

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 Written Answer

Discrimination

Melanie Onn (Labour) [139538] To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to implement the dual discrimination provisions set out in s14 of the Equality Act 2010.

Victoria Atkins: We keep un-commenced provisions of the Equality Act 2010 under review. Successive governments have not considered that sufficient evidence exists to justify the cost and complexity of introducing section 14 of that Act, which would enable a single discrimination claim to be brought under any two characteristics in the Act.

People may already bring a claim under more than one characteristic in relation to the same alleged case of discrimination, and courts and tribunals can consider such claims concurrently.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139538/>

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Organ Donation (Opt-out System)

2. Fulton MacGregor (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it is making toward introducing an opt-out system for organ donation. (S5O-02048)

The Minister for Public Health and Sport (Aileen Campbell): The Scottish Government is committed to introducing a workable soft opt-out system that will add to the improvements that have already been delivered, and legislation to provide for such a system will be introduced before the summer recess. It is important that we take the time to get the system right. It needs to be developed in a way that will do no harm to trust in the national health service or the safety of donation. We are working with stakeholders to achieve that.

Fulton MacGregor: Last week I hosted a round-table event for Kidney Research UK on renal regenerative medicine. We heard from a range of stakeholders how Scotland is leading the way on life sciences. Will the minister advise how the opt-out system can work in tandem with regenerative medicine to improve outcomes for kidney patients?

Aileen Campbell: Opt out will of course work alongside the range of measures that we already have in place, including the work on regenerative medicine. We

know that for opt out to be successful it has to work alongside other measures and would be part of the on-going work on improving outcomes for patients. We also recognise the potential for research in regenerative medicine to lead transformative new approaches to the treatment of renal disease. Officials from the chief scientist's office are in discussions with Kidney Research UK on collaborative funding of research in that area.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=11501&i=104400#ScotParlOR>

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Israel

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Madeleine Moon (Labour) [138409] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on adherence to international humanitarian law when responding to Palestinian protests on Gaza's borders.

Alistair Burt: We continue to raise our concerns about the high volume of live fire being used in response to the protests in Gaza. Our Ambassador to Israel raised this most recently with the Israeli authorities on 27 April. We have been clear that Israel has the right to secure itself against Hamas and other terrorist groups. Hamas and its operatives have been exploiting these protests for their own benefit. We are urging Israel to show restraint, and the Palestinian leadership to ensure the protests are peaceful.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-26/138409/>

Gaza: Visits Abroad

David Drew (Labour Co-op) [139357] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 27 April 2018 to Question 137403, on Gaza: Visits abroad, what plans he has to further investigate the medical needs of people affected by the situation in Gaza by sending representatives into (a) hospitals and (b) medical centres.

Allistair Burt: The UK remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and supports the health sector through funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency. We are also supporting the United Nations Children's Fund to provide clean water and rehabilitate sanitation facilities to stop the spread of disease. Officials from our consulate-General in Jerusalem regularly visit Gaza, including medical facilities, and intend to do so again soon.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139357/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-24/137403/>

Occupied Territories: Arms Trade

Richard Burden (Labour) [139364] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether the Government of Israel has given undertakings to the UK Government on limits on the use in the Occupied Palestinian Territories of arms and arms components imported from the UK.

Alistair Burt: The Government takes its defence exports responsibilities extremely seriously and operates some of the most robust export controls in the world. We only approve equipment which is for Israel's legitimate self-defence and when we are satisfied that it would be consistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria and other relevant commitments. All applications for export licences are assessed on a case-by-case basis against strict criteria. We will not issue a licence if there is a clear risk that the equipment might be used for internal repression, or if there is a clear risk that it would provoke or prolong conflict.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139364/>

Israel: Peacekeeping Operations

The following three questions all received the same answer

Richard Burden (Labour) [139365] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he is investigating the use by the Israeli Government of armoured vehicles, assault rifles, small arms ammunition, sniper rifles and components for sniper rifles exported from UK to Israel.

Israel: Arms Trade

Richard Burden (Labour) [139367] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether any arms or arms components exported from the UK to Israel have been used against Palestinians in the West Bank or Gaza in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Richard Burden (Labour) [139368] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure his Department can track the use of arms and arms components exported from the UK to Israel.

