

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

SCoJeC

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Topical Questions: Education

T5. Fiona Bruce (Conservative): What consideration are Ministers giving to implementing the Government's commitment to ending the faith-based admissions caps for free schools? [903606]

Damian Hinds: I thank my hon. Friend for that important question. I value greatly the contribution that Church and faith schools make to our education system; they are consistently generally high-performing and popular schools. Every child deserves a good school place, which is why the "Schools that work for everyone" consultation set out proposals to enable a wider group of providers, including the Catholic Church, for example, to set up new schools. I am carefully considering the proposals.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-29/debates/4F2A0469-2F29-4E94-8337-474108AD25AA/TopicalQuestions#contribution-3F09884F-5095-48AE-9BC9-848320BC99F8>

The consultation referred to above can be read at

https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone/supporting_documents/SCHOOLS%20THAT%20WORK%20FOR%20EVERYONE%20%20FINAL.PDF

House of Commons Written Answers

Coroners: Greater London

Wes Streeting (Labour) [124352] To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has received representations on the performance of the Inner North London Coroner's Office with reference to (a) ensuring appropriate burial arrangements for Jewish and Muslim people and (b) otherwise; and if he will make a statement.

Phillip Lee: Coroners are independent judicial office holders. As such, it would be inappropriate for Ministers to comment on the reported actions of the Inner North London Senior Coroner.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-23/124352/>

Football: Racial Discrimination

Fiona Onasanya (Labour) [124243] To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department has taken to support grassroots football organisations in tackling racism.

Reply from Tracey Crouch: Our aim is to get more children and young people playing football and volunteering in the game and the 2018 World Cup in Russia promises to be a great spectacle for inspiring young people to take up and remain in the sport. Through the year-on-year investment, we will be funding grassroots programmes in schools and clubs and in the provision of new facilities and all-weather pitches that encourage greater levels of participation up to, during and after the World Cup.

The Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people, particularly those who are currently least active or from under-represented groups, have the best opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-23/124243/>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-10173 Fulton MacGregor (SNP): UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – That the Parliament recognises that 21 March 2018 is the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; understands that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out therein without distinction to race, colour or national origin; notes that racial inequality and racial discrimination continue to be prevalent and, at times, accepted in society, despite the ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination nearly 53 years ago; condemns all forms of racism and racial discrimination in Scotland; notes that the UN has urged taking comprehensive measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerances; welcomes the publication of the Scottish Government's Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030 and the Race Equality Action Plan 2017-2021, and notes the calls for there to be regular updates on actions taken to fully eradicate racism and racial discrimination in Scotland.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-10173>

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Holocaust

House of Commons Oral Answer

Topical Questions: Education

T4. Iain Stewart (Conservative): Figures out today show a worrying rise in the number of hate crimes being committed in schools. Does that not underline the vital role that organisations such as the Holocaust Educational Trust have to play in stamping out these abhorrent attitudes?[903605]

Damian Hinds: Yes, it does. Before “Never again” comes “Never forget.” Every young person should learn about the holocaust, which is why it is the only historic event that is compulsory within the national curriculum. I commend the work of the Holocaust Educational Trust and other such organisations.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-01-29/debates/4F2A0469-2F29-4E94-8337-474108AD25AA/TopicalQuestions#contribution-91A5118C-5760-41B7-93A3-25487B3A07D7>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-10168 Oliver Mundell (Conservative): Jane Haining Heritage Centre Opens in Dunscore – That the Parliament welcomes the opening of a heritage centre dedicated to Jane Haining; notes that the centre, in her home village of Dunscore, recognises the enormous sacrifices that Jane made during the Holocaust; acknowledges that it was opened on Holocaust Memorial Day, and hopes that this fitting tribute to Jane will ensure that new generations learn all about her missionary work.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-10168>

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House of Commons Written Answers

Trade Promotion: Technology

Chi Onwurah (Labour) [124286] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate he has made of the number of exhibitors at the Consumer Electronics Show 2017 that came from (a) the UK, (b) France, (c) the Netherlands, and (d) Israel; and what support his Department provided to exhibitors from the UK.

Graham Stuart: The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is an externally organised event. The Department for International Trade has not made an estimate of companies that attended from France, Israel, and the Netherlands and does not hold data for the Number of UK exhibitors.

DIT has boosted its support for UK companies exhibiting at CES in 2018, including by supporting more than 50 companies to attend.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-23/124286/>

Members: Correspondence

Richard Burden (Labour) [124802] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter of 8 December 2017 from the hon. Member for Birmingham Northfield on President Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Alistair Burt: A response has been sent.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-01-24/124802/>

Neither the letter nor response referred to above is currently available online.

House of Lords Written Answers

Gaza: Politics and Government

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4713] To ask Her Majesty's Government what contact they have made with the new administration in Gaza; and with what results.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not had any contact with the administration in Gaza. The UK retains a policy of no contact with Hamas in its entirety. We encourage the Palestinian Authority to fully resume its government functions in Gaza, and ensure that the reconciliation process is compliant with the Quartet Principles.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4713/>

Occupied Territories: Economic Situation

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4715] To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of economic progress in the Occupied Territories of Palestine following decades of aid dependency.

