

# Minutes Cross Party Group On Middle East and South Asia

6 pm 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Room TG 20-21, Scottish Parliament

## **MSP Present:**

Mary Fee MSP  
Jim Eadie MSP  
Hugh Henry MSP  
Jamie Hepburn MSP  
Jamie McGrigor MSP  
Anne McTaggart MSP  
Hanzala Malik MSP (Convener)

## **All Others Present:**

Khalid Mir - Individual  
Bashir Malik – Individual  
April Cumming - Individual  
Naeem Khalid – FRAE Fife  
Emily Thomson – Individual  
Umbreen Khalid - (Secretary)  
Mohammad Akram - Individual  
Dr Saqlain Javed – Deputy Consul for Pakistan  
Thomas Lea – Alwaleed Centre, University of Edinburgh  
Dr Crispin Bates – Dept. of South Asia, University of Edinburgh  
Shami Khan – Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council

## **Apologies:**

Joseph Feinmann – Individual  
Victoria Pyle - Edinburgh College  
Julia Weedon – Edinburgh College  
Tracy Exton - Application Recruitment  
Faten Hamid – Chair of Scottish Friends of Kurdistan  
Masood Khan – Edinburgh & East of Scotland Pakistan Association  
Mohammed Razaq – West of Scotland Regional Equality Council  
Nadeem Arshad - Individual

1. **Bank account and treasurer**  
The group agreed that they should look into the setting up of a bank account and elect a treasurer for the CPG.
2. **AGM/ election of office bearers**  
The group agreed that the next election of office bearers should be undertaken via electronically.

3. Pakistan Report

The previously circulated "Report on the Cultural, Economic and Social Links between Scotland and Pakistan" was formally accepted by the group. The Group also agreed its circulation to SPICE, MSP, all relevant departments.

Comprehensiveness of the report was praised. Dr Saqlain Javed mentioned that if the report were to be updated in the future, it should include some information on the work of the Church of Scotland in rural areas in Pakistan.

4. Hanzala Malik report on Visit to Pakistan

Mr Malik gave a report of the strategic meetings that had taken place on his recent visits to Pakistan including progress on re-establishing the air link between Lahore and Glasgow. (Report attached to the minutes)

5. Proposed CPG visit to Pakistan

The CPG has been invited to visit Pakistan, the visit is planned to take place during recess in October 2013. The main visit will be for MSPs and officers of the CPG, other members of the CPG can apply to accompany the delegation and the CPG will liaise with the Pakistan Consulate to book suitable accommodation and meetings. Anne McTaggart requested that the delegation engage with women's groups and female Parliamentarians in Pakistan.

6. Remembering Hajabja Events

Hanzala Malik MSP is sponsoring Kurdish Community Association events in the Scottish Parliament and in Glasgow to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Saddam Hussein ordering the use of chemical weapons on Kurdish civilians. Mr Malik asked for the members of the CPG to sign an e-petition asking the UK government to officially recognise the Anfal Campaign against the Kurds in Iraq, of which the Halabja massacre was a part, as genocide.

**Action:** Umbreen to circulate link to petition with minutes of this meeting.

AOB

Dr Crispin Bates said that he attended an event in Delhi supported by the British Council about re-imagining UK relations with Pakistan, it was suggested that a similar event was needed for Pakistan.

The theme of the role of SDI/Scottish Enterprise and the British Council in promoting Scotland to the Middle East and South Asia was suggested for the next CPG meeting.

**Action:** Umbreen to contact the British Council and Scottish Enterprise about giving a presentation at the next CPG.

Another theme for future meetings was how can we support organisations engage with Pakistan (Middle East and South Asia) that do not have the highly trusted sponsor status?