

# THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

A step towards greater consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim Affairs in the UK.

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## Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

*8 Thw al-Hijjah 1422 Wednesday 20 February 2002*

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### **Weekly Updates on Reports, Committees and Events:      Issue XIII**

#### **Reports and Committee Updates**

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- Conference on Freedom of Belief and Expression
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- Public Affairs Committee

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- Standing Together Against Intolerance
- The Westminster Conference - One Year On

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- Report published today by the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU)
- Islamic financial Instruments
- MCB Newsletter

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## **Reports and Committee updates**

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### **Meeting with Christian faith leaders**

MCB Secretary General Yousuf Bhailok attended a dinner hosted by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of London to meet the Archbishops and Bishops of England and Wales at Mansion House in London on Tuesday February 19th.

### **Conference on Freedom of Belief and Expression**

Assistant Secretary General Afzal Khan attended and addressed the Conference on Freedom of Belief and Expression held in Jalal-Abad, Kyrgyzstan, from February 15-16th.

The Conference was organised by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Centre in Bishkek, in conjunction with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the State Committee for Religious Affairs, with financial assistance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Cllr. Khan gave a speech entitled 'Freedom of Belief is the Cornerstone of Democratic Society'

### **The Board of Deputies of British Jews**

The MCB received a letter of regret from the Director General of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Neville Nagler, on its declining the invitation to attend the Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony.

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

### **Concorde: Celebration of Marriage**

Imam Abduljalil Sajid, Chair of the Social Policy, Welfare and Regeneration Committee attended a meeting of faith and other groups on celebrating the union of marriage. The event, organised as part of National Marriage Week, 10-17th February 2002, took place on February 12th and featured representatives of the various faith communities.

### **Religion and Terrorism: A Muslim Perspective**

Imam Abduljalil Sajid delivered a lecture on 'Religion and Terrorism: A Muslim Perspective' at University College Chichester on Wednesday February 20th.

## **Media Committee**

### **Letter sent to Lib-Dem Leader Charles Kennedy**

The Media Committee wrote on February 18th to the leader of the Liberal Democrats, Charles Kennedy, thanking him for his recent remarks in which he criticised the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for his deplorable military actions against a Palestinian population which has endured Israeli occupation for over 34 years. The Media committee urged the Lib-Dem leader to support UN resolutions calling on Israel to unconditionally withdraw from the occupied territories and cease its ever-expanding illegal settlements programme.

Letter of support sent to BBC Breakfast's Jeremy Bowen The Media Committee wrote to Jeremy Bowen, presenter of BBC Breakfast News, to thank him for his critical remarks on the Daily Express's

front page headline on the release on bail of the Algerian pilot-trainer Lotfi Raissi.

The letter thanked Mr Bowen for not indulging tabloid scaremongering and rightly stating that Mr Raissi has been freed by a British court following the FBI's failure of provide evidence to justify his continued detention.

### **London Task Group**

The London Civic Forum held an information seminar on the London Development Agency's plans to implement to Mayor's Economic Development Strategy on Wednesday February 13th. Ajmal Masroor attended the seminar as MCB representative.

### **Public Affairs Committee**

The Public Affairs Committee, along with the Legal Affairs and Research and Documentation committees, is working on a response to the Government White paper 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integrating with Diversity'. The White paper raises issues such as arranged marriages, literacy tests, oaths of allegiance and changes to immigration rules.

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## **Events**

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### **Standing Together Against Intolerance**

Building on the success of the conference held at Westminster Central Hall last October, in conjunction with the MCB, the London Civic Forum will be holding four open 'Standing Together Against Intolerance' meetings. The meetings will be held across London and will run from February 18th to March 20th. For details log on to [www.londoncivicforum.org.uk](http://www.londoncivicforum.org.uk)

### **The Westminster Conference - One Year On**

The International Action Against Child Poverty Coalition will be presenting its first year's report at the anniversary meeting of The Westminster Conference on Tuesday February 26th 2002.

A year ago, at The Westminster Conference 2001, international financial institutions, world governments, UN agencies and NGOs committed themselves to renewed action to eradicate child poverty. One year on, NGOs and faith groups hope to assess progress made toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and Target 2015.

The anniversary meeting will take place at Portcullis House, Westminster with International Development Minister Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn MP in attendance.

### **Miscellaneous Report published today by the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU)**

The report on Ethnic Minorities in the Labour Market can be viewed at: [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/2001/ethnicity/main.shtml](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/2001/ethnicity/main.shtml)

### **Islamic financial Instruments**

Following a report in the [BBC on Islamic mortgages](#), Iqbal Asaria, chair of the MCB Business and Economics Committee, was interviewed by Sunrise Radio.

**MCB Newsletter**

The next hardcopy newsletter of the MCB will be published by the end of the week. To receive a copy please email the MCB office.

