

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

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

Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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Weekly Updates on Reports, Committees and Events: Issue 32

Reports and Events Update

- The MCB Launches Publication
- War Against Iraq Meeting
- Meeting with Church of England Representatives
- From Sabra and Shatila to Jenin
- Interfaith Meeting
- Funeral Service of Baroness Young

Committees Update

- Media Committee
- Social Affairs Committee
- Europe & International Affairs Committee
- Education Committee
- Mosques & Community Affairs Committee
- Youth Committee
- Health & Medical Committee
- Research & Documentation Committee

Events

- Muslim Demographics - the way ahead
- Million's March For Palestine
- Muslim Education in Europe Conference
- Central Working Committee Meeting

Vacancies

- Fund Raising Officer

Reports and Events Update

The MCB Launches Publication

The Muslim Council of Britain held a book launch at London's Central Mosque in Regent's Park at 10.30am on Thursday 19th September 2002 for its new publication "The Quest For Sanity: Reflections On September 11 And The Aftermath."

"This is the first major study of its kind about the events of September 11th and the aftermath incorporating the Muslim perspective. The Quest For Sanity is a collection of over thirty papers by both Muslim and non-Muslim specialists about the wide-ranging impact of the September 11 terrorist attacks, with a special focus on how it affected British Muslims. At its centre is an urgent call for increased dialogue and understanding between peoples to help remove the causes behind the phenomenon of terrorism," said Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the MCB.

To order copies of The Quest For Sanity (£12.75 each, plus P&P) please contact the MCB on 0208 903 9650 or order online at www.mcb.org.uk/books.

War Against Iraq Meeting

The MCB held an emergency meeting on Saturday 21 Sept at 2.00 pm at the Islamic Cultural Centre to discuss the issue of 'War against Iraq'. Nearly 60 Ulema and Muslim leaders from across the UK (including a representative from Northern Ireland) attended the meeting which was chaired by Iqbal Sacranie, the Secretary General of The MCB.

Dr Aziz Skeikh, the Chair of the Research & Documentation Committee (ReDoc) announced the findings of the recent survey and consultation carried out by the ReDoc among the MCB affiliates on this issue. On the basis of the survey's results and a unanimous vote from attendees, all were against the war. A decision was taken to issue a press release on the MCB's position and write to MPs to be followed shortly by a more comprehensive Position Statement.

Meeting with Church of England Representatives

On Thursday 15 September, representatives of The MCB including Iqbal Sacranie, Unaiza Malik, MCB Assistant Secretary General, Ibrahim Mogra, Chair of the Mosques & Community Affairs Committee, and Dr Manazir Ahsan, Director General of the Islamic Foundation, attended a meeting with Jeremy Harris, The Archbishop of Canterbury's Secretary of Public Affairs, David Marshall, Chaplain for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev Canon Michael Ipgrave, Inter Faith Relations Advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Church House. The meeting discussed how to establish better links between the MCB and Lambeth Palace. Amongst the issues discussed were interfaith relations and the recent consultation on establishing Christian/Muslim dialogue.

From Sabra and Shatila to Jenin

To commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacres the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC), MCB affiliate, organized a public seminar on 17 September at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The seminar, chaired by the Labour MP for Erith and Thamesmead, Mr John Austin, examined the possibilities of pressing legal charges in a British court against Israel's incumbent Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and other political and military officials involved in the 1982 massacres and that of the Jenin refugee camp in April 2002.

The first speaker at the seminar was Dr. Swee Chai Ang, a British surgeon who worked in the Gaza

Hospital during the time of the Sabra and Shatila massacres. Other speakers included Lloyd Quinan of the Scottish Parliament, who was one of the first British and European officials to visit the Jenin refugee camp in April 2002 after its invasion by the Israelis. Quinan said he never thought in his wildest dreams that he would have witnessed such carnage in his entire life. The Belgian solicitor, Michael Verstraeten, who participated in the case brought against Ariel Sharon, explained the position of Belgian law regarding crimes against humanity. The final speaker at the seminar was the prominent British Queen's Council, Owen Davies, who recently handled the Augusto Pinochet case. For further details please contact PRC Head Office: Tel: 0208 453 0919; e-mail: info@prc.org.uk; Website: www.prc.org.uