

# 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 Lords Written Answers

#### **Out-of-school Education: Prosecutions**

**Lord Warner (Crossbench)** [HL4333] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Keen of Elie on 6 November (HL2408), whether there have been no prosecutions for operating unregistered schools because no cases have been put to the Crown Prosecution Service, or for evidential reasons.

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The offences under sections 96 and 97 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 came into force, as they relate to independent schools, on 5 January 2015. Since that date two cases have been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for early investigative advice following which investigations were discontinued. Two further cases have been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for a charging decision. In both of these latter cases the evidential test under the Code for Crown Prosecutors was not met.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-19/HL4333/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-10-23/HL2408/>

#### **Ofsted: Security**

**Lord Warner (Crossbench)** [HL4334] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect the Chief Inspector of Schools and her staff and offices in the light of threatened attacks following Ofsted's criticism of faith-based schools.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** It is imperative that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector and her staff feel able to carry out their responsibilities and report their findings without fear or favour. The Cabinet Office sets security policy for government, which all departments, including Ofsted, follow. Any concerns that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector or her staff have regarding their personal safety or building security would in the first instance, be discussed with the police who would consider the nature of any threats, provide appropriate security advice and recommend any further measures.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-19/HL4334/>

## Out-of-school Education

**Lord Warner (Crossbench)** [HL4335] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take to strengthen Ofsted's powers to prosecute and close illegal unregistered schools following comments by the Chief Inspector of Schools in her annual report that the current legislation is inadequate; and what guidance they will provide to local authorities regarding steps that can be taken against such schools using (1) health and safety provisions, and (2) child protection measures.

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The department does not have primary legislation scheduled for this session, therefore the government has no current plans to change Ofsted's powers in relation to the investigation of unregistered schools.

In January 2016 we announced that we were providing funding to Ofsted to establish a dedicated team of specialist inspectors to investigate such settings. The figures published in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's annual report shows that the work of this team has been highly successful, but the figures also demonstrate that there are far fewer unregistered schools than many had believed to be the case. During a period of one and a half years, from January 2016 to August 2017, the Ofsted team found 38 unregistered schools to be operating; and the team was successful in getting 34 of those 38 to cease operating illegally. The remaining 4 were still under investigation as at August 2017.

The department, working with Ofsted and local authority Directors of Childrens Services, has been drawing up guidance for local authorities on how to tackle unregistered schools. We are expecting to be publishing this guidance in due course.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-19/HL4335/>

*The annual report referred to above can be read at*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/666871/Ofsted\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2016-17\\_Accessible.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/666871/Ofsted_Annual_Report_2016-17_Accessible.pdf)

## Prisons: Ministers of Religion

**Lord Murphy of Torfaen (Labour)** [HL4279] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will ensure that overcrowding does not restrict prisoners' access to chaplaincy services; and whether they intend to include such access in future performance measures.

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Prison Safety and Reform White paper set out a range of performance measures so that the performance of prisons is judged on the results they deliver rather than just compliance with processes. Access to Chaplaincy services is not currently included in these measures. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service seek to ensure that prisoners have access to chaplaincy services in accordance with PSI 5/2016 (Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners). Overcrowding in and of itself would not restrict access to chaplaincy services.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4279/>

*The White Paper referred to above can be read at*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/565012/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-print.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565012/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-print.pdf)

## Prisons: Ministers of Religion

**Lord Murphy of Torfaen (Labour)** [HL4280] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they intend to guarantee the continued provision of quality assured chaplaincy services to every prison in England and Wales by continuing the guidelines Faith and Pastoral Care for Prisoners (PSI 05/2016) and including those guidelines in any future prison policy frameworks.

**Lord Keen of Elie:** PSI 05/2016 Faith and Pastoral Care of Prisoners is not in the

first tranche of PSIs to be deregulated. When it is replaced by a Policy Framework I am confident that Governors will have the guidance they need to ensure the delivery of chaplaincy services that meet the pastoral and faith needs of prisoners. Discussions are already under way to see how the present Assurance and Compliance quality assurance process may be developed to support delivery of chaplaincy services in the future.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4280/>

*The guidelines referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/psipso/psi-2016/psi-05-2016-faith-and-pastoral-care-for-prisoners.doc>

## Hackney Council Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

### **Hackney's Scrutiny Commission releases report into unregistered 'schools'**

Hackney Council's Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission has released a report into unregistered educational settings, calling on the Government to strengthen legislation to ensure children in unregistered 'schools' are safe.

