

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 Oral Answer

Prime Minister's Questions

Peter Bottomley (Conservative): ... I hope that the Prime Minister and leaders of Opposition parties will help to protect Jews from anti-Semitism and Muslims from Islamophobia. ...

The Prime Minister: ... there should be a very clear message from all of us in the House that there is no place for racial hatred or hate crime in our society. That should not be part of our society—whether it is Islamophobia or anti-Semitism. That is something we should all stand up against and do our best to eradicate from our society.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-03-28/debates/OCC1ED1A-90AA-4066-97BE-7BED0A1AD745/Engagements#contribution-77277F24-B0D3-4EFD-878C-07F616C0EBC3>

House of Commons Written Answer

Meat: Labelling

Edward Leigh (Conservative) [133452] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department plans to introduce the mandatory labelling of non-halal meat.

George Eustice: The Government is aware that there is public concern about meat from animals slaughtered in accordance with religious beliefs being sold to consumers who do not require their meat to be prepared in this way. There are no domestic or European Regulations that require the labelling of halal or kosher meat but where any information of this nature is provided, it must be accurate and must not be misleading to the consumer.

The Government believes that consumers should have the necessary information available to them to make an informed choice about their food and this is an issue the Government is considering in the context of our departure from the EU.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-20/133452/>

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House of Commons Written Answer

Palestinians: Reconstruction

Rosie Cooper (Labour) [134115] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to encourage other Governments to honour the reconstruction pledges made at the 2014 Cairo Conference.

Alistair Burt: The UK has disbursed its £20 million pledge in early recovery assistance made at the 2014 Gaza Reconstruction Conference in Cairo, including support for cash assistance to Palestinian refugees, mine removal and medical treatment. We continue to encourage other donors and the international community to work towards reconstruction in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-23/134115/>

House of Lords Written Answers

Jerusalem: Religious Buildings

Baroness Tone (Non-affiliated) [HL6336] To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel to protect the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We recognise that Jerusalem holds huge religious significance for Jews, Muslims and Christians. We have made representations to all parties, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan, reiterating the fundamental necessity of maintaining the status quo at the Holy Sites, including at Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-13/HL6336/>

Gaza: Ports

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL6390] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 7 March (HL5727), what progress has been made on easing movement and access into and out of Gaza, particularly through EU assistance in establishing a sea-link from Gaza to another international port, currently envisaged in Cyprus.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are not aware of progress towards establishing a sea-link from Gaza to another international port. The UK continues to call on the Governments of Israel and Egypt to ease movement and access restrictions into and out of Gaza. Most recently British officials encouraged an easing of restrictions and improvement in the humanitarian situation in Gaza at the Ad-Hoc Liaison Committee on 20 March.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-14/HL6390/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-02-21/HL5727/>

Golan Heights: Elections

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL6391] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on 5 March (HC130079), whether they will now make an assessment of the implications of Israel's plans to hold local elections in the Golan Heights.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of the Israel's plans to hold local elections in the Golan Heights. The UK considers the Golan Heights to be Occupied Territory and we call on Israel as the occupying power to uphold its obligations under international law.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-03-14/HL6391/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-02-27/130079/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Emma Little Pengelly (DUP) (1149) Centenary of the birth of Chaim Herzog – That this House commemorates the centenary of the birth of Chaim Herzog in Belfast; recognises his achievement as President of Israel; and reaffirms the strong bonds between Israel and the UK.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1149>

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Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Written Answer

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting: Religious Freedom

Tom Brake (Liberal Democrat) [133575] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the right to freedom of religion and belief will (a) be discussed at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and (b) included in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Joint Communiqué.

Alistair Burt: We are working with fellow member states to negotiate the communiqué for next month's Commonwealth Heads of Government. We do not comment on those negotiations while they are underway. The UK considers freedom of religion and belief to be one of the Commonwealth's core values.

Encouraging member states to uphold the values and principles enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter – which include freedom of religion as well as democracy, freedom of expression, the rule of law and opposition to all forms of discrimination – will be an important part of April's summit.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-03-21/133575/>

UK Parliament Early Day Motion

Patricia Gibson (SNP) (1141) Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting 2018 – Freedom of Worship – hat this House is aware that the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2018 will take place in London from 16 to 20 April 2018; appreciates that the Commonwealth is a diverse community and that CHOGM 2018 is an important opportunity to promote democracy and peace; understands that religion plays a huge part in life across all Commonwealth countries with incredibly diverse religions and belief systems practiced throughout member states; urges the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to ensure that freedom to practice the religion or

belief of one's choice is firmly on the agenda at this CHOGM; is alarmed that freedom of religion is facing increased restrictions around the globe and therefore Commonwealth countries affirming the importance of this fundamental right, highlighting good practice across its member states, would be hugely important; and stresses that CHOGM 2018 provides opportunities for robust dialogue with those member states which fall short in protecting freedom of religion which should not be missed.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1141>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

**** European Union (Withdrawal) Bill**

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

Committee Stage, House of Lords

[https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-03-28/debates/28BF3C81-82B7-4E1B-B389-E004A2F61E2B/EuropeanUnion\(Withdrawal\)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-03-28/debates/28BF3C81-82B7-4E1B-B389-E004A2F61E2B/EuropeanUnion(Withdrawal)Bill)

Notice of amendments

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

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.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>

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Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 8 days**

Creating a Parliament for Wales (closing date 6 April 2018)

<http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=292>

Integrated Communities Strategy green paper (closing date 5 June 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438