

# Political Affairs Digest

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

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

## Contents

Home Affairs

Holocaust

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

## Home Affairs

### House of Lords Debate

#### **Stronger Charities for a Stronger Society (Charities Committee Report)**

*col 547* **The Lord Bishop of Durham:** ... Sometimes these charities encounter a lack of religious literacy when relating to local authorities. A recent report from NPC found that many faith-based charities have concerns that a negative or sceptical perception can count against them, particularly with local authority commissioners. Equally, there is a challenge and responsibility for Christians and other faith groups to express their belief in a way that is confident and inviting. In my experience, where churches and Christian charities develop a reputation for delivering services well and inclusively, trust builds and opportunities for collaboration grow. ...

Some excellent work has been done on this issue, including the APPG on Faith and Society's faith covenant. This sets out a joint commitment between local authorities and faith-based groups to guide engagement between them. The covenant is currently working in six areas but could be implemented more widely. What are Her Majesty's Government doing to improve religious understanding and awareness to ensure further healthy engagement of faith-based charities in the design of future service provision? ...

*col 566* **Baroness Barker (Liberal Democrat):** ... The right reverend Prelate is absolutely right about the role of religious charities and I encourage him to look at our discussions with the Church Urban Fund and the Islamic charity Penny Appeal. However, I say to him that unless and until those religious charities welcome everybody—and I mean everybody—in a locality, there will always be something of a tension and something of a reservation before some of us engage with them in the ways that we would wish to. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

[http://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-16/debates/3CC1D81A-B3B5-43F5-9A54-569C7673BA0E/StrongerCharitiesForAStrongerSociety\(CharitiesCommitteeReport\)](http://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-01-16/debates/3CC1D81A-B3B5-43F5-9A54-569C7673BA0E/StrongerCharitiesForAStrongerSociety(CharitiesCommitteeReport))

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### **Hate Crime**

**Kate Osamor (Labour Co-op)** [122201] To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the rate of hate crime; and

whether those steps vary depending on the group targeted by hate crime.

**Victoria Atkins:** We are committed to addressing all forms of hate crime. In July 2016, the Home Office published Action Against Hate: The UK Government's Plan for Tackling Hate Crime, an action plan which focuses on five key areas:

- preventing hate crime by challenging beliefs and attitudes;
- responding to hate crime within our communities;
- increasing the reporting of hate crime;
- improving support for victims of hate crime; and
- building our understanding of hate crime

The Home Office, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are leading a refresh of this action plan in 2018. The refresh will be overseen by the national Hate Crime Strategy Board which is jointly chaired by the two Departments.

Hate crimes are motivated by hostility or prejudice on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity – the majority of the actions we are taking forward address all five of these 'strands'. For example, we have committed up to £900,000 over three years from the Hate Crime Community Projects Fund (HCCPF) for local community projects. Also, in October 2017 the Home Secretary announced £200,000 of Home Office funding for a new national hub that will be run by police officers for the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) to help the police to tackle the emerging threat of online hate crime.

The Home Secretary has asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services to carry out inspection work on hate crime to build a national picture of how effectively and efficiently police forces deal with all five strands of hate crime, including that committed online.

However, it is also right that some of our activities address hate crimes targeted at specific groups. Each of the five strands is represented by specific actions in the 2016 Action Plan, and in the 16 Hate Crime Community Projects the Home Office has funded to date. The Home Office is also funding protective security measures at faith institutions, through up to £2.4 million from the Places of Worship scheme and up to £1 million from the Vulnerable Faith Institutions scheme.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-11/122201/>

## House of Lords Written Answer

### Hate Crime: Prosecutions

**Lord Vinson (Conservative)** [HL4576] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the remarks by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 6 December 2017 that she would write to the Director of Public Prosecutions (HL Deb, col 1051), whether she has done so; and if so, what was the response.

**Lord Keen of Elie:** I would refer his Lordship to the answer to HL4421 from Lord Pearson, which was tabled on 21 December 2017, a copy of which has been made available in the Library of the House.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-09/HL4576/>

*Baroness Vere of Norbiton's remarks, referred to above, can be read at*  
<http://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2017-12-06/debates/2322BFC7-28B5-4D8F-BF90-E847771C422B/FreedomOfSpeechHateCrime>

*The answer referred to above can be read at*  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2017-12-21/HL4421/>

*Baroness Vere of Norbiton wrote to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) on 13 December 2017. The DPP provided her response on 9 January 2018.*

