



Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

Contents

Home Affairs

Israel

Relevant Legislation

Consultations

Back issues

SCoJeC is incurring significant extra costs as a result of the war in Israel and Gaza, including producing expanded issues of this digest. Please help us maintain these resources by donating at

www.scojec.org/donate.html

Thank you very much for your support.



Home Affairs

Scottish Parliament Oral Answers

Universities' Activities (Palestine Conflict)

Maggie Chapman (Green) [S6O-03535] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on any discussions that it has had with universities across Scotland about how public money is used, including in relation to any activities that may impact the on-going conflict in Palestine.

The Minister for Higher and Further Education and Minister for Veterans (Graeme Dey): The requirements that institutions are expected to comply with in return for public funding are set out in the Scottish Funding Council's financial memoranda for colleges and universities. The Scottish Government regularly meets the SFC and Universities Scotland to discuss any issues of importance, including how we can work together to manage public spending to ensure that public money is fully focused on delivering a wellbeing economy.

The Scottish Government's position on the conflict in Palestine is clear: we call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire by all sides. We expect universities, as autonomous bodies, to have in place measures to safeguard students and staff, and to continue to build interfaith relations on campus.

Maggie Chapman: The minister will be aware of several Palestine solidarity camps on campuses across Scotland. Supported by Aberdeen University Students Association and folk across Aberdeen, the encampment at the University of Aberdeen is calling for the university to divest from all investments relating to the arms industry. No money intended

for education should be used to fund war, directly or indirectly. Until it fell at dissolution, the university was using the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill, which is anti-BDS—boycott, divestment and sanctions—legislation, as an excuse for not divesting.

I ask the minister to confirm whether the Scottish Government stands by its policy note from 2014, which states: “Exploitation of assets in illegal settlements ... is likely to be regarded as constituting ‘grave professional misconduct’”.

Does he therefore believe that no institution in receipt of public money should be financially engaged in Israel?

Graeme Dey: I am aware of the campus encampments and fully support their right to freedom of expression.

On the procurement policy note that Ms Chapman raises—I hope that she will realise that procurement is not my area of expertise—the substance of that note remains unchanged. Ms Chapman is correct to say that that means that the exploitation of assets in illegally occupied territories may constitute grave professional misconduct for the purposes of procurement legislation.

Equally, it is true that any decision to exclude a bidder from a procurement process must be taken on a case-by-case basis, be proportionate and be compliant with our international obligations in relation to procurement and trade.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-06-06-2024?meeting=15913&iob=135852#orscontributions_M16207E340P829C2597159

The Scottish Government web archive is currently unavailable due to a major technology outage, but when it is restored the procurement note referred to above can be read at

<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20160106214501/http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Procurement/policy/SPPNSSPANS/policy-notes/SPPN2014/SPPN42014>

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 (Implementation)

Tess White (Conservative): [S6O-03531] To ask the Scottish Government whether it will provide an update on the implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 since it came into force on 1 April 2024.

The Minister for Victims and Community Safety (Siobhian Brown): The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 sends a strong message to victims, perpetrators and communities that offences that are motivated by prejudice will not be tolerated. The act consolidates, maintains and extends protections that are aggravated by prejudice, as well as including stirring up of hatred offences for all characteristics covered in the hate crime legislative framework.

The offence of stirring up racial hatred has been in Scots law since 1986. We have worked closely with Police Scotland and other justice partners to ensure the 2021 act’s effective implementation, and we will continue to do so.

Tess White: I have been liaising with Police Scotland about engagement with women’s groups on the implications of the hate crime act for their lawful meetings. Disappointingly, Police Scotland has indicated to me that it will not participate in that vital engagement while it is in the process of developing longer-term policies around the 2021 act.

Does the minister or the cabinet secretary agree that input from women’s groups should influence the process and should not occur after it has concluded? Will the minister and the cabinet secretary make representations to Police Scotland to ensure that women’s voices are heard?

Siobhian Brown: Yes, I agree. We have been told that Police Scotland will consult internally and externally.

Emma Roddick (SNP): Police Scotland data shows us that the volume of reports has consistently reduced week on week. Does the cabinet secretary believe that the early high

numbers of reports were due to widespread misinformation about the 2021 act, including, unfortunately, from members in the chamber?

