



Shevat - 5770  
January - 2010

The Board of Deputies

## Community Briefing



**Dear colleague,**

Welcome to our new look **Community Briefing**, a central part of our renewed communication strategy to keep you in touch with the work of the Board as well as key issues of importance to the Jewish community.

In this, our January edition, you'll note that combined with our all-important lobbying and diplomacy work, we are also concentrating on galvanizing as many of you as possible to speak out on issues that you feel passionate about.

You'll read about our BUYcott and Universal Jurisdiction campaigns, both empowering you and members of your communities to write letters to newspapers, call into radio stations and write to your MPs. In addition, we also now have a dedicated member of staff who is ready and waiting to help with all sorts of community action. Feel free to email her on [response@bod.org.uk](mailto:response@bod.org.uk).

As always if there is anything else you'd like to discuss with us - don't hesitate to get in touch. Lastly, please share this newsletter with all your friends, family and members of your community, encouraging them to stay informed by subscribing to this free, monthly Community Briefing update.

Warm Regards,

**Jon Benjamin**  
Chief Executive

### The JFS Ruling

#### Community Says No To Legislative Change, For Now



The JFS narrative took a new twist last week following the Supreme Court decision mid-December to uphold last summer's Court of Appeal ruling regarding schools admissions criteria. Following the Board's lead in a series of comprehensive cross-communal meetings, a consensus decision determined that for now, legislative change via the Equalities Bill would not be the prudent route. Contrary to some mischievous headlines last week, reporting that the Board had 'retreated' from guiding the community through legislative change, the Board has always

stated that it would represent the consensus view.

The very clear consensus - from the US, the Sephardi, the Reform, the Liberal and the Masorti Movements - is not to act in haste without knowledge of all of the consequences and ramifications. That's not to say that a legislative change may not be explored at a later date. In the short-term, we will continue to monitor how the Supreme Court decision is impacting on the community.

## Fighting Demonisation of Israel

### Push to Ensure Israeli Officials Can Visit the UK



Several recent attempts to have senior Israeli politicians and officials arrested have highlighted a legal anomaly that is being abused for political ends. The most recent attempt targeted opposition leader Tzipi Livni (pictured).

Under the principle of Universal Jurisdiction, serious crimes can be prosecuted in countries other than where the alleged offences were committed by persons who were not themselves British subjects against victims who were also not British subjects. An arrest warrant, can be sought from a magistrate by any private individual showing only a prima facie case, even if there is no prospect of charges, and still less of a conviction.

The Board has made numerous representations to Government in recent months, and we welcome the confirmation from Foreign Secretary David Miliband, and the Attorney General, Baroness Scotland (speaking in Israel), that they are urgently looking at resolving an issue that brings the legal system into disrepute.

### Do Your Bit - Write to Your MP

In the meantime, you too have a key role to play in galvanizing a change in the law of Universal Jurisdiction. It won't take more than a few minutes. [Click here for details](#). Alternatively, email [response@bod.org.uk](mailto:response@bod.org.uk).

## The Board Hits Back at Boycotts

### Support the BUYcott

All too predictably, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign's (PSC) continues to promote its campaign to boycott all things Israeli, regardless of the indiscriminate effect on both Arabs and Jews in the region. The latest campaign targeting Waitrose and Tesco is taking place this week 9-17 January, and once again the Board is calling on all Israel's friends and those who desire peace and security to respond with a BUYcott. Show your support for Israel both at Waitrose and Tesco checkouts and by writing to their respective head offices, to commend and thank them for stocking Israeli produce. For more information on the campaign [click here](#). If you'd like any assistance with letter writing please [click here](#).

The logo for the BUYcott campaign. The word 'BUY' is in large, bold, blue capital letters, and 'cott' is in a smaller, red, cursive font.

## Extremist Groups Banned

### The Board Welcomes Proscription of 'islam4UK'



The recent announcement that membership of Islam4UK and al-Muhajiroun and its many subsidiary groups will now be a criminal offence is an encouraging move in the fight against extremism. It sends a strong signal to those that wish to undermine British values of freedom and democracy and will be warmly welcomed by the Jewish community.

When making representations to Government on the issue of extremism, the Board has repeatedly emphasised the importance of excluding groups which advocate violence, while supporting the moderate majority of British Muslims. Moving forward, the challenge for the government will be to remain vigilant in preventing the inevitable formation of duplicate organisations with different names and to confront more directly British proponents of Islamism and those that preach its theology of hatred from abroad.

## The University and Colleges Union

### Board Slams the UCU



The Universities and Colleges Union, (UCU) which has repeatedly advocated a policy of boycotting Israeli academia, has announced that it is holding three seminars on the challenges of antisemitism. The Board has made it clear that these seminars cannot disguise the discrimination that has, for too long caused the UCU to ignore the concerns of so many of its Jewish members.

It was only a few weeks ago that Tom Hickey, the President of the UCU, welcomed Bongani Masuku, a virulent antisemitic speaker to spread his twisted polemic in the UK and we consider that these seminars are nothing more than a fig leaf. We will continue to lobby for the UCU to be removed from its role in the Government's group on Antisemitism in Higher Education.

## Limmud Conference 2009

### Learning Together at Limmud



Every year thousands of Jews gather for the Limmud conference to share experiences and learn from each other. Once again the Board of Deputies was involved in sessions covering a wide range of topics, with a particular focus on interfaith work, but also including progress in the fight against antisemitism, the impact of the JFS ruling and communal engagement with politicians, Non-Governmental Organisations and others. For a full report of what happened, please [click here](#).

## Jewish Way of Life Goes 'Lite'

### New Learning Resources Printed



To compliment the huge success of our Jewish Way of Life Exhibition (JWOL), the Board is now producing 'JWOL Light' - a set of eight beautifully illustrated posters, designed to explain the basics of Judaism to a non-Jewish audience. Topics covered include Keeping Kosher, Shabbat and Jewish Values. If you would like a set of the posters or you know anybody else that might, they're available now from the Board's Education Department. For more information about the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition, [click here](#).

Is there something you'd like to discuss with us?

**Why not get in touch?**

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