

# Political Affairs Digest

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

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## Israel

### Scottish Parliament Motion

**S5M-13424 Kenneth Gibson (SNP): Successful Rescue of White Helmet Volunteers from the Syrian Conflict** – That the Parliament commends the joint effort by the Israeli Defense Forces and international partners, which successfully evacuated White Helmet volunteers and their families from southern Syria; notes that 422 people, including 97 White Helmets, were rescued and taken to safety in Jordan, where they are currently housed in a secure location awaiting resettlement; understands that the White Helmets group, which is officially known as Syria Civil Defence, consists of emergency relief and rescue volunteers and is estimated to have saved over 115,000 lives during the Syrian conflict at great personal risk; regrets that more than 250 of the volunteers are estimated to have been killed in attacks while operating in opposition-held areas rescuing civilians; appreciates that the volunteers remaining in Syria would fear for their lives as, it understands, President Assad and his supporters have labelled them as both western-sponsored tools of propaganda and proxies of Islamist-led insurgents; believes that, under the processes established by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Canada will take in up to 50 White Helmets volunteers and their families, totalling up to 250 people, Germany will take in eight and their families and that the UK is also willing to offer asylum to those who have been rescued, and pays tribute to the selfless work that the White Helmet volunteers have undertaken to save Syrians on all sides of the conflict and the brave efforts of the rescuers who risked their own lives to bring these volunteers and their families to safety.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-13424>

## United Nations

### **UN development agency provides lifeline to Gaza lifeguards, in bid to keep workers from debtors' prison**

If Bilal Bashir, a Palestinian fisherman and lifeguard living on the coast of the Gaza Strip, does not get work over the summer months, he risks being sent to debtors' prison.

That's the harsh reality facing many in the enclave, which is blockaded by Israel, as unemployment rates reach as high as 60 per cent, but the United Nations Development Programme's Assistance to the Palestinian People initiative, is creating jobs as part of an overall effort to relieve the intense pressure on workers and their families during the

summer period.

Since Israel's decision to close the Kerem Shalom/Karm Abu Salem commercial crossing into Gaza last month — in response to the flying of incendiary kites into southern Israel — the dire economic situation has worsened, making it even more difficult for people such as Bilal to find work.

The closure of the crossing prohibits the import of everything but food, animal fodder, livestock, fuels and medical supplies, and bans all exports. In addition, the livelihood of fishermen like Bilal has been made more precarious by the restriction of the fishing zone off the coast of Gaza from nine nautical miles, to six. ...

The summer lifeguard job that Bilal desperately waits for each year is part of the UNDP's Programme of Assistance, designed to create job opportunities in Gaza and alleviate the impact of the economic and social hardships being endured by most of the population there. ...

The primary objective of the operation is to provide an income for a period of between three and six months. When money is injected into the local economy, a virtuous cycle of development can begin."

The scheme is funded by the Islamic Development Bank, to the tune of \$2 million; the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, which provides \$1.2 million, and \$300,000 from UNDP.

As a result of PAPP and other projects, over 4,000 new sources of income will be created. Additionally, ongoing infrastructure projects related to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of educational facilities and the construction of water, wastewater and health facilities, are also creating thousands of extra shifts every week for skilled and unskilled labourers. ...

**To read the full press release see**

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/08/1016402>

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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/>

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