Siobhian Brown: Recent Police Scotland data shows that the volume of reports at week 7 has reduced by more than 99 per cent from the first week of the act's commencement. The fact that we have seen so many reports since implementation reinforces the importance of the hate crime act.

Although the commentary surrounding the act during its implementation included misrepresentation, it is important to remember that the act was passed by 82 members of the Parliament. People and communities who are at the sharp end of hatred in their daily lives, simply for being who they are, should rightly look to this Parliament to stand with them, which the Scottish Government will continue to do.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-05-06-2024?meeting=15912&iob=135796#orscontributions_M16183E409P745C2596464

Non-crime Hate Incidents (Recording)

Murdo Fraser (Conservative) [S6O-03528] To ask the Scottish Government what discussions it has had with Police Scotland in relation to its guidance on recording non-crime hate incidents.

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs (Angela Constance): On 9 May 2024, Police Scotland published its interim guidance on responding to hate crime, which includes information on the recording and handling of non-crime hate incidents. Although the recording of non-crime hate incidents and the development of guidance are operational matters for Police Scotland, the chief constable and I discussed the matter when we met on 30 April.

Murdo Fraser: I am aware that, following concerns that I and others raised about the lawfulness of Police Scotland's policy on recording non-crime hate incidents, it has now changed its policy to bring it into line with the Miller judgment. Police Scotland appears to have done so from 1 April, but it took it another five weeks to update its policy and tell anyone that it was changing. Only then was its website updated. Although that change is welcome, what will happen to all the non-crime hate incidents that were recorded under the old policy, which Police Scotland has tacitly accepted was unlawful?

Angela Constance: I reassure Mr Fraser that I have discussed the matter not only with the chief constable; I have also taken the opportunity to discuss it at length with Martyn Evans, the chair of the Scottish Police Authority board, because the SPA has a crucial role in scrutinising Police Scotland operational matters.

Obviously, I take very seriously concerns that are expressed in the chamber. I do not think that Police Scotland would have the same interpretation of what is lawful or unlawful as Mr Fraser has articulated but, given that the detail of the policy is firmly located in an operational space, I will ask the chief constable or the chair of the SPA to reply directly to Mr Fraser on that point.

https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament/meeting-of-parliament-05-06-2024?meeting=15912&iob=135796#orscontributions_M1735E440P776C2596448

The interim guidance referred to above can be read at

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/spa-media/ftlh1q/interim-guidance-responding-to-hate.docx>

TOP

Israel

See also Scottish Parliament oral answers “Universities’ Activities (Palestine Conflict)” that are included in the Home Affairs section above.

Downing Street

Quad Leaders statement on the situation in the Middle East

In the margins of the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, the Leaders of Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and France reaffirmed their full support for the comprehensive deal outlined by President Biden that would lead to an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all the hostages, a significant and sustained increase in humanitarian assistance at scale for distribution throughout Gaza, to include temporary shelters, and an enduring end to the crisis with Israel’s security and Gazan civilian safety assured. They emphasized that the deal further calls for the immediate refurbishment of essential services, including medical facilities, bakeries, electricity and water lines, clearing rubble, and setting conditions for a long-term reconstruction program. They reiterated their demand for Hamas to express its full acceptance of this comprehensive proposal, which has been presented and agreed to by Israel, and called on the parties to implement the plan without further delay, so to ultimately bring an end to this war. They committed to work in support of the mediation efforts to that end.

The four Heads of State and Government reiterated their commitment to a negotiated two-state solution, which remains the only viable solution to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the two peoples for peace and security. They reaffirmed the legitimacy of the Palestinian aspirations for an independent State living in peace and security alongside Israel, and the need to mark out a clear path in the direction. The Leaders stressed their unwavering commitment to Israel’s security.

They reaffirmed their support to the Palestinian Authority and for the reform program of Prime Minister Mohammed Mustafa, and called for greater regional and international backing of his government, including the transfer of revenues by the Israeli government. In this regard, they underlined the need to restore a legitimate Palestinian governance in Gaza, with the appropriate international support, while answering Israel’s security needs. To that end, they stressed their determination to contribute to an international support effort to stabilization in Gaza, with a view to a long-term regional security for all, and ensuring that a crisis like this can never again recur.

