

# Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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Wednesday 19 December 2001

## Weekly Updates on Reports, Committees and Events:

### Reports and Committee Updates

- International Affairs Committee
- Media Committee
- Education, Training & Employment Committee
- Social Policy Welfare and Regeneration Committee
- London Task Group
- British Hajj Advisory Group

### Events

- Food Standards Agency
- GLA Labour Group Annual Reception
- Eid Reception, St James's Palace

### Miscellaneous

- Home Office publish statistics on Religion in Prisons 1999-2000

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## Reports and Committee Updates

### International Affairs Committee

#### Letter to the Foreign Secretary

The International Affairs committee wrote to the Foreign Secretary with regard to the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Palestine.

The MCB called upon the Government to take immediate steps to halt the escalation in violence and killing of innocent Palestinians, many of them schoolchildren. The letter stated that Israel was using the international climate since September 11th under the guise of a 'war on terrorism' to pursue its own militaristic designs in the West Bank and Gaza and intimidate the Palestinian population.

The MCB reminded the Government that it was obliged under the UN Charter, to render all necessary assistance to the Palestinian people so that they may regain their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

### Future meetings

Tanzeem Wasti sent his cordial wishes to the newly appointed Ambassador of the Bosnian Embassy in London, Her Excellency Mrs Elvira Begovic. Mr Wasti also requested a meeting and one will duly take place after Eid insha'Allah.

A meeting has been arranged between a delegation from the MCB and the Palestinian General Delegate, Mr Afif Safieh, for Tuesday December 18th.

## Media Committee

### **Letter of complaint to Radio 4**

Inayat Bunglawala (Secretary, Media Committee) wrote a letter to the influential Radio 4 Today programme about James Naughtie's interview with the advisor to the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon on 13th December 2001.

The letter urged the Today programme to adopt a more robust approach in its questioning of Israel officials especially in view of Israel's 34-year long occupation of Palestinian territories in defiance of numerous UN resolutions.

### **Letter to Conservative Party Leader**

The Media Committee sent a letter to the Conservative Party leader, Mr Iain Duncan Smith expressing the MCB's concerns over a speech he gave to the Conservative Friends of Israel on 10th Dec 2001.

Mr Duncan Smith had called on the BBC to refer to Palestinian resistance groups as 'terrorists' but somehow himself failed to call on Israel to also leave the occupied territories.

### **New Statesman and Orientalism**

The MCB wrote a spirited response for the MCB to an article which appeared in the New Statesman last week entitled "The Great Koran Con Trick". To see the MCB response go to: <http://www.mcb.org.uk/statesman.html>.

## **Education, Training & Employment Committee (E,T & E)**

Nawazish Bokhari, Chair of the Education, Training and Employment committee, was interviewed by John Humphrys on Radio 4's Today programme on Wednesday December 12th.

Mr Humphrys questioned Nawazish on the findings of the Home Office reports published on Tuesday that criticised faith schools as augmenting the problems of social segregation.

Nawazish Bokhari argued that it was a well-known fact that religious schools out-performed state schools in educational achievements and that the remarks by the Home Secretary seemed somewhat hypocritical given that the Prime Minister's own children all attend faith schools.

Mr Bokhari also stated that there was no evidence to suggest that the individuals that took part in the riots over the summer were the products of religious based schooling. Quite the contrary, they were more likely to have been schooled in the state sector as was the case with the rioters in Bradford and Oldham.

### **Circular on Substance Misuse**

The E,T & E committee has been asked to pass comments and recommendations on a draft circular, 'Substance Misuse: Children and Young People' by the National Assembly of Wales.

The circular contains guidance on developing a substance misuse policy, substance misuse education and dealing with incidents involving substance misuse.

## **Social Policy Welfare and Regeneration Committee**

Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Chair of the Social Policy, Welfare and Regeneration committee, delivered a keynote speech on the occasion of the 15th birthday of 'Rights and Humanity', an international NGO, and the 53rd anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, on

Monday December 10th.

Imam Sajid spoke on 'Islam against Religious Extremism and Fanaticism' ([click here to read the speech.](#))

### **London Task Group**

The London Task Group has been asked to submit suggestions and recommendations on how the Mayor of London may more effectively consult with Londoners.

The Mayor promised in his Annual Report to encourage "...the fullest participation and engagement of all London's communities in developing policies and strategies we need to improve our city." In an effort to fulfil this promise groups and organisations involved with the Greater London Authority have been asked to submit responses based on their experiences of the consultative process.

### **British Hajj Advisory Group**

The next meeting of the Hajj Advisory Group will take place on Wednesday December 19th. Dr Abdur Raheem Khan will be attending for the MCB.

## **EVENTS**

### **Food Standards Agency**

Dr Abdul Majid Katme attended the BSE and Sheep Conference, held by the Food Standards Agency, on Tuesday December 18th.

### **GLA Labour Group Annual Reception**

Members of the London Task Group and Office Bearers of the MCB were invited to the Annual Reception of the GLA Labour Group. The reception took place on Tuesday December 18th at Romney House.

### **Eid Reception, St James's Palace**

HRH the Prince of Wales will be hosting an Eid reception for Muslim teenagers and young adults at St James's Palace on Wednesday December 19th.

Over 200 Muslim youngsters from across the country will be given the opportunity to meet with the Prince of Wales and chief guest, Prince Naseem Hamed. Yousuf Bhailok, Secretary General and Afzal Khan, Assistant Secretary General, will be attending for the MCB.

### **Miscellaneous**

The Home Office Statistical Bulletin on 'Religion in Prisons 1999-2000, England and Wales' was published on Monday 17th December. Bulletin can be viewed at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hosb1501.pdf>