

# Political Affairs Digest

*A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community*  
**Scottish Council of Jewish Communities**  
**SCoJeC**

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## Home Affairs

### House of Commons Written Answer

#### **Slaughterhouses: Animal Welfare**

**Mike Penning (Conservative)** [162017] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the creation of a specific mark to enable consumers to identify meat, poultry and fish that has been pre-stunned before slaughter (a) now and (b) after the UK leaves the EU; and if he will make a statement.

**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, and that there are calls for such meat to be labelled.

There are currently no specific EU or national requirements governing the sale and labelling of Halal or Kosher meat. Where any information of this nature is provided voluntarily, it must be accurate and must not be misleading.

The Government believes that consumers should have the necessary information to enable them to make an informed choice about their food. This is an issue the Government is considering in the context of the UK's departure from the EU.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-09/162017/>

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## Israel

### House of Lords Written Answer

#### **Israeli Settlements**

**Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated)** [HL9145] To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 25 June (HL8532), what action they intend to take following the plans by Israel to construct a further 3,000 settlement units in the West Bank.

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We will continue to raise our concerns about Israel's plans for further settlements with the Israeli authorities. The British Government's position is clear, settlements are illegal under international law, present an

obstacle to peace, and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-02/HL9145/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-06-11/HL8532/>

## House of Commons Library

**Letter from Alistair Burt MP to Stephen Twigg MP regarding the possible use of UK-supplied equipment by the Israel Defence Forces in Gaza.**

[http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-0696/Stephen\\_Twigg\\_MP\\_Letter.pdf](http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2018-0696/Stephen_Twigg_MP_Letter.pdf)

## UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

**Closure of Gaza commercial crossing: UN expert calls on Israel to reverse decision**

A UN human rights expert has called on Israel to reverse its decision to close the Kerem Shalom/Karm Abu Salem commercial crossing into Gaza.

The Israeli decision, announced on 9 July, prohibits the import of everything but food, animal fodder, livestock, fuels and medical supplies into Gaza, and bans all export from Gaza. Israel imposed these new restrictions in response to burning kites being sent by Palestinians into southern Israel from Gaza.

“This further tightening of an already-punitive and comprehensive blockade on Gaza will only worsen its dire humanitarian crisis,” said Michael Lynk, the UN Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967.

“Gaza survives with four to six hours of daily electrical power, its drinkable water is almost exhausted, it endures the highest unemployment rates in the world, and its anaemic economy is already flat on its back.”

“Israel’s 11-year-old air, sea and land blockade has driven Gaza’s social and economic conditions steadily backwards. This amounts to the collective punishment of the two million residents of Gaza, which is strictly prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention.” ...

“The flying of incendiary kites into southern Israel, which has caused the burning and destruction of agricultural fields, is to be deplored,” Mr. Lynk said. “However, imposing even greater social and economic harm on Gaza will not address Israel’s true security interests, and it profoundly violates the rights of the residents of Gaza.” ...

Instead of punitive responses, the Special Rapporteur has called on Israel to reverse the closure of the Kerem Shalom/Karm Abu Salem crossing, and commit to lifting its comprehensive blockade, consistent with appropriate security arrangements.

“Only through the economic restoration of Gaza, and a guaranteed path for Palestinian self-determination and the end of the Israeli occupation, will tensions ease between Gaza and Israel. Collectively punishing the entire population of Gaza, and further isolating it from the world, is exactly the wrong path – legally, politically and morally.” ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23375&LangID=E>

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women considers the report of the State of Palestine**

Hayfaa Alaga, Minister for Women’s Affairs of the State of Palestine, introducing the report, said that in the State of Palestine, the rights of women were affirmed in the Palestinian Independence Declaration and reflected in laws, policies and the gender

equality strategy. Palestine was the cradle of the three major world's religions, said the Minister, noting that the Palestinian people had developed their history and cultural identity on this sacred land. The State of Palestine belonged to Palestinians wherever they were, and on this territory they enjoyed their rights, religious and political beliefs and human dignity. It was a State where the majority respected the wishes of the minority, and a society built on the principles of social justice, equality and non-discrimination, which were enshrined in law. The plight of the Palestinian people was the result of geopolitical interests and tensions between the major political powers, an outcome of political heritage and social beliefs which had led to the exile of the Palestinian people. Human rights were enshrined in article 9 of the Constitution which guaranteed the equality of all citizens of the State of Palestine. All legislation which contained discrimination against women was being repealed and the Government was revising its policies to bring them in line with its international obligations, in demonstration of the full commitment of the State of Palestine to international treaties it had acceded to. ... The State of Palestine submitted monthly reports to the International Court of Justice on the violations of international law by Israel, the occupying power, and had submitted complaints to relevant bodies, including the International Court of Justice, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council, on war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Israel the occupying power. A report and complaints had also been submitted concerning the violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, by Israel during the latest peaceful protests of the Palestinian people. ...