*In her response, the DPP confirmed that the flagging definition for hate crime was agreed between the CPS and the NPCC (ACPO as it was then) in 2007 and that it is wider than the definition set out in legislation to ensure all relevant cases are captured.*

*The CPS adopted the recommended definition in the Macpherson report published in 1999 as a result of the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The Macpherson report also recommended that 'this definition should be universally adopted by the Police, local Government and other relevant agencies'. This recommendation in the Macpherson report was welcomed by the Government at the time and the current Government remains in support of this position. The CPS has worked with police to implement the recommended definition across all strands of hate crime. The CPS takes tackling hate crime seriously and recognises the need to increase public confidence to report. The flagging definition is important in achieving this aim.*

*In order for a crime to be charged and prosecuted as a hate crime, the CPS uses the legal definitions contained in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA 1998) and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (CJA 2003). This means that not every incident that the victim or another person has perceived to be a hate crime will actually be a hate crime in law.*

*In her letter, the DPP also confirmed that the CPS legal guidance recognises the potential impact of prosecutions on Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the right to freedom of expression). The CPS must balance the rights of an individual to freedom of speech against the duty of the state to act proportionately and to protect the rights of others.*

## Welsh Assembly Debate

### **The legalisation of cannabis for medicinal use**

Motion for debate: ... there a growing number of countries which regulate the medical use of cannabis and cannabis derivatives, such as Canada, the Netherlands, Israel and over 20 States in the US, who regulate herbal cannabis for medical use ...

col 280 **Mark Isherwood (Conservative):** ... A recent study from Tel Aviv in Israel found that medical cannabis significantly improved the condition of children suffering from cerebral palsy. According to their interim findings, treatment with cannabis oil reduced the disorder's symptoms and improved the children's motor skills. It also improved the children's sleep quality, bowel movements and general mood. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/4897?lang=en-GB#A40857>

## Welsh Assembly 90-second Statement

**Dawn Bowden (Labour):** In 1955, there was held, and I quote, 'an impressive service in which the Chief Rabbi re-consecrated the 80 year old Synagogue.... In his address...the Chief Rabbi referred to the persecution which made Jews leave the lands of their birth and how they had found', to quote, 'freedom of worship in Merthyr.'

It's therefore sad to note, which you'll see from the picture, the current condition of the former synagogue. The UK-based Foundation for Jewish Heritage recently mapped all the historic synagogues right across Europe, which they categorised according to their significance and condition. The Merthyr Tydfil synagogue is one of only two in the UK highlighted by this work and shown to be in the most danger. Thankfully, the foundation

has already found the funds to undertake a preliminary study of the building that could lead to its restoration. The synagogue is an important part of our collective history, not just for Merthyr Tydfil and for Wales, but beyond that as well. So, I wish the foundation well in their work; it deserves to succeed and for this important building to be saved.

<http://record.assembly.wales/Plenary/4897#C51385>

TOP

## Holocaust

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### Art Works: Poland

**Daniel Kawczynski (Conservative)** [121797] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to prevent the sale of Polish art which was looted during World War 2.

**Michael Ellis:** The Government provides guidance for the UK art market to assist them in determining the history of cultural objects in which they deal. Additionally, Arts Council England provides a Cultural Property Advice website which offers advice to the art trade, museums and private individuals on the buying and selling of art. The trade associations for the UK art market publish codes of ethics for their members which the Government expects to see enforced.

In September 2017, DCMS hosted an international Conference, attended by the major auction houses, which explored ways of speeding up the identification and return of cultural objects lost during the Nazi era. The Government established the Spoliation Advisory Panel in 2000 to advise on claims for the return of items lost during the Nazi era (1933-1945). The Panel can consider claims for items that are privately owned at the joint request of the claimant and the current owner.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-09/121797/>

### Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government

#### Holocaust Educational Trust – Holocaust Memorial Day Reception

... We know, particularly from the world of instant of communication on social media how words can entertain us, educate us, unite us, and uplift us.

But, also, how they can wound and divide.

How they can inflame prejudice in echo chambers where ignorance goes unchallenged.

How they can drive people towards hatred and even violence.

So it's fitting that this year's Holocaust Memorial Day asks us to consider the power of words.

The [Holocaust Educational Trust](#) has never shied away from teaching young people where hatred, intolerance and misinformation can lead.

The way we use words and language is key to this.

Which is why the government has been proud to support HET's vital work through initiatives such as the [Lessons from Auschwitz programme](#).

This programme has enabled thousands of children and their teachers to understand a little of what it meant to live through. ...

