



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Foreign Affairs

Other Relevant Information

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Home Affairs

House of Commons Library Briefing

Civil partnership for opposite sex couples

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8609/CBP-8609.pdf>

Ministry of Justice

Divorce 'blame game' to end

Divorcing couples will no longer have to blame one another for the breakdown of their marriage as a Bill that seeks to reduce family conflict enters Parliament ...

The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill represents the biggest shake-up of divorce laws in half a century and aims to reduce the impact that allegations of blame can have on a couple and in particular children.

Currently, one spouse has to make accusations about the other's conduct, such as 'unreasonable behaviour' or adultery, or otherwise face years of separation before a divorce can be granted – regardless of whether a couple has made a mutual decision to separate.

The new law will remove this 'blame game' by allowing one spouse - or the couple jointly - to make a statement of irretrievable breakdown. It will also stop one partner contesting a divorce if the other wants one – which in some cases has allowed domestic abusers to exercise further coercive control over their victim. ...

Justice Secretary & Lord Chancellor Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP said: ... Our reforms will stop divorcing couples having to make unnecessary allegations against one another and instead help them focus on separating amicably. ...

Aidan Jones, Chief Executive at relationships charity Relate said: ... The proposed changes will encourage a positive start to the new relationship divorcing couples must form as co-parents. ... the introduction of a minimum timeframe will provide an opportunity for couples to reflect and seek vital support such as counselling and mediation. ...

Specifically, the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill will:

- Replace the current requirement to evidence either a conduct or separation 'fact'

- with the provision of a statement of irretrievable breakdown of the marriage ...
- Remove the possibility of contesting the decision to divorce ...
 - Introduces a new minimum period of 20 weeks from the start of proceedings to confirmation to the court that a conditional order of divorce may be made ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/divorce-blame-game-to-end>

TOP

Israel

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Updated Travel Advice: Israel

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/israel>

Updated Travel Advice: The Occupied Palestinian Territories

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/the-occupied-palestinian-territories>

Scottish Parliament Motion

S5M-20315 Colin Beattie (SNP): Condemning Cyprus Sentencing of a British Teenager – That the Parliament condemns the decision regarding the sentencing of a 19-year-old British teenager in Cyprus following her claim that she was raped by 12 Israelis; expresses concern at the justice system in Cyprus and the judge for punishing this teenager after she was reportedly questioned without access to a lawyer and forced into retracting her claim without any legal representation; stands by victims of sexual assault and rape, and acknowledges their right to report these abhorrent acts; believes in victims having the right to adequate support from the justice system and proper legal representation; sends its support to the teenager, as well as all those who have been distressed by this case; hopes that the matter is dealt with quickly and fairly, and urges the UK Government and EU to intervene and ensure that justice is sought.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-20315>

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Israel/OPT: UN expert says ICC war crimes probe would be a “momentous step for accountability”

A UN human rights expert has hailed the International Criminal Court's decision to consider a formal criminal investigation into allegations of war crimes in Palestine as a "momentous step forward in the quest for accountability" in the five-decade-long Israeli occupation.

"Accountability has, until now, been largely missing in action throughout the 52-year-old occupation," said Michael Lynk, the Special Rapporteur for the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

"Over the years, the international community has adopted hundreds of resolutions through the United Nations condemning various features of Israel's entrenched occupation of the Palestinian territory. Yet rarely has it ever combined criticism with consequences for Israel.

Now, the possibility of accountability is finally on the horizon."

ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced on 20 December that she was "satisfied that there is a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation into the situation in Palestine". She has spent the past five years reviewing the initial evidence as part of a preliminary investigation in the 2014 war on Gaza, the Israeli settlements and, more recently, the killing and wounding of Palestinian demonstrators near the Gaza frontier. ...

"In a world that proclaims its devotion to human rights and a rules-based international order, it is vital that the international community defend the decision of the ICC Prosecutor to advance her investigation and to seek a favourable ruling from the Pre-Trial Chamber on the issue of territorial jurisdiction," said the Special Rapporteur.

"International law must be the basis for seeking justice for the victims of war crimes in this interminable conflict, and the international community must resolutely support the laws and the institutions that it has created and nurtured."

The Special Rapporteur noted that the Prosecutor also intended to investigate whether members of Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups had committed war crimes in the period since June 2014. "If the evidence gathered by the ICC Prosecutor leads her to make findings against these organizations, then her efforts must also be supported," ...

"Justice delayed is justice denied. Should the allegations of war crimes then proceed to the formal investigation stage, every effort must be made to advance the work of the Prosecutor's office in a reasonably speedy manner consistent with legal fairness, so that the many victims of this conflict can realistically hope that justice might yet prevail within their lifetimes." ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25456&Langl=D=E>

TOP

Foreign Affairs

House of Commons Library Briefing

Iraq, Iranian influence and the death of Soleimani

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8758/CBP-8758.pdf>

TOP

Other Relevant Information

CST

Antisemitic Discourse in Britain 2018

<https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/6/0/Antisemitic%20Discourse%20Report%202018%20WEB.pdf>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

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

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2019-20/europeanunionwithdrawalagreement.html>

Scottish Parliament Legislative Consent Memorandum

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/SPLCM-S05-29.pdf

Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing: The revised (European Union) Withdrawal Agreement Bill – Implications for Scotland

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdnep.azureedge.net/published/2020/1/6/The-revised--European-Union--Withdrawal-Agreement-Bill---Implications-for-Scotland/SB%2020-01.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Motion: S5M-20318 Michael Russell (SNP): European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill – That the Parliament notes the legislative consent memorandum on the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill lodged by the Scottish Government on 20 December 2019; further notes that people in Scotland voted remain and for remain parties, most recently at the UK General Election on 12 December 2019; considers that the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated by the UK Government would cause damage to Scotland's environment, economic and social interests; regrets that the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill has been amended to remove important protections from workers' rights and asylum-seeking children, and to prohibit an extension of the implementation period to negotiate the future relationship with the EU; regrets that the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill is to proceed through the UK Parliament with minimal scrutiny, failing to respect the significance of the decision to be taken by, or the role of, the Scottish Parliament in scrutinising legislation requiring its legislative consent; is determined to respect and uphold the views of the people of Scotland on this crucial issue to the future of the nation, and therefore does not support the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration negotiated by the UK Government, and does not consent to the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill that would implement that agreement.

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/28877.aspx?SearchType=Advance&ReferenceNumbers=S5M-20318>

Scottish Parliament

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/112997.aspx>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

**** closes in 10 days**

Equality Act 2010: Commencing the socio-economic duty (Welsh Government)

(closing date 17 January 2020)

<https://gov.wales/equality-act-2010-commencing-socio-economic-duty>

Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill (closing date 31 January 2020)

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/113449.aspx>

TOP