... a Committee Expert ... noted that the weakness of Palestinian institutions and the absence of legislative activities since 2007 were a cause of fragility too. ...

... the Expert noted the need to reform the laws, and urgently address the legal fragmentation which was the major source of legal uncertainty – there were multiple sources of law in the country, Ottoman, Israeli, Palestinian and others, while Sharia law remained the main source of the law. The unification of laws was therefore a priority, the Expert stressed ...

Responding, the delegation said ... The Government was working to address the lack of political stability since the coup d'état in Gaza, and was investing considerable efforts in the reconciliation process, unification of the State and harmonization of laws. ...

With regards to legal fragmentation, the State of Palestine was looking into legal fragmentation in relation to personal status, particularly for the Palestinians living in Israel, and for the Palestinian Diaspora. ...

A Committee Expert noted that the State of Palestine still suffered “occupation and aggressive practices”, including the construction of settlements and disposition of land, and others, while the non-contiguity of territories between the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem represented a major challenge. ...

Palestinian women, continued the Expert, were never a burden on the society, but were the sponsors and carers of the national Palestinian. Peace would not be built without women and yet women were not represented in the decision-making positions, nor were they adequately represented in the harmonization committee. ...

The delegation explained that a committee ... had adopted a strategy and a plan of action on women, peace and security 2016-2019. Its primary goals were the protection of women from Israeli occupation, accountability, and the participation of women in decision making. ...

As for accountability, the State of Palestine was documenting Israeli violations and was working with the international community to obtain resolutions, for example by the Human Rights Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and others. ...

... a Committee Expert noted that women and men were equal before the law in matters of nationality and that the right to return was transferred both by mother and father to their children. The enjoyment of the right to Palestinian nationality was impeded by the occupation, as Israeli occupying authorities restricted this right. ...

What happened with the Palestinians whose houses were demolished by the Israeli occupying power, where did they go? ...

Responses by the Delegation: The State of Palestine was a State under occupation and thus did not exercise full control over its territory. The nationality was transferred to the children by Palestinian nationals both by mothers and fathers regardless of the nationality of the other parent. In territories occupied by Israel, the transfer of nationality was linked to the registry of birth and the authorisation issued by the occupying power, which could refuse to recognize the birth.

Another issue was related to the definition of a Palestinian; the Palestinian Liberation Authority used the definition by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency: a Palestinian was any person born to parents who were Palestinians in 1948 and had to emigrate because of the Naqba.

The delegation said that Palestinians living in Jerusalem and other occupied Palestinian territories were issued residency permits by the occupying power, in violation of international law. What was now happening in Jerusalem and other occupied Palestinian territories was the continuation of settler movement in the land of Palestine, which included the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes in Palestine, including the withdrawal of identity documents of Palestinians from Jerusalem, destruction of homes and expelling of all Palestinians from the holy city of Jerusalem. The State of Palestine provided legal aid to Palestinians whose homes were demolished by Israel, in order to support them, particularly Jerusalemites, to stay in the city. ...

The suffering of detainees in Israeli prisons, including children, was insupportable, said a delegate, herself detained by the Israeli occupying force at the age of 14, tortured, and held in solitary confinement. ...

The delegation reiterated that the State of Palestine was an open legal workshop, in which work was ongoing to ensure that no law discriminated against women, and that all the laws were promoting and protecting all the human rights of all the Palestinian people. ...

***To read the full press release see***

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23377&LangID=E>

***The report discussed above can be read at***

<https://tinyurl.com/ycb5a76x>

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

### **UK Parliament**

#### **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>

## Scottish Parliament

### Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

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## Consultations

\*\* new or updated today

### Financial Memorandum of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill

(closing date 31 August 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/109042.aspx>

### Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill (closing date 4 September 2018)

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/108999.aspx>

### 20 years of the Human Rights Act (closing date 14 September 2018)

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/20-years-human-rights-act-launch-17-19/>

### Antisemitism: Survey of European Jews (closing date not stated)

<http://www.eurojews.eu/>

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