In 2011, I was privileged to accompany a group from my constituency to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

It was one of the most moving experiences of my life.

The hateful inscription on the gate might be familiar, but there are no words to convey the

feeling when you walk inside.

Of imagining all the men, women and children who perished there and whose cries were silenced forever.

Cries – against hatred, intolerance and misinformation - that we must ensure are heard.

We all have a duty to speak out in their memory.

Of course, Holocaust education is not the only answer.

But it remains one of the most powerful tools we have to fight bigotry today.

That's why I am delighted to announce today that my Ministry – together with the Department for Education – will fund a new strand of the Lessons from Auschwitz programme.

A new initiative, proposed by HET and the Union of Jewish Students, to tackle antisemitism, prejudice and intolerance on university campuses.

I know this is something that the Trust has been keen to get off the ground.

And Karen - as anyone who knows her well will agree - is someone you do not turn down or disagree with! ...

And I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Karen and everyone at the Trust for their tireless dedication to Holocaust education. ...

HET's work is invaluable and I'm honoured to be associated with it.

Not just because it's the right thing to do, but because I have seen it works.

I remember Harry [Spiro] telling me about a visit to a school in London's East End.

When a pupil refused to attend his Holocaust presentation because he didn't want to, in the words of that pupil, "hear from Jews."

Harry refused to deliver his talk unless the young man was present.

And so he was persuaded, reluctantly, to attend Harry's talk.

That same young man later wrote to him and said it was one of the most moving experiences of his life.

So much so, he was inspired to become a passionate champion of greater tolerance and understanding among his peers.

So our efforts to tell stories like Harry's, to challenge antisemitism wherever it exists, are absolutely crucial. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/holocaust-educational-trust-holocaust-memorial-day-reception>

TOP

## Israel

### House of Commons Oral Answers

#### Occupied Palestinian Territories

4. **Grahame Morris (Labour):** What steps she is taking to improve access for humanitarian organisations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [903328]

9. **Andy Slaughter (Labour):** What steps she is taking to improve access for humanitarian organisations in the occupied Palestinian territories. [R] [903333]

**The Minister for the Middle East (Alistair Burt):** ... The UK Government consistently call on the Israeli Government to ease movement and access restrictions in the OPTs. Since 2011, we have been funding the United Nations Access Coordination Unit to work with the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority.

**Grahame Morris:** Palestinians in the occupied territories face significant barriers to access to healthcare. Some have even died as a result of delays at checkpoints. Will the Minister urge the UK Government to recommend to the working group of the United

Nations' universal periodic review of Israel's human rights record that Israel lift restrictions on the movement of Palestinian patients and healthcare workers and Palestinian-registered ambulances?

**Alistair Burt:** The hon. Gentleman has drawn attention to a serious aspect of the difficulties of restrictions. It is much in the UK's mind, and we will continue to raise it.

**Andy Slaughter:** I draw attention to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

The overnight announcement from the United States of the largest cut in aid for Palestinian refugees for 70 years follows the Israeli Government's ban on 20 international organisations entering Israel, including three from the UK. Does that concern the Government, and what do they intend to do about it?

**Alistair Burt:** The United Nations Relief and Works Agency has a unique role in protecting and providing essential services for 5 million Palestinian refugees. We are deeply concerned about the impact of potential cuts in US funding on stability in the region, and about the continuity of UNRWA's vital services. We will go on supporting them.

**Theresa Villiers (Conservative):** What action is the Minister taking to ensure that no taxpayers' money from DFID ever ends up in the pockets of convicted terrorists?

**Alistair Burt:** It just does not. We do not give aid to terrorists, and the Palestinian Authority knows that.

**Bob Blackman (Conservative):** What action is my right hon. Friend taking to ensure that the funds given to the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli non-governmental organisations are used to promote peace in the area, so that we can see a peaceful co-existence between Israel and the state of Palestine?

**Alistair Burt:** My hon. Friend raises an important point. We have just this year allocated £3 million to co-existence projects so that those from the Palestinian community and Israelis can work more effectively together. One of the problems in recent years has been a growing divide between communities. We want to find projects that will break down barriers rather than erect them.

**Tommy Sheppard (SNP):** Will the Government oppose President Trump's latest threat to withdraw funding from UNRWA, and will the Government attend a conference of donor countries, convened by the Norwegian Government and the EU, to discuss the imminent crisis that would result?

**Alistair Burt:** The answer to the second question is yes, and I am hoping to attend that conference myself. On the first question, as I said in answer to the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Andy Slaughter), that is a decision for the United States; we are concerned about the impact but our support for UNRWA will continue.