The Leaders also underlined the utmost importance of preserving the stability of Lebanon and their determination to combine their efforts in supporting de-escalation on the Blue Line consistent with UNSCR 1701. They called on all parties to exert maximum restraint to avoid further regional escalation.

The Leaders stressed their determination to continue working together in support of the implementation of the deal as outlined by President Biden and towards regional peace and stability.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/quad-leaders-statement-on-the-situation-in-the-middle-east-6-june-2024>

Joint leaders statement on Gaza

Leaders of the United States, Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Thailand, and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement on Gaza.

As leaders of countries deeply concerned for the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, including many of our own citizens, we fully support the movement towards a ceasefire

and hostage release deal now on the table and as outlined by President Biden on May 31, 2024. There is no time to lose. We call on Hamas to close this agreement, that Israel is ready to move forward with, and begin the process of releasing our citizens.

We note that this agreement would lead to an immediate ceasefire and rehabilitation of Gaza together with security assurances for Israelis, and Palestinians, and opportunities for a more enduring long-term peace and a two-state solution. At this decisive moment, we call on the leaders of Israel as well as Hamas to make whatever final compromises are necessary to close this deal and bring relief to the families of our hostages, as well as those on both sides of this terrible conflict, including the civilian populations. It is time for the war to end and this deal is the necessary starting point.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-leaders-statement-on-gaza-6-june-2024>

Rishi Sunak It is a huge relief to see hostages returned after their unimaginable ordeal and heartwarming to see the pictures of them reunited with their families. We will continue to strive towards an end to the fighting as well as safety and security for all. [plus link to BBC report]

<https://x.com/RishiSunak/status/1799502518260469849>

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories: UK statement, Special sitting on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories

... The UK, like others in this room today, wants to bring the Gaza conflict to a sustainable end as quickly as possible. We are shocked by the sheer scale of the loss of lives and livelihoods of both Israelis and Palestinians.

On 7 October, Israel suffered the deadliest terrorist attack in its history. Almost 250 days on and Hamas continues to hold hostages.

In Gaza, the situation is desperate. Palestinian civilians face a devastating and growing humanitarian crisis. We again urge Israel to let humanitarian aid enter Gaza through all relevant crossings, including Rafah. ...

Both Palestinian and Israeli labour markets have been affected by this crisis. The absence of a functioning labour market in Gaza; rising rates of unemployment; and the effects on vulnerable workers including women and those with disabilities is particularly concerning. This has only been compounded by the destruction of businesses.

If we are to stop the loss of life, and allow the rebuilding of the labour market in both the West Bank and Gaza, the fighting needs to stop now. The fastest way to end the conflict is to secure a deal which gets the hostages out and allows for a pause in the fighting in Gaza. We must then work together to turn that pause into a sustainable, permanent ceasefire.

The UK supports an irreversible two-state solution that guarantees security and stability for both the Israeli and Palestinian people. The UK has offered support to the Palestinian Authority to implement much-needed reforms, and we encourage labour and social policy reforms to be resumed at the appropriate time. An effective PA is vital for lasting peace and progress towards a two-state solution.

Just as the PA must act, so must Israel. This means releasing frozen funds, halting settlement expansion, and holding to account those responsible for extremist settler violence.

The UK has already moved to ban those responsible for violence in the West Bank from entering the UK, and announced new sanctions designations against four extremist Israeli settlers.

So, in closing, let us join together today to renew our collective commitment to end the suffering and reach a long-term solution to this crisis. It is time for it to end. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uk-statement-on-the-situation-of-workers-of-the-occupied-arab-territories>

David Cameron News of the rescue of four hostages will be a huge relief to their families. My thoughts also with families of those still captive, and all the innocent lives affected by the conflict. We must secure the release of all hostages and end the fighting through a ceasefire deal.

https://x.com/David_Cameron/status/1799506338256454038

Scottish Parliament Motion

Ross Greer (Green) [S6M-13522] "Show Israel the Red Card" Campaign – That the Parliament welcomes the "Show Israel the Red Card" campaign, which has the aim of drawing attention to what it considers to be the injustice of allowing Israeli athletes to participate in international sporting events, while Palestinians are often unable to participate, it understands, due to the Israeli occupation and what groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have referred to as the system of apartheid enforced on Palestinians by the state of Israel; congratulates protesters who gathered outside Hampden Park on 31 May 2024 to object to Israel's continued participation in international football events, despite what it believes is an ongoing genocidal assault on Gaza; notes that the efforts of campaigners resulted in the match between Israel and Scotland being played behind closed doors and a 45-minute delay to kick-off; further notes with concern reports that, since 7 October 2023, at least 265 Palestinian sportspeople have been killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza and the West Bank, with dozens more still missing; believes that Israel is in violation of the Olympic Charter, which states that "every individual must have access to the practice of sport, without discrimination of any kind in respect of internationally recognised human rights", and calls, therefore, on the relevant international bodies to immediately suspend Israel from all major sporting events.

