

Cross-Party Group on Palestine AGM

18th February 2015 6pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Maggie Chapman MSP, Co Convener CPG Palestine

Pauline McNeil MSP, Co Convener CPG Palestine

Bill Kidd MSP

Invited guests

Vicky McGraw

Non-MSP Group Members

Chris White

Eman El-Bahnassawy

Anne Alden

Michael Bonaventura

Olivia Pullman

Jon Pullman

Vicky McGraw

Colin Cooper

Allan Gordon

Nathalie Lane (office of Foysol Choudhury MSP)

Alan Ritchie (office of Pauline McNeil MSP)

Roger Spooner

Monica Spooner

Phil Chetwynd

Mike Mineter

Asif Dean

Carol Morton

Frances Guy

Ousman Khan

Kate Aspinwall

Amy McNeese-Mechan

Pat Bryden

Dr Bashier Oudeh

Claudia Beamish

John Badenhorst

Michael Bonaventura

Apologies

Mercedes Villalba MSP
Basi Gordon
Alison Waugh
Sandra Horne

Agenda item 1

Agenda item 2

Election of Office Bearers

Maggie Chapman was elected as Co convener
Pauline McNeil was elected as Co convener
Chris White was elected as Secretary and Treasurer

Agenda item 3

Reflection on recent changes to the situation in Palestine.

The convener reflected on recent experiences where some demonstrators were detained by Police.

The group reflected on what they see as a shift in Policing practices around demonstrations and rallies. Expressing concern over this shift and calling on the group to seek clarification from the Scottish Government.

The BDS campaign was discussed noting that around 60 MPs in Westminster had spoken on the issue and asked how the group could raise it with the Scottish Government.

The group expressed concern over the lack of real engagement from other MSPs and Government in the face of the ongoing genocide and the rulings of the ICJ in relation to the war crimes committed.

The convener sympathised with these views and agreed to write to the Police with regards the points raised.

Members also expressed concern over the number of medical professionals killed in the conflict.

The upcoming Ramadan was mentioned, and it was felt that it would be fitting to mark the occasion.

In response to the points raised the Convener agreed that the Secretary draft a letter to the First minister regarding the issue of BDS and invite them to attend the meeting of the Cross Party Group.

The convener also agreed to write to the NHS and Cabinet secretary for Health and Wellbeing around the treatment of healthcare workers who have been trying to protest or raise awareness of the victimisation of healthcare workers in Palestine in NHS facilities here and have been stopped.

The group noted that a Member had worked on this issue with NHS Lothian and the convener agreed to liaise with them regarding the proposed letter.

The Convener also agreed to draft a Parliamentary motion marking Ramadan and the points which were mentioned with regards.

Agenda item 4

Update on Palestine and Israel: Understanding the Conflict teaching resource.

The group heard from Vicki McGraw, regarding teaching resources to help students understand the background and issues around Palestine and Israel which underpin the current situation.

Vicky noted that it is paramount that children and young people are provided with the necessary resources and information to understand the situation in order to make informed decisions.

Vicky also noted the obstacles that have been met in relation to the collation and publication of such a resource.

Specifically, in 2017, after much consultation with Educational bodies, local authorities, the children's commissioner and the Scottish Government the resources were agreed to and made available to educational practitioners.

However, subsequently the materials were withdrawn after pressure from groups opposed to their publication.

Despite, further work being undertaken on the materials, the Scottish Government and Education Scotland did not uphold previous commitments to make the resources widely available.

As a result, EIS, made the material available and they have seen a dramatic uptick in use since the most recent Gaza conflict.

Vicky expressed concern that much of the material may now be outdated and that the Scottish Government needs to recognise and deliver on its previous commitments.

In response the group agreed to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education regarding the points raised and also include this issue in the letter to the First Minister.

Agenda item 5

Update on proposed letter to Scottish Government regarding Arms sales.

The convener thanked the Member for drafting a letter for MSPs regarding the Scottish Government, using public money to fund components of the F35.

The convener agreed to distribute a copy of the draft letter to Members for comment by the 28th of February before complying a final draft for distribution.

Agenda item 5

Festival of Politics 20-22nd August 2025.

The group was invited to consider making a application to be part of the Festival. The Secretary agreed to provide more information to the group and ask for proposals.

AOCB

Medical scholarships for Palestinian students.

The group agreed to undertake researching to the issues to report back at next meeting.

Visit by Mrs Raisa Albahnasawi Nakba and Genocide survivor.

The group heard of the visit of Mrs Raisa Albahnasawi and the proposal for them to address MSPS and Parliament.

The convenor agreed to look into the possibility of the request and get back to the Member with regard.

ENDS