**Dan Carden (Labour):** The US President's threat this week to withdraw tens of millions of dollars from UNRWA for Palestinian refugees is an act of cruelty towards some of the poorest and most disadvantaged people in the world. It attacks the long-established principle that development and aid cannot await a peace deal. What is the Minister doing to strengthen the resolve of the United Nations and our European counterparts to maintain vital humanitarian work in the region?

**Alistair Burt:** I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his position; we look forward to hearing much more from him. I met the head of UNRWA recently in London. Our commitment for next year to its programme budget is £38 million. It assists in the provision of basic education for some half a million children. As I have explained, we are concerned about the loss of funding to UNRWA and our support for it remains clear, but this is another example of how something will not be properly fixed until we get the agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that we are all searching for, and we hope 2018 will be a landmark in that.

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-17/debates/BFDEDAE9-9CBB-4B86-AC14-5854B1706888/OccupiedPalestinianTerritories>

### Topical Questions: International Development

**T8. Robert Halfon (Conservative):** British taxpayers can be proud that their money goes to the salaries of Palestinian teachers, but does the Secretary of State share my obvious concern that some of those teachers are working at one of the more than 30 Palestinian Authority schools named after terrorists who have murdered Israelis or at one of the three named after Nazi collaborators? [903347]

**Alistair Burt:** As the House knows, we constantly challenge the Palestinian Authority in relation to anything that might encourage or glorify violence. I can assure the House that we ensure that no payments are made to those who have those connections. We do all we can to encourage the Authority to understand that naming places after those who have been involved in terrorism does not contribute to the peace process.

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-17/debates/C1E16378-B3BD-4455-B908-1394B07E3040/TopicalQuestions#contribution-8964F8B6-53AB-4150-809D-D3E56CB4C05E>

## House of Commons Written Answers

### Israel: Detainees

**Sarah Champion (Labour) [121430]** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he plans to make representations to the Government of Israel on the military detention of human rights defenders, Ahed Tamimi, and her mother, Nariman Tamimi.

**Alistair Burt:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office raised Ahed Tamimi's case with the Israeli Ambassador to London on 8 January. On 2 January, officials from our Embassy in Tel Aviv raised this case with the Israeli authorities, noting the British Government's long-standing concerns about the treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. We are also aware of the arrest of Nariman Tamimi on charges of inciting violence, and will seek further details from the appropriate Israeli authorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-08/121430/>

### West Bank: Demolition

**Lyn Brown (Labour) [122077]** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, if she will assess the potential effect of planned demolitions in the West Bank village of Susiya on (a) the welfare and rights of residents and (b) the human and economic development of Palestinian people living in Area C of the occupied West Bank.

**Alistair Burt:** I discussed the threat of forcible transfer with the Susiya Bedouin community during my visit there in August 2017. The Israeli authorities have stated their plan to imminently demolish around a third of structures in Susiya, including two clinics, which would stand to affect all residents. Demolitions of Palestinian homes and buildings cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, are harmful to the peace process and, in most circumstances, are contrary to international humanitarian law. A clear, transparent route to construction for Palestinians in Area C is needed to prevent continued demolitions. According to the World Bank, the removal of the Israeli restrictions on Area C, including restrictions on construction, could result in the West Bank economy being 33% larger by 2025 than it would otherwise be. Officials have repeatedly raised our concerns about proposed demolitions in Susiya with Israeli ministers, including in a joint demarche with European partners on 2 November 2017.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-10/122077/>

## Agriculture: Israel

**Zac Goldsmith (Conservative)** [122398] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what cooperation programmes his Department has with the Government of Israel for research and trade in the agricultural sector and what assessment he has made of the potential for future collaboration in that sector after the UK leaves the EU.

**George Eustice:** The UK, as part of the EU, is currently a member of around 40 EU trade agreements covering over 55 countries; one such country is Israel. After leaving the EU, the UK will be able to implement an independent trade policy. This would make it possible to revisit and improve existing agreements where appropriate.

