

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

Poultry: Animal Welfare

Matthew Offord (Conservative) [164984] To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to make an assessment of the potential merits of banning the use of electrical water bath systems for the stunning of poultry after the UK has left the European Union.

George Eustice: European Council Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009 requires all animals to be stunned before slaughter using the methods and parameters listed in Annex 1 to the Regulation, which includes electrical waterbath stunning. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 will convert the existing body of EU animal welfare law into UK law.

According to a survey carried out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in 2013, 71% of poultry in GB were stunned using a gas stunning system with 25% being electronically stunned. Defra and Welsh Government have asked the FSA to carry out an updated version of the survey for 2018. We hope to publish the results of the survey later in the year.

We are committed to reviewing the legislation on protecting animals at the time of killing before 2020 and considering the extent to which the objectives of the legislation have been met.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-17/164984/>

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House of Commons Debate

Syria

col 881 **Alison McGovern (Labour):** ... the Foreign Secretary and the International Development Secretary announced that the Government will help to provide safe passage for the White Helmets ... They will come to UK and other safe countries via Israel and Jordan. ... The White Helmets are some of those who choose not to fight and it is correct, therefore, that we give them sanctuary. ...

col 883 **Alan Duncan (Conservative):** It has been an absolutely remarkable feat of extraction to take the White Helmets out of southern Syria. We give enormous thanks to the Israelis for the efforts they made once requested by us, our international partners and the Americans. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, who had only been in the job for two days, was absolutely significant in discussing this with President Trump, when he was with the Prime Minister at Chequers, to try to persuade him to put a request to the Israelis to do it. Clearly, that has worked, and as a result many of hundreds of White Helmets and their families have been extracted from southern Syria. ...

col 885 It has been one of the most protracted and insoluble conflicts I have ever seen, as someone who has watched the middle east and the near east for over 30 years. It is the one to which there is no obvious answer, compared with so many of the difficult protracted differences that exist in the region. More territory is controlled now by Mr Assad and his associates than before. ... We are perhaps seeing movements towards the foot of the Golan Heights near Quneitra where, if there is a conflict with the Israelis, it would obviously be very serious indeed. ...

col 886 **Peter Grant (SNP):** ... I have often criticised Israel here and elsewhere in this building, so I have no hesitation on this occasion in commending and thanking Israel for the speedy and effective way in which they got so many of the White Helmets, and vitally, their loved ones, out of the danger zone. ...

To read the full transcript see

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-07-24/debates/4B164CD4-08F0-41F7-A258-42392C2351DD/Syria>

House of Commons Written Answers

Israel: Palestinians

Richard Burden (Labour) [164265] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what information his Department holds on instances of Israeli authorities using equipment from UK-based companies in demolishing or assisting with demolishing structures in the West Bank.

Alistair Burt: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is aware of media reports that highlight possible instances of Israeli authorities using equipment from UK-based companies to demolish or assist with demolishing structures in the West Bank. We continue to raise concerns with the Israeli authorities about demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes, which cause unnecessary suffering to ordinary Palestinians, calls into question Israel's commitment to a viable two-state solution, and, in all but the most exceptional cases, are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The Government is fully committed to the promotion of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines, and to encouraging and fostering respect for human rights among UK business. Where a company decides to trade is a decision for each company taking account of the legal and regulatory environment, including international human rights law.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-16/164265/>

Israel: Politics and Government

Richard Burden (Labour) [166059] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the Israeli Government on the (a) passage of the Nation State Law by the Israeli Knesset and (b) implications of that law on the rights and status of minority groups.

Alistair Burt: The Nation-State Bill has passed through the Knesset into law. The final wording of the legislation did not contain the clause which would have

explicitly allowed a community composed of people of the same faith or nationality to maintain an exclusive community. As part of their regular diplomatic work with Israeli authorities and legislators, British diplomats in Israel discussed the (Nation-State Bill) alongside other legislation and developments. Israel's long standing commitment to equality for all its citizens is one of its great strengths as a fellow democracy. As friends of Israel we would be concerned about any development that would undermine this commitment

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-19/166059/>

UNRWA: Finance

Richard Burden (Labour) [166060] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the funding shortfall for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees on front line services in (a) the West Bank, (b) Gaza, (c) Jordan, (d) Lebanon and (e) Syria.

Alistair Burt: UNRWA has a twin-track approach to addressing the funding shortfall: raising additional money from donors; and identifying those programme activities which can be merged with its core activities or reviewing non-core activities which can be picked up by other providers. The UK supports UNRWA's approach, and has increased our funding for UNRWA this year to £38.5 million so far.