It follows a year-long investigation by the Commission, which heard that across the country, up to 6,000 children attend as many as 290 unregistered educational settings. In Hackney, around 29 unregistered yeshivas offer religious teaching to approximately 1,000-1,500 boys within the Charedi Orthodox Jewish community. ...

Key concerns detailed in the report are around an apparent lack of safeguarding procedures, the narrow educational focus of yeshivas, and a lack of interaction with education and safeguarding professionals.

The investigation found serious failings in Government policy, which allows illegal 'schools' to operate without appropriate safeguarding, health and safety or curriculum standards. ...

#### **[Cllr Chris Kennedy, Chair of the Children and Young People Commission said:]**

"Hackney's Charedi community is a valued and important part of our diverse borough, and throughout this process we've worked hard to ensure their voice is heard, and this report is the result of the most intensive piece of work the Commission has ever carried out. ...

Our research brought to the fore the fundamental clash between parents' wishes to educate their children at these settings and the rights of children to a broad education, where their safety is paramount. We've made a number of recommendations and have been clear that the Council needs to continue to do all it can to work with the Charedi community to ensure the safety of all our children. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<http://news.hackney.gov.uk/hackneys-scrutiny-commission-releases-report-into-unregistered-schools/>

### **Investigation into unregistered educational settings in Hackney**

<http://mginternet.hackney.gov.uk/documents/s58810/FINAL%20UES%20for%20PUBLIC%20ATION.pdf>

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## House of Lords Written Answers

### **Palestinians: Refugees**

**Lord Hylton (Crossbench)** [HL4271] To ask Her Majesty's Government what information they have about Palestinian refugees who are in Iraq; whether they can estimate the number of Palestinians still in Syria; and whether all such refugees are receiving UK and international relief and development funds.

**Lord Bates:** Iraq is outside of the areas of operation of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) so assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees who are in Iraq is the responsibility of the Government of Iraq supported by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Official up to date figures on the number of Palestinian refugees in Iraq do not exist. As at 31 August 2017, there were some 40,200 non-Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR in Iraq, some of which will be Palestinian. DFID and the wider international community assist and protect the most vulnerable in Iraq and many of ours and other donor's programmes may be assisting Palestinian refugees. For example, since 2014 DFID has provided £34 million to UNHCR in Iraq to provide cash assistance for over 110,000 vulnerable displaced persons in Iraq. Additionally, the UK is providing UNHCR with £35 million per year in core funding, from 2017/18- 2020/21.

UNRWA estimates that around 438,000 Palestinian refugees remain in Syria as of August 2017. UNRWA is the only organisation mandated to provide protection and assistance for Palestinian Refugees in Syria (PRS) and receives significant international voluntary contributions for their work across the region, mostly from government donors. DFID will provide £36 million from 2017 – 2020 to UNRWA's Syria Emergency Appeal to support 418,000 PRS with cash and in-kind food assistance, including 254,000 internally displaced PRS with non-food items such as blankets, mattresses and hygiene kits, alongside health, livelihood support, education and protection assistance each year.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4271/>

### **Ibrahim Abu Thuraya**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4293] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the death of Ibraheem Abu Thuraya.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made any representations to the Israeli authorities on this specific issue, we have an ongoing dialogue with the Israeli authorities about the Israel Defence Forces' use of live fire. We remain concerned by the use of force by Israeli security personnel in response to protests and security incidents.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4293/>

### **West Bank: Schools**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4294] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action will they take to protect the right of Palestinian Bedouin children to education following reports of demolitions of schools in the West Bank, including one at Abu Nawar on 13 December.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Our Embassy in Tel Aviv most recently raised the issue of demolitions and their effects with the Israeli authorities on 29 November. I also raised concerns about the demolitions of schools in Area C when I met the

Israeli Ambassador on 29 August. As the Minister for the Middle East set out in a Westminster Hall debate on 6 December, the UK position on demolitions is clear: we consider them to be entirely unacceptable and will continue to raise our concerns.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4294/>

*The Minister's speech in the debate referred to above can be read at*

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-12-06/debates/9592DCC4-2292-4B92-AD3D-A7AAD1A746B1/PalestinianCommunitiesIsraeliDemolitions#contribution-56994D70-6A01-4A86-B896-4BA57469308B>

### **Hebron: Schools**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4296] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel regarding the right to education for Palestinian children in Hebron.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK will continue to urge the Israeli authorities to ease movement and access restrictions across the Occupied Palestinian Territories, not least because of the impact that the restrictions have on children and the continuity of their education.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4296/>

### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4297] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel following the report by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs highlighting that "many Palestinians throughout the West Bank are at risk of forcible transfer due to a coercive environment generated by Israeli policies and practices".