Alistair Burt: The UK has exported a number of military-listed items to Israel over the last 12 months. UK arms exports are subject to export controls and all decisions to approve export licences to Israel are considered on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (Consolidated Criteria). Decisions are based on the most up-to-date information and analysis available, including reports from our overseas network and military contacts. The Consolidated Criteria provide a thorough risk assessment framework and require consideration of the impact of providing equipment and its capabilities. We do not issue export licences where we assess there is a clear risk that the goods might be used for internal repression, in the commission of a serious violation of international humanitarian law, or where the export would provoke or prolong conflict. We keep the situation in Israel under continued review. We do not collect data on the use of equipment after sale.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139365/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139367/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139368/>

Israel: Arms Trade

Richard Burden (Labour) [139366] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether he has made changes to the conditions for the use of arms to arms components sold to Israel in the last two years.

Graham Stuart: All export licence applications are considered on a case-by-case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria, known as the Consolidated Criteria, based on the most up-to-date information and

analysis available, including reports from NGOs and our overseas network. The Consolidated Criteria provide a thorough risk assessment framework and require us to assess the impact of providing equipment and its capabilities. We will not issue an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-30/139366/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Innovation: Israel

Baroness Deech (Crossbench) [HL7102] To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of benefits to the UK from Israeli advances in medicine, science and technology.

Lord Henley: BIRAX (the Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange Partnership) is a £10 million initiative of the UK Government and the British Council in Israel funding cutting-edge research into regenerative medicine. Over £8 million has been committed to 19 projects in the UK and Israel funding research in Oxford, Cambridge, Nottingham and Edinburgh universities. The programme provides an invaluable framework for enabling knowledge exchange between UK and Israeli researchers.

Researchers presented BIRAX supported research at 71 conferences and workshops to over 21,000 scientists and researchers, postdoctoral students and students across 22 countries including the US, India, China, France, Japan, Germany, Sweden as well as to audiences in the UK and Israel. To date, 27 scientific articles have been published as a result of BIRAX projects and BIRAX funded research has been cited 635 times. Three of the seven BIRAX projects which concluded in 2016, have registered patents and two project teams have been approached by biotech companies expressing an interest in licensing their intellectual property. Three BIRAX projects have secured further funding for research initiated under the BIRAX initiative.

In BIRAX's first five years, three scientific conferences and two workshops have been held for BIRAX grantees, reaching over 1,000 participants from over 110 British and Israeli universities. This year a major new initiative, BIRAX Ageing, launched which will be the main academic research theme for the next 4-5 years.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-04-19/HL7102/>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-11963.1 Ivan McKee (SNP): Israil Direct Flights from Tel Aviv to Edinburgh –

As an amendment to motion S5M-11963 in the name of Jackson Carlaw (Israil Direct Flights from Tel Aviv to Edinburgh), leave out from "considers" to end and insert "notes that Ben Gurion Airport has been the closest airport to Gaza and the occupied West Bank since the destruction of Yasser Arafat International Airport in 2001 by Israeli forces, and considers that this new service presents an opportunity for people from Scotland to visit Palestine and enjoy the wonderful Palestinian hospitality."

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11963.1>

The Motion to which the above is an amendment was included in Political Affairs Digest of 1 May:

S5M-11963 Jackson Carlaw (Conservative): Israil Direct Flights from Tel Aviv to Edinburgh – That the Parliament welcomes the announcement that Israil will commence direct flights from Edinburgh to Israel from 13 June 2018; notes that the airline will operate weekly flights from Ben Gurion Airport to Edinburgh; considers that this is an important step in strengthening Scotland-Israel cultural, trade and tourism links, which it believes has been called for by the Building Bridges with Israel Cross Party Group; further considers that VisitScotland must now work to capitalise on this new route to further encourage Israeli tourism to Scotland, which it understands currently often starts in London rather than direct into Scotland, and wishes the airline well ahead of the route's official launch date.
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-11963>

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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>

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

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

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

Measures to further improve the effectiveness of the fight against illegal content online (closing date 25 June 2018)

https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-measures-further-improve-effectiveness-fight-against-illegal-content-online_en

Home Education (closing date 2 July 2018)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/home-education-call-for-evidence-and-revised-dfe-a/>

Ecclesiastical exemption and guidance on scheduled monuments (closing date 13 July 2018)

<https://beta.gov.wales/ecclesiastical-exemption-and-guidance-scheduled-monuments>

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