Emergency Appeal activities currently being reviewed are:

1. West Bank
 - Emergency interventions such as cash for work activities, community mental health and mobile health work;
2. Gaza
 - Community mental health programmes and the job creation project;
3. Jordan & Lebanon
 - Palestinian refugees from Syria in Jordan and Lebanon will continue to receive UNRWA support, and the delivery of UNRWA's core services are funded until late August;
4. Syria
 - UNRWA core services are currently funded until late August, and emergency services are secure until the end of 2018.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-19/166060/>

Israel: Palestinians

Richard Burden (Labour) [166062] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the distribution of land allocations between settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank.

Alistair Burt: The UK considers all Israeli settlements in the West Bank to be illegal under international law, and a barrier to a two-state solution.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-19/166062/>

Syria: Palestinians

Richard Burden (Labour) [166061] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what recent estimate she has made of the number of refugees who have been displaced from Yarmouk refugee camp; and if she will make a statement.

Alistair Burt: The recent Assad regime offensive on Yarmouk camp has resulted in the displacement of approximately 6,000 residents according to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's assessment.

When access permits, DFID is supporting the UN, NGOs and other partners to

deliver life-saving assistance to those who remain in Yarmouk and those who were displaced following the siege, by providing food, healthcare, water and other life-saving relief.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-19/166061/>

Occupied Territories: Foreign Nationals

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) [166266] To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether he has received representations on allegations of the Israeli Government's refusal to grant residency permits and visas to foreign nationals who have made their home and livelihood in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Alistair Burt: We have not received any representations on this issue.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-07-19/166266/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Middle East: Water

Lord Hunt of Chesterton (Labour) [HL9584] To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken with other countries and UN agencies, including the World Meteorological Organisation, to help restore water to the rivers and ground water resources in war torn countries in the Middle East.

Lord Bates: The UK Government is working closely with partners, including UN agencies, to improve access to and management of water resources in a number of Middle Eastern countries.

Examples include:

- Technical support for national policy and planning on water resources in Syria, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Lebanon and Jordan.
- Support for water resources management in Yemen, through the World Bank's Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience.
- Working with UNICEF in Jordan to improve access to safe water and sanitation facilities for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians.
- Supporting the Water Authority of Jordan carry out urgently needed improvement of the wastewater system's operational capacity, by building a new wastewater conveyor (redundancy pipe) benefitting a total of 2.3 million people.
- Support to the construction of the Central Gaza Desalination Plant and upgrading of the water distribution network in Gaza.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-17/HL9584/>

Palestinians: Military Aid

Baroness Tonge (Non-affiliated) [HL9623] To ask Her Majesty's Government what training the army and Joint Forces Command supply to the Palestinian Authority Security Forces; what is their budget for such training; and which department provides the budget.

Earl Howe: I refer the noble Baroness to the answer I gave her on 19 June 2018, to HL 8534.

This training is paid for by the cross-Government Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and MOD's Defence Assistance Fund (DAF). In financial year 2017-18, the CSSF spend was £2.32 million; and DAF spend was £145,000.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-07-17/HL9623/>

The answer referred to above can be read at

UK Parliament Early Day Motions

Alex Sobel (Labour Co-op) (1556) Israel's Nation State Law – That this House notes with concern the Nation State Law passed in the Israeli Knesset by just 62 votes to 55; further notes this law enshrines the concept that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people as a basic law and alters the application of the Basic Law on Human Dignity and Liberty in court rulings, and permits judges to give priority to Israel's Jewish character in their rulings; notes in addition that Benjamin Netanyahu has stated that the Palestinian Authority must acknowledge aspects of the law as a condition for a future peace agreement, putting the two state solution at risk; declares that democracies by their character treat all their citizens equally before the law and are committed to the pluralism of peoples and that this law abandons those basic tenets; and therefore calls on the Government to urge the Israeli Government to repeal the Nation State Law and to enshrine equal status to all its citizens.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1556>

Layla Moran (Liberal Democrat) (1560) Twinning of Oxford and Ramallah – That this House welcomes the work of the Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association over 15 years to develop cultural, social and friendship links between the people of Ramallah and Oxford; further welcomes visits and exchanges between residents, schools, community groups and trade unions in the two cities in that time; notes that, on 23 July 2018, Oxford City Council backed a motion calling on the Council to initiate a twinning link based on the long-standing friendship between Oxford and Ramallah; and calls on the Government to offer support for establishing a full twinning relationship between Oxford and Ramallah.

<https://www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1560>

Court of Justice of the European Union

A Palestinian who has refugee status from UNRWA cannot obtain refugee status in the EU while receiving effective protection or assistance from that UN agency

Ms Serin Alheto, a Palestinian habitually resident in the Gaza Strip, left that territory for Jordan where she stayed for a short time before travelling to Bulgaria and lodging an application for asylum and subsidiary protection in that country. After that application was refused by the Bulgarian administrative authorities, Ms Alheto brought an action before the Sofia Administrative Court (Bulgaria). That court asks the Court of Justice, in particular, for clarification as to whether and according to what criteria Ms Alheto is entitled to refugee status under EU law. ...

