

Cross Party Group on Kurdistan

26 November 2019

Annual General Meeting

Attending:- Ross Greer MSP, Ruth Maguire MSP, Stephen Smellie, Sarah Glynn and Honar Kobane (Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan- SSK)

Apologies received from:- Angela Constance MSP, John Finnie MSP.

1. Election of Co-convenors – Ross Greer and Ruth Maguire were proposed to be Co-convenors. This was agreed.
2. Election of Secretary – it was proposed and agreed that Scottish Solidarity with Kurdistan would act as Secretary.
3. Update on recent activity
 - a) Ross Greer, Stephen Smellie and two members of the local Kurdish community met with Ben MacPherson, Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development. Issues covered included concerns regarding police activity with the Kurdish community, experience of Kurds at UK airports and Government meetings with Turkish Ambassador and Consul.
 - b) Ross Greer had lodged a Question regarding Turkey's invasion of northern Syria which led to a statement by the First Minister highlighting concern regarding Turkey's actions.
 - c) A letter had been sent to Provosts regarding the dismissal of several elected Mayors in Turkish municipalities. There had been no response.
 - d) An approach had been made to the government requesting a donation from the Humanitarian Crisis Fund. This requires a Scottish based charity to lead on this. Ross had discussed this with one charity and was awaiting feedback.
 - e) The Church of Scotland had made a statement regarding the Turkish invasion and this had then been taken up at an international level.
4. Actions agreed
 - a) Ross and Ruth would consider how lodging more questions on events in Kurdistan could be used to highlight issues.
 - b) A model motion would be drafted for use in Councils, trade unions, political parties and elsewhere regarding the attacks on Kurdish politicians in Turkey referring specifically to the dismissal of elected Mayors and their replacement with government Trustees. SSK would encourage members to lobby their local councillors on the issue.
5. Other issues
 - a) The situation in Iran was noted. Protests against increased fuel costs had been violently suppressed by police and military forces. The situation in the Kurdish areas was particularly bad with several people killed. It was agreed to consider a motion to Parliament. Stephen to provide information to Ruth and Ross.
 - b) It was noted that the meeting requested with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice had not yet been arranged. It was noted that SSK intended to write to the Cabinet Secretary.

- c) The outstanding invite to visit Rojava was considered. Any delegation would have to be during a parliamentary recess. It was agreed to consider this issue further.
- d) It was noted that a film was due to be released telling the story of the events in Rojava during recent years. The film, The End Will be Spectacular, is released in November. Ross to make enquiries regarding a showing in Scotland.

6. Future meetings

It was agreed to organise a meeting around New Roz on 21 March. Ross to identify a suitable room and advise of the date. This would be primarily be a cultural event with music and dancing. Stephen to contact the Kurdish community regarding contributors.