

CPG 26/10/21

MSP's

Jackson Carlaw
Paul O'Kane
Fergus Ewing
Rachel Hamilton
Jamie Greene
Murdo Fraser
Douglas Ross
John Mason

Jackson opens the group, said September is a big month for the Jewish community and then we have a quick dash to get this re-constituted to be registered.

CPG did great work in last session, academic link and COVID update, along with other areas of interest that we were informed on and raised within Scottish Parliament. Jackson discussed the UK premier of the Olive Tree exhibition and other cultural links and the Balfour event. Worked on anti-Semitism and reached out to the CPG on Palestine. Hope to link up with Anas Sarwar's CPG on dealing with anti-Semitism and other areas of persecution. Zoom has been a great way to link up with those in Israel and engage directly.

After the meeting to send emails and suggest themes as to how the group could be taken forward in this Parliament, will then circulate and see how it can be integrated.

Office bearers:

Convenor: Fergus nominates Jackson, seconded by Paul O'Kane
Deputy Convenor: Jackson nominates Fergus Ewing, seconded by Jamie Greene
Secretariat: Stanley Lovatt, Honorary Consul of Israel nominated by Jackson and supported by Edward Green

Jackson congratulated Sammy Stein and his wife, and the work that they did during the Afghan appeal. The quality of the donations was fantastic.

Sammy said they were overwhelmed from the response and giving to other charities now too as they received so much and he asked for any suggestions for other charities to benefit from the donations. Vicci noted that it was cross-party and inter-faith backed, from all communities.

Big sadness of repatriation of former Deputy Ambassador, Sharon Bar-li. She never flinched from key issues and always made herself available.

Jackson notes that Oren unable to join due to COP26 but looks forward to meeting him and the new Ambassador.

Jenny says her thanks to Jackson and all the attendees. Jenny mentions the COP26 delegation which is one of the biggest delegations present at COP26 headed by Prime Minister Bennett and two Ministers, Energy and Environmental Protection. The delegation size shows the focus of the new government has on climate change and innovation and tech and commitment to achieve Net Zero. The new government is the most diverse than ever.

Update on Foreign Minister and their new plan: Hamas is a terror organisation and the difference in negotiations with such partners should be addressed in new ways. Giving Gaza economic prosperity and strengthening the PA strengthens the moderate side, to help negotiations.

A year since the Abraham Accords, step forward with neighbours. Shows that Israel is capable of peace and that other countries and region want peace with Israel. Contributes to stability and moderate camp.

Challenges with Iran and nuclear ambitions, seen in the impact in Lebanon as the proxy of Iran, this impact is on our borders. PM recently met President Putin to discuss Syria.

Scotland: wanting to engage further with several areas wish to build upon and co-operate.

Jackson noted seeing Lebanon and Syria is so close on the Northern Border with Murdo.

Q&A:

Jackson-would like an update about the COVID situation in Israel

Jenny- Booster vaccine-3 million to date, green passport being used, race to get people vaccinated and seeing a slight rise in hospitalisation. Facilitating discussions from people from the NHS and UK Ministries and happy to help accommodate this in Scotland as well.

Jamie Greene MSP: Lucky enough to go to Israel a few years ago, established not a direct connection between Scotland-Israel, many campaigned an air route. What are the plans or lobbying with each side of the border to re-establish a direct connection, or still reliant on the North England, trade, tourism, academia as well.

Jenny: Has an Office for Tourism here, happy to discuss with colleague. Every question put here happy to follow up on. It's always about interest, many Israeli's want to visit. It is all about numbers by the airline, sometimes need encouragement, we need to do a little push and regenerate a new conversation about this.

Doug Flett: Both Scotland and Israel, any way in which way we can link up Hubs with in Universities

Jenny-There is a co-operation that does exist, it is very interesting, happens bottom-up. Which leads to the University picking this up. Aberdeen, Glasgow, etc. Need the bottom up co-operation to help the faculty to faculty, hub to hub for exchange programs, best to start with something that we have already the touring scheme for students. Recently facilitated roundtable with academics about the climate, also many attending from Israel for Cop26.

Andrew Jones: What is the makeup of the new government compared to the last one.

Jackson: It is a difficult one and one party does not accept the IHRA and this CPG has the participation of all of the major parties, but this group is to help build on these relations.

Jackson says his thanks and closes the meeting and notes having a phone call with the new Deputy Ambassador tomorrow.

Next meeting on 22 Feb, 2022.

Participants

Alasdair Macdonald
Andrew Jones
Atilla Incecik
David Rose
Debby Taylor
Dorothe Kaufman
Doug Flett
Douglas Ross MSP
Edward Green
Edwin Mandel
Elizabeth Spurell
Ephraim Borowski
Euan Waddell
Fergus Ewing MSP
Fiona Brodie
Gina Brown
Jack Green
Jackson Carlaw MSP
James Atkin
Jamie Greene MSP
Jenny Sedov
John Mason MSP
John Urquhart
Jonny Connelly
Liz Gibb
Michelle Brannigan
Murdo Fraser MSP
Nicol Livingstone
Paul Cocking
Paul Edlin
Paul O’Kane MSP
Rachael Hamilton MSP
Sammy Stein
Stanley Grossman
Stanley Lovatt
Thomas Webber