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/votes-and-motions/S6M-13522>

United Nations

Secretary-General Renews Call for Ceasefire along Lebanon, Israel Border

... As the exchanges of fire across the Blue Line continue, the Secretary-General renews his calls to the parties to urgently cease fire.

He remains gravely concerned that the exchanges of fire have not only ravaged communities close to the Blue Line but have also impacted deeper into the territories of both Lebanon and Israel, with the use of increasingly destructive weapons. These exchanges of fire could trigger a broader conflict with devastating consequences for the region.

Hundreds of lives have already been lost, tens of thousands of people have been displaced, and homes and livelihoods destroyed, on both sides of the Blue Line. Bushfires sparked by explosions are further devastating communities and the environment.

The Secretary-General urges the parties to recommit to the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and immediately return to a cessation of hostilities.

The United Nations supports all diplomatic and political efforts to end the violence.

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sqsm22260.doc.htm>

UNSCR 1701, referred to above, can be read at
[https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1701(2006))

Despite Our Differences, ‘Those Who Serve Under the UN Flag Are Entitled to Protection’, Says Secretary-General, at Memorial Service for Fallen Staff

... Today we remember and honour the 188 United Nations personnel who lost their lives in 2023 in the line of duty. ...

Among those personnel are 135 women and men who worked for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, in Gaza. That is by far the highest number of our personnel killed in a single conflict or natural disaster since the creation of the United Nations — a reality we can never accept.

Some were killed with their families by bombardment of their homes; others were at work, both in offices and shelters. I repeat my call for a full accounting for each and every one of these deaths. We owe this to their family members and friends; to their colleagues; and to the world.

Our UNRWA personnel lived and died as representatives of the international community in Gaza, and that community deserves an explanation.

The United Nations has sought the consent of family members for the inclusion of their loved ones’ names in today’s service. This is the practice established by our rules.

Unfortunately, we were unable to contact many of the family members of our UNRWA colleagues because they have either been killed or forced from their homes by Israeli military operations. So today, we commemorate and honour some of those colleagues with their full names and pay tribute to others with their professional titles.

They were teachers, drivers, doctors, sanitation workers, guards, pharmacists, administrative assistants and more. They were mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, husbands, wives. They were our colleagues. They were our friends.

I am personally devastated that despite our best efforts, we could not protect our personnel in Gaza. Today, we remember them, and we honour their dedication and service. ...

To read the full press release see

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sqsm22256.doc.htm>

UNOCHA

Martin Griffiths Nuseirat refugee camp is the epicentre of the seismic trauma that civilians in #Gaza continue to suffer. As 4 hostages are reunited with their families, scores are still being held captive. All of them must be released. Each day this war continues, it only grows more horrific.

Today Nuseirat refugee camp is the epicentre of the seismic trauma that civilians in Gaza continue to suffer.

The images of death and devastation following Israel’s military operation there prove that each day this war continues, it only grows more horrific.

Seeing shrouded bodies on the ground, we are reminded that nowhere is safe in Gaza. Seeing bloodied patients being treated on hospital floors, we are reminded that health care in Gaza is hanging by a thread.

And even as four hostages are reunited with their families, we are reminded that scores are still being held captive. All of them must be released.

All civilians must be protected. This collective agony can and must end now.

<https://x.com/UNReliefChief/status/1799628590323003821>

No shelter from war: the bombing of Block 2 at the UNRWA Nuseirat School

In yet another strike on a UN installation in the Gaza Strip, this time on the UNRWA Nuseirat Boys' Preparatory School, a bombardment by Israeli forces early on 6 June killed at least 35 people and injured dozens more.

The UNRWA school-turned-shelter at Nuseirat refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip, housed some 6,000 internally displaced people. ...

