrative detention. ...

To read the full press release see

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21659&LangID=E>

Church of Scotland General Assembly Deliverance (Resolution)

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report
2. Instruct the World Mission and Church and Society Councils to make available an easily accessible study document based on the information in this report to help Church members understand the conflict and engage with steps for a just peace.
3. [amendment to add “noting the limits of the report as stated in Section 1.3” rejected]
4. Urge that any public commemorations of the Balfour Declaration are undertaken sensitively, recognising the costs involved for the Palestinian people.
5. [further amendment to refer to “the enormous cost to the Palestinian people of the failure to fulfill the promise in the Declaration, and to safeguard and secure their human rights which continue to be violated” defeated]
6. Call on UK government to base their engagement in this conflict on the principles of justice, equality, dignity, equal access to natural resources and freedom of opportunity for all.
7. Commend all those who are committed to the use of non-violent means to resist the occupation and achieve a just peace and instruct the World Mission Council to continue to support partners who are working in this way, particularly those civil society organisations that are under threat because of their work.
8. Condemn all infringements of international law, including the increased expansion of settlements, which are an obstacle to peace.
9. [further amendment “to urge the adoption of economic measures to pressure the state of Israel to comply with international law.” defeated]
10. Express deep concern in regard to Hamas's continued declaration, despite recent changes to its charter, that Israel does not have the right to exist which is unjust and an obstacle to peace.
11. Note that 2017 marks the year of the Jubilee since the demarcation of Israel/Palestine and calls for renewed prayer for all those who are displaced and

- live under occupation, and encourage the restitution of all Palestinian lands within the 1967 border.
12. Instruct the World Mission Council, with the cooperation of the Church and Society Council, Council of Assembly, and other relevant bodies within the Church, to undertake a strategic review of the Church's presence in Israel/Palestine, and to consider what would be the most effective use of its assets in the pursuit of a just peace in Israel/ Palestine, and report back to the General Assembly of 2019.
 13. Instruct the World Mission Council to continue to support, encourage, and organise 'Go and See, Come and Tell" visits; and urge congregations, Presbyteries and individuals to make this kind of pilgrimage which offers opportunities to meet with, and better understand the realities of partners working for peace and justice.
 - 14.9. Commend the Kairos Palestine document and invite the World Mission Council to produce resources to encourage church members to engage with the Kairos Palestine document.
 15. Affirm that Christian theology should not be used to justify or perpetuate a situation of injustice.
 16. Instruct all church members to challenge antisemitism and anti-Muslim prejudice.
 17. Encourage all church members to work ecumenically and with interfaith partners to pursue a shared vision for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.
 18. Urge all Presbyteries where such a service has not yet taken place to organise a "24th of the month" service for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

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http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/40222/24_May_2017_Wednesday_Paper.pdf

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Consultations ** new or updated today

Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law (closing date 18 July 2017)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>

Workplace Diversity (Wales) (closing date not stated)

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

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