Defra does not currently cooperate on agricultural research programmes with Israel bilaterally. We do cooperate with Israel through multilateral research programmes such as the Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change (FACCE-JPI) and the STAR-IDAZ International Research Consortium on Animal Health and we intend to continue to do so after we have left the EU.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-12/122398/>

## House of Lords Written Answers

### Israel: USA

**Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (Liberal Democrat)** [HL4458] To ask Her Majesty's Government what communications they have had with Mahmoud Abbas since the announcement by the government of the United States of its intention to relocate the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign Secretary and the Minister for the Middle East reaffirmed the UK's long-standing position on Jerusalem when they met Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki on 8 January.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-08/HL4458/>

### Israel: Palestinians

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4516] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of a report by the Palestine Red Cross Crescent Society and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights that the Israeli military are making "indiscriminate use of excessive and disproportionate force against Palestinian civilians" following the announcement by the government of the United States that it would move its Israeli Embassy to Jerusalem.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** While we have not made any assessment of this specific report, we repeatedly make clear to the Israeli authorities our longstanding concerns about the manner in which the Israel Defense Forces police the Occupied Palestinian Territories. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-08/HL4516/>

### Jerusalem

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4517] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the legislation before the Parliament of Israel that would set a high threshold for any future vote on ceding parts of Jerusalem to Palestinians.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned that the recently passed amendment to the Basic Law makes the prospects of meaningful and peaceful progress towards a two-state solution, with Jerusalem as a shared capital, more difficult.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-08/HL4517/>

#### **Israel: Palestinians**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL4518] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the conditions necessary to enable a viable and secure Palestine to exist alongside a secure Israel, following recent developments.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Our longstanding policy in support of a two-state solution remains clear. We support a negotiated settlement based on 1967 borders with agreed land swaps, Jerusalem as the shared capital of both states, and a just, fair, agreed and realistic settlement for refugees.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-08/HL4518/>

## **UK Parliament Early Day Motion**

**Richard Burden (Labour) (817) Funding for the work of UNWRA in support of Palestinian refugees** – That this House is appalled by the announcement by the US Administration that it is to cut its funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency by more than half; notes that this decision threatens the human security of millions of Palestinian refugees, including those in need of emergency food assistance and other support in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza; is concerned that this will also impact on Palestinian refugees' access to primary health care and the right to education of 525,000 boys and girls in 700 UNRWA schools; and calls on the Government to reaffirm the UK's support for UNRWA, to ask the United Nations Secretary General to convene a special conference to develop new funding alliances to secure the future of UNRWA, to make representations to the World Bank and IDB Trust Fund urgently to consider the case for supporting UNRWA and to promote the public appeal for funds that UNRWA has launched.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/817>

## **UK Parliament Petition**

### **Proscription of Hezbollah**

**Matthew Offord (Conservative):** I present this petition on behalf of 896 residents of the Hendon constituency. The petition states:

The petition of residents of the Hendon constituency,

Declares that demonstrations against the legitimate and democratic state of Israel where offensive and anti-Semitic language is used are not acceptable and that they, the petitioners, condemn such actions; further, that they, the petitioners, note that the police will not take any legal action against perpetrators under the current law; and further, that they, the petitioners, demonstrate their commitment to democracy, tolerance and freedom of speech by seeking the elimination of hatred.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to proscribe the political as well as military arm of the Hezbollah organisation under the Terrorism Act 2000. And the petitioners remain, etc. [P002099]

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-17/debates/31535CD4-4A0A-4D60-82D7-3876F0535044/ProscriptionOfHezbollah>

## Scottish Parliament Debate

### International Policy Framework and Priorities 2018

... 16.27 **Pauline McNeill (Labour)**: ... I am sure that many people will agree that there will be no peace and stability in the world until there is justice for the Palestinian people. The State of Palestine is now recognised by 137 countries in the United Nations, but justice seems to be further away than ever, with the continuing building of illegal settlements in the occupied territories. If she is able to do so, I would like the cabinet secretary to comment on what I thought was an excellent provision in policy under the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, where there was a commitment to discourage public sector purchasers strongly from dealing with companies that may be involved with illegal Israeli settlements. If she is able to say something on that, it will be important. Perhaps she could get back to me at a future date. That commitment makes an important contribution to peace, and how it is monitored is important to people who follow the subject closely. ...

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11303&i=102885&c=2055575#ScotParlOR>

**To read the full transcript see**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11303&i=102885#ScotParlOR>

## United Nations

### US funding cuts for UN Palestine refugee agency put vital education, health programmes at risk

The decision by the United States to withhold more than half its annual funding commitment to the United Nations relief agency providing aid for Palestine refugees threatens “one of the most successful and innovative human development endeavours in the Middle-East,” the head of the body said Wednesday, warning that the rights and dignity of an entire community are at stake.

In a [statement](#) Wednesday, Pierre Krähenbühl, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, said that US government announced a contribution of \$60 million for the UN agency, down from \$350 million total contribution by the country in 2017.