As regards an application for asylum and subsidiary protection lodged by a Palestinian, the Court also sets out, in today's judgment, the specific criteria which derive from EU law concerning applications for international protection lodged by Palestinians.

In that regard, the Court recalls that, when a Palestinian, such as the applicant in the case in question, is registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (the UN agency established to protect and assist, in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, Palestinians who are 'Palestine refugees'), that Palestinian may not obtain asylum in the EU for as long as he or she is a beneficiary of effective protection or assistance from that UN agency. That individual may obtain asylum in the EU only if he or she are in a position in which his or her personal safety is at serious risk, has unsuccessfully sought assistance

from UNRWA and has been driven to leave the UNRWA area of operations owing to circumstances beyond his or her control.

When, as in the present case, a person of Palestinian origin registered with UNRWA leaves his or her residence in the Gaza Strip for Jordan and stays for a short time in that country before travelling to an EU Member State where he or she lodges an application for international protection, both the administrative or quasi-judicial body designated by that Member State to examine such an application and the court or tribunal hearing an appeal against the decision adopted by that body must, inter alia, examine whether that person enjoyed effective protection or assistance from UNRWA in Jordan. If that is the case, that person may not obtain asylum in the EU. Nor may that person obtain subsidiary protection in the EU if it has not been established that his or her personal safety is at serious risk in the territory of his or her place of residence (in the present case, the Gaza Strip) or, otherwise, if Jordan is prepared to readmit that individual to its territory and grant him or her the right to stay in dignified living conditions for as long as necessary in view of the risks in the Gaza Strip.

To read the full press release see

<https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2018-07/cp180112en.pdf>

United Nations

Outbreak of New Israel-Hamas Conflict ‘Almost a Certainty’, Special Coordinator for Middle East Peace Process Warns Security Council

Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process ... [said] Last Saturday, it took intensive preventative diplomacy by the United Nations and Egypt to avert a fourth military confrontation between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip ...

The past month has seen one of the largest escalations since the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict, he said, noting that 19 Palestinians – including 7 children — were killed by the Israel Defense Forces, and more than 1,000 injured amid protests, clashes and air strikes. One Israeli soldier was killed by gunfire from Gaza, and four Israeli civilians and a soldier were moderately injured by rocket fire and a hand grenade, respectively. In the occupied West Bank, a Palestinian teenager was killed by the Israel Defense Forces during a search-and-arrest operation, while some 25 Palestinians and three Israeli soldiers were injured, he said. ...

... he said Israeli authorities have continued the demolition and confiscation of Palestinian-owned structures. Detailing the situation in Khan al Ahmar-Abu al Helu and Abu Nuwar, he said they are among 18 communities located in, or adjacent to, the controversial E1 area where plans for new settlement construction would undermine the contiguity of a future Palestinian State. ...

Recalling Israel’s interception of unmanned aerial vehicles launched from Syria earlier this month, and the targeting of Syrian military posts in retaliation, he said the United Nations is closely monitoring the situation after the Israel Defense Force said it fired two missiles earlier today to shoot down a Syrian fighter jet which it claimed had infiltrated Israeli airspace. ...

... For seven decades, Palestinians have borne witness to decisions that denigrated their rights under the pretext of security and religious edicts. In the Gaza Strip, they endure a worsening humanitarian crisis, which has placed “explosive” pressure on infrastructure and caused loss of livelihoods, all while Israel kills Palestinian civilians, [Riyad H. Mansour, Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine] said. ...

Recalling Israel’s recent adoption of its “Jewish Nation-State Law”, he said that its goal is not peace and a two-State solution, but rather, annexation at the expense of a future Palestinian State. ...

Danny Danon (Israel), recalling that two missiles were launched at a Syrian fighter jet that was in Israel’s airspace, warned Syria against breaching the 1974 separation of

forces agreement. He recalled that Israel rescued 422 members of the “White Helmets” and their families over the weekend, approving their passage as a humanitarian gesture. Israel will continue to provide Syrians with food, medicine and clothing as it has since the war’s earliest days, he said, pointing out that too many in the international community criticized his country’s actions. Describing recent events, he said an Israeli Defense Force soldier was killed by a Hamas terrorist squad, while a 17-year-old girl was wounded in a rocket attack, and balloon explosives landed on the roof of a kindergarten. Some 7,400 acres in southern Israel — “half the size of Manhattan” or eight Central Parks — have been destroyed by Hamas arson attacks, he added. ...

Designating Hamas a terrorist organization would reaffirm the international community’s obligation to combat terrorism, as it shares the goal of Al-Qaida and ISIL of killing innocent people and disrupting peace, he continued. Recalling that Hamas still holds two Israeli civilians and the abducted bodies of two Israeli soldiers hostage, he said it has been more than four years since the killing of the two soldiers and the United Nations is responsible for ensuring their return for burial in Israel. Failure to do so would be in violation of international humanitarian law ...