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have not made representations to the Israeli Government related to this specific report.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4297/>

*The report referred to above can be read at*

<https://www.ochaopt.org/page/46-bedouin-communities-risk-forcible-transfer-central-west-bank-vulnerability-profile>

### **Gaza: Travel Restrictions**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4298] To ask Her Majesty's Government further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 11 December (HL3639), what representations they are making to the Palestinian Authority concerning prospects for opening the Rafah crossing and allowing people with visas to leave.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem frequently urge the Palestinian Authority (PA) to take steps to improve conditions in Gaza. They also regularly discuss border crossings with the PA in the context of PA empowerment in Gaza. Officials from our Embassy in Cairo also raised the Rafah crossing with the Egyptian authorities on 19 December, highlighting the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-18/HL4298/>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-11-27/HL3639/>

## Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4330] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the reported arrest and abuse of Palestinian minors in relation to unidentified charges.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK has strong concerns about continued reports of mistreatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention, notably the use of painful restraints and insufficient notification of legal rights. Our Ambassador to Israel raised concerns about this issue with Minister of Justice Shaked on 7 December. The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt) also raised our concerns with the Israeli authorities during his visit to Israel in August 2017. We continue to regularly raise this issue with the Israeli authorities, and to press them to secure improvements to the practices surrounding the military detention of minors.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-19/HL4330/>

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

**Alistair Burt:** Concerned by yesterday's preliminary vote in Israel on the death penalty. UK is firmly opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances. It is incompatible with human dignity and we encourage others to abolish its use.

<https://twitter.com/AlistairBurtUK/status/948926746828726272>

## Scottish Parliament Motion

**S5M-09774 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative): Marsha Gladstone Recognised as a Points of Light Outstanding Volunteer** – That the Parliament welcomes the recognition of Marsha Gladstone as a Points of Light outstanding volunteer for her work with the Yoni Jesner Foundation; understands that Points of Light was first established in the United States by President George HW Bush and introduced into the UK by the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, in 2014; recognises the work that Marsha Gladstone has done within Eastwood and the UK through the Yoni Jesner Foundation to honour the life of her son, Yoni Jesner; notes that Yoni was a former pupil of Belmont House School in Newton Mearns who planned to be a medical doctor; acknowledges that Yoni was only 19 when his life was cut short on 19 September 2002 when he and five others were killed in a Tel Aviv suicide bombing; commends the subsequent decision of his parents to allow for Yoni's organs to be donated to save the life of a young Palestinian girl, Yasmin Abu Ramila, who had experienced kidney failure since birth, and thanks the Yoni Jesner Foundation and Marsha Gladstone for their continued work to encourage volunteering, among other issues.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-09774>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

**Draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/666576/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/666576/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf)

## European Union (Withdrawal) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/europeanunionwithdrawal.html>

## Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

## Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

## Scottish Parliament

### Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105269.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

**\*\* closes in 2 days**

**Proposed changes to the Northern Ireland Crime Survey** (closing date 9 January 2018)

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj-corporate-secretariat/ni-crime-survey-consultation-2017/>

**\*\* closes in 3 days**

**Schools: collecting information on bullying** (closing date 10 January 2018)

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/secondary-education-resources/schools-tell-us-how-you-collect-information-bullying>

**Draft Animal Welfare Bill** (closing date 17 January 2018)

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2017/draft-animal-welfare-bill-17-19/>

**Draft Animal Welfare (Sentencing and Recognition of Sentience) Bill** (closing date 31 January 2018)

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/animal-health-and-welfare/consultation-on-the-animal-welfare-bill/>

**Introducing 'opt-out' consent for organ and tissue donation in England** (closing date 6 March 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-opt-out-consent-for-organ-and-tissue-donation-in-england>

**Promoting Organ Donation and Transplantation in Northern Ireland** (closing date 9 March 2018)

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/consultations/promoting-organ-donation-and-transplantation-northern-ireland>

**Electoral Reform (Scotland)** (closing date 12 March 2018)

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00529431.pdf>

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