The reduction has endangered the agency’s programmes across the region, he added.

“At stake is the access of 525,000 boys and girls in 700 UNRWA schools, and their future. At stake is the dignity and human security of millions of Palestine refugees [and] access of refugees to primary health care, including pre-natal care and other life-saving services,” added Mr. Krähenbühl in the statement. ...

“UNRWA stands for hope, for respect of rights and for dignity. When things are difficult, our determination grows. When the way seems lost, we invest all our energy in search of new paths, keeping our eyes on the horizon and looking for different solutions,” he stressed. ...

[Speaking to the press](#) ... Secretary-General António Guterres underlined the importance of the UN agency’s support programmes, not only for the well-being of the refugees but also its importance as a factor of stability, something which he noted is the “opinion shared by most international observers, including some Israeli ones.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58437#.WmDSsJOFgqI>

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**OHCHR calls for the best interests of the child to be primary consideration in the Tamimi case**

OHCHR today expressed deep concern at the almost one month long pre-trial detention of the Palestinian child Ahd Tamimi. “The Convention on the Rights of the Child is clear”, said James Heenan, head of OHCHR’s office in the occupied Palestinian territory, “deprivation of liberty of children shall only be used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, and the best interests of the child are to be a primary consideration.” ...

Ms Tamimi has now been detained for almost a month. As a child, she is entitled to all fair trial rights guaranteed under international law, in addition to the special protection granted to children in contact with the law. International standards require that children should be deprived of their liberty only if they pose an imminent threat to themselves or to others, and all other means have been exhausted, or as a precaution against escape during transfer, but in all cases, only for as long as is strictly necessary.

“The circumstances of the girl’s arrest are deeply worrisome: in the middle of the night by heavily armed soldiers followed by an interrogation without the presence of a relative or a lawyer in disregard of international standards” said Mr. Heenan. The girl’s lawyer claims that during the interrogation she was ill-treated and threats were made to arrest other members of her family. The fact that the child is detained outside the occupied Palestinian territory is itself in contravention of international humanitarian law. Aspects of the treatment of this child mirror the treatment of hundreds of other Palestinian children arrested and detained by Israeli Security Forces across the occupied territory, as the High Commissioner, the Secretary-General and UNICEF have reported over the years. “This case is in many ways emblematic of the way in which Palestinian children experience the military justice system in the occupied West Bank and the Israeli justice system in East Jerusalem” he said.

“We urge Israel to ensure that the treatment of Ahd Tamimi is in accordance with international law and the special protection she is granted as a child. In particular we question her continued pre-trial detention” said Mr. Heenan.

**To read the full press release see**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22590&LangID=E>

TOP

## 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/66657/6/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/66657/6/draft-animal-welfare-bill-171212.pdf)

#### **\*\* European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

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

Report Stage, House of Commons

[http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-16/debates/D57C9B33-2C83-42D0-B4CF-6821CF691349/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-16/debates/D57C9B33-2C83-42D0-B4CF-6821CF691349/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

and

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-17/debates/3B790638-0ABB-4CF2-BB80-9F417D843D98/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill#contribution-641B88FC-0183-4E2A-87D0-3BD8BD589972](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-17/debates/3B790638-0ABB-4CF2-BB80-9F417D843D98/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill#contribution-641B88FC-0183-4E2A-87D0-3BD8BD589972)

Third Reading, House of Commons

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-17/debates/3B790638-0ABB-4CF2-BB80-9F417D843D98/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill#contribution-641B88FC-0183-4E2A-87D0-3BD8BD589972](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-17/debates/3B790638-0ABB-4CF2-BB80-9F417D843D98/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill#contribution-641B88FC-0183-4E2A-87D0-3BD8BD589972)

Bill as amended at Report and Committee Stages

[https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-public-bill-office/2017-19/compared-bills/EU-\(Withdrawal\)-Bill-tracked-changes-since-introduction.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-public-bill-office/2017-19/compared-bills/EU-(Withdrawal)-Bill-tracked-changes-since-introduction.pdf)

Delegated Powers Memorandum

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2017-2019/0079/18079-DPM.pdf>

### **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>

Justice Committee: Stage 1 Report

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnp.azureedge.net/published/J/2018/1/18/Stage-1-report-on-the-Offensive-Behaviour-at-Football-and-Threatening-Communications--Repeal---Scotland--Bill/JS052018R2.pdf>

**TOP**

## **Consultations**

\*\* new or updated today

### **\*\* closes today**

**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>

**TOP**