Nikki Haley (United States) said that, while the international media pays attention to every step Israel takes in self-defence, the Council must not lose sight of the damage it suffers under terrorist attacks from Gaza. ...

François Delattre (France) said ... The Council must not abdicate its responsibility nor divert its attention, he said. Condemning the indiscriminate use of disproportionate force, he expressed support for the right of Palestinians to protest, while recalling also France’s condemnation of Hamas’ exploitation of those protests to breach the security fence, as well as to launch rockets and incendiary devices against Israel’s territory. ...

Stephen Hickey (United Kingdom) stressed that, more than ever, a political process that delivers a two-State solution is needed. The United Kingdom is ready to support and contribute to all credible efforts to restart the peace process and he urged others to do the same. ... Hamas must immediately and permanently stop directing rocket fire and incendiary devices at Israel, which in turn must end punitive actions and work instead with the international community to improve access to Gaza. The Palestinian Authority must, for its part, resume salary payments and work to restore its presence in Gaza. ... Israel must abandon the demolition of Palestinian property, which causes unnecessary suffering and runs counter to international law. ...

Joanne Adamson, European Union, described Gaza as a pressure cooker “on the brink of explosion”. ... Condemning the violence taking place since March and committed by both Israelis and Palestinians, she said the Israeli security forces in particular must refrain from using excessive force against unarmed civilians while protecting their country’s legitimate security interests. ...

Sima Sami I. Bahous (Jordan) said her country will spare no effort to counter Israel’s attempts to change the character of Jerusalem. Condemning recent attacks against helpless civilians in the Gaza Strip, she recalled that a General Assembly resolution adopted in June guarantees international protection to Palestinian civilians. She also denounced Israel’s adoption of a new law enshrining racial segregation in contravention of international norms, calling upon the international community to oppose that legislation — which will only exacerbate tensions and lead to greater conflict. ...

The representative of Israel took the floor a second time, saying that over three years, many States have made false accusations during the Council’s open debate on the Middle East. ... The open debate is not a platform for discussions involving honesty and self-awareness, especially for Middle Eastern delegates, she said, adding that over three years, some of them claimed to favour diplomatic solutions, while refusing to sit next to an Israeli delegate. How can one take the Council seriously when some delegates ban even the concept of sitting together at the same table? she asked. How can the Council think it knows best what the region needs without hearing once from Israel? ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13433.doc.htm>

President of Human Rights Council appoints Members of Commission of Inquiry on 2018 protests in Occupied Palestinian Territory

The President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Vojislav Šuc (Slovenia), announced today the appointment of David Michael Crane (United States), Sara Hossain (Bangladesh) and Kaari Betty Murungi (Kenya), to serve as the three members of the Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Mr. Crane will serve as Chair of the three-person Commission. ...

Through Human Rights Council [resolution S-28/1](#), the 47-member body mandated the Commission “to establish the facts and circumstances, with assistance from relevant experts and special procedure mandate holders, of the alleged violations and abuses, including those that may amount to war crimes” and “to identify those responsible”.

The Commissioners, who will serve in their personal capacities, were also requested by the Council “to make recommendations, in particular on accountability measures, all with a view to avoiding and ending impunity and ensuring legal accountability, including individual criminal and command responsibility, for such violations and abuses, and on protecting civilians against any further assaults”.

The Commission is scheduled to present an oral update to the Human Rights Council at its 39th session in September 2018, and a final, written report at its 40th session to be held in March 2019.

Biographies of the members of the Commission of Inquiry

David Michael Crane (United States) is an international law expert who has served over 30 years in the federal government of the United States having held numerous key positions, including Senior Inspector General in the Department of Defence. In 2006, he was appointed Professor of Practice at Syracuse University College of Law where he teaches international criminal law, international law, national security law, and the law of armed conflict. Professor Crane served as Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone from April 2002 until 15 July 2005, during which period he indicted, among others, the then-President of Liberia, Charles Taylor.

Sara Hossain (Bangladesh) is a lawyer who works as a barrister at the bar of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and an honorary executive director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST). In 2016, she was appointed by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights as one of the two experts on accountability to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. She was one of the recipients of the 2016 International Women of Courage Award awarded by the US Secretary of State. She is also a Member of the Board of trustee on the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture since 2017.

Kaari Betty Murungi (Kenya) is a lawyer who has practiced law at national, regional and international levels, and in the management of non-governmental and non-profit organisations. She serves on the board of the Kenya Human Rights Commission and the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice at the International Criminal Court. She was also a legal advisor on gender-related crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. From 2009 to 2013, she served as Vice-Chairperson and Commissioner to the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya and as the African representative on the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims at the International Criminal Court.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23403&LangID=E>

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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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