The testimonies of the people at the shelter are horrifying, with the airstrike coming on top of what has already been an eight-month onslaught of displacement, death, and dispossession. Many have lost their relatives and friends, and have fear and anxiety etched deep in their faces. One person said, "We are in an UNRWA school, and we are being targeted! Where can we go when we have lost everything?" ...

Since the war began last October, UNRWA's schools and other facilities in Gaza have been transformed into emergency shelters for internally displaced people. Some 1.7 million people have been displaced by the war, many of them multiple times, and the shelters are massively overcrowded.

The UNRWA Nuseirat School and Emergency Shelter is one of more than 180 United Nations installations damaged since the start of the war, in over 435 separate incidents. At least 450 people sheltering in UNRWA facilities have been killed and over 1,470 injured. UNRWA installations, like all United Nations facilities, are inviolable. UNRWA shares the coordinates of all its installations with the Israeli authorities and other parties to the conflict. UNRWA Commissioner-General, Philippe Lazzarini, has underscored that, "[Targeting UN premises or using them for military purposes cannot become the new norm.](#)" The Agency has called for an independent international investigation into the disregard for UN facilities and said that all those responsible must be held accountable.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/features/no-shelter-war-bombing-block-2-unrwa-nuseirat-school>

International Labour Organisation

War propels unemployment to close to 80 per cent and shrinks GDP by 83.5 per cent in the Gaza Strip

The war has caused unprecedented devastation to the Palestinian labour market and the wider economy, according to new data and analysis by the ILO and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. ...

Since hostilities erupted in October 2023, the unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip has reached a staggering 79.1 per cent. In the West Bank, which has also been severely impacted by the crisis, unemployment has reached 32 per cent.

These figures bring the average rate of unemployment to 50.8 per cent across the two areas of the OPT. ...

Additionally, real GDP has contracted by an astounding 83.5 per cent in the Gaza Strip and by 22.7 in the West Bank over the past eight months, and real GDP of the entire OPT has shrunk by an average of 32.8 per cent. ...

The severe economic crisis now affecting the OPT has particularly impacted the private sector, the bulletin reports.

In the Gaza Strip, almost all private sector establishments have either completely ceased or significantly reduced production, with the sector losing 85.8 per cent of its production value – equivalent to USD \$810 million – during the first four months of the war. In the West Bank, the private sector suffered a 27 per cent reduction in production value equivalent to USD \$1.5 billion during the same period. ...

“Restoring people’s livelihoods and creating decent jobs is vital to enabling Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to recover from the horrors the war has inflicted on them,” Jaradat said. “ ...

The new bulletin also takes a close look at the impact of the war in Gaza on workers and employers in the West Bank, where closures by Israel, movement restrictions and settler attacks have disrupted supply chain networks and transportation routes.

A survey conducted by the ILO in partnership with the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) found that, among West Bank workers who are still employed, 51 per cent faced reduced hours of work and 62.8 per cent experienced a reduction in wages. A second survey conducted by the ILO and the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (FPCCIA) found that 65.3 per cent of West Bank enterprises reported a reduction in their workforce, with many resorting to permanent or temporary layoffs.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/war-propels-unemployment-close-80-cent-and-shrinks-gdp-835-cent-gaza-strip>

Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

<https://www.ilo.org/media/556706/download>

TOP

Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Holocaust Memorial Bill

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3421>

Scottish Parliament

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill>

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/gender-recognition-reform-scotland-bill>

TOP

Consultations ** new or updated today

Faith school designation reforms (closing date 20 June 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/faith-schools-policy-team/faith-school-designation-reforms/>

Review of the RSHE statutory guidance (closing date 11 July 2024)

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/rshe-team/review-of-the-rshe-statutory-guidance/>

Petitioning against the Holocaust Memorial Bill (closing date 17 July 2024)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/8481/petitioning-against-the-holocaust-memorial-bill/>

House of Lords: Guidance on the right to be heard

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/55634/documents/4871>

House of Lords: Guidance on submitting your petition

<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/55632/documents/4869>

£20k registration threshold for charities in Northern Ireland (closing date 11 August 2024)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-ps20k-registration-threshold-charities-northern-ireland>

**** Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill** (closing date 16 August 2024)

https://yourviews.parliament.scot/health/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-bill/consult_view/

[TOP](#)

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438