Lord Bates: According to the World Bank (August 2017), growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) is forecast at around 3% for the next three years. This level of growth is not sufficient to create the necessary jobs for a growing labour force or to improve living standards. International bodies (the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations) conclude that Israeli constraints on movement, access and trade remain a key impediment to economic progress in the OPTs and that full potential will not be reached without a final political resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Donor support has been crucial in creating the enabling environment for economic progress including by improving the competitiveness of the private sector and investing in infrastructure.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4715/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4716] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel following reports of the multiple shooting of a three-year-old Palestinian with live bullets during an Israeli military training session in the West Bank city of Tubas.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: There are a number of conflicting reports on this incident. It is not clear who is responsible for the shooting. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv engaged a number of independent human rights non-governmental organisations to seek further details, and was advised that there was no evidence that the Israeli Defense Forces were involved in this incident. As such, we have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4716/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4717] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning the lasting effects of tear gas inhalation, and its reported use on Palestinians, especially in the Aida refugee camp.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not raised this issue with the Israeli authorities. We recognise the Israeli authorities' legitimate need to deploy security measures in some circumstances, but we have encouraged them to avoid excessive use of force and to act in a way which minimises tensions. When there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have urged the Israeli authorities to conduct swift and transparent investigations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4717/>

Israel: War on Want

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4718] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they are making to the government of Israel concerning reports that War on Want, a non-violent human rights group, has been banned from entering Israel.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is strongly opposed to the Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Movement against Israel. We believe the best way to combat this movement is through discussion rather than proscription. British Government officials raised the recent Israeli publication of a list of

organisations that may be subject to Israeli proscription with the Israeli Ambassador on 8 January and made clear our position. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv have also raised the matter with the Israeli authorities.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4718/>

Israel: Palestinians

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4778] To ask Her Majesty's Government what action, if any, they are taking through their international partners to protect Palestinian children in the Occupied Territories from being killed, injured or imprisoned by Israeli forces.

Lord Admad of Wimbledon: The issue of children in military detention remains a human rights priority for the UK. British Embassy officials in Tel Aviv most recently raised the issue with the Israeli authorities on 16 January, and senior British Government officials raised this issue with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 8 January. The Minister for the Middle East raised our concerns with the Israeli Government during his visit to Israel in August 2017. We have recently raised this as part of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review into Israel. We recognise that in some circumstances the Israelis have a legitimate need to deploy security measures to address instances of violence. We encourage that such measures are deployed in a way which minimises tension and using only appropriate force. When there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we advocate swift and transparent investigations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-16/HL4778/>

Palestinians: Refugees

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL4779] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for applying relevant provisions of international law to persuade Palestinians back to the negotiating table in order to resolve the Palestinian refugee crisis.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not made a specific assessment of this issue the British Government remains clear that there needs to be a just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the Palestinian refugee question, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1515. In practice, this means that any such agreement must be demographically compatible with two states for two peoples and a generous package of international compensation should be made available. We continue to press both the Israelis and Palestinians to return to direct negotiations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-16/HL4779/>

Balfour Declaration

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench) [HL4720] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of which of the aspirations contained in the Balfour Declaration have been fulfilled; and if not all, which ones they consider not to have been fulfilled, and why.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we are proud that the UK played a role in helping to make a Jewish homeland a reality, the Balfour Declaration remains unfinished business. That is why we are committed to ensuring that the whole of Balfour is fulfilled, through a two-state solution which provides security and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians. Our focus now is on encouraging the parties to take steps which bring them closer to peace.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4720/>

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench) [HL4721] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for (1) recognition of a Palestinian state, and (2) Jerusalem to be a shared capital, within a defined period of time, following the announcement by President Trump that the United States will recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; and if they do not consider that there is a case to be made, why not.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government wishes to see the creation of a sovereign, independent, contiguous, and viable Palestinian state living in peace and security, side by side with Israel, and with Jerusalem as a shared capital. We disagree with the US' decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem and recognise Jerusalem as the Israeli capital before a final status agreement. We believe it is unhelpful to prospects for peace in the region. The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Recognition cannot end the occupation; only a negotiated agreement can. We regularly press both parties to engage in negotiations.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4721/>

Palestinians: Recognition of States

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench) [HL4722] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for imposing a fixed timetable for the achievement of an agreed settlement for a Palestinian state on both the government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority; and, in the absence of any such timetable or agreement, whether they intend to unilaterally recognise the state of Palestine.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: A resolution of the conflict that leads to peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians is long overdue. But the imposition of fixed timescales without agreement from the parties, and given the present absence of direct talks, is unlikely to be productive. The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation, and the problems that come with it, will continue.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4722/>

Israel: USA

Viscount Waverley (Crossbench) [HL4723] To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made any recent representations to the government of the United States concerning the application of the provisions of the Jerusalem Embassy Act 1995; and if so, what response they received.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: While we have not discussed the specific application of the provisions of the Jerusalem Embassy Act 1995 with the Government of the United States, the Prime Minister made clear in her statement of 6 December 2017 that the UK disagrees with the United States' plans to move its embassy to Jerusalem and recognise Jerusalem as the Israeli capital before a final status agreement. The Prime Minister reiterated our position when she spoke to President Trump in December 2017.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-01-15/HL4723/>

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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

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 tomorrow**

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>

Human Rights (Scottish Parliament) (closing date 16 March 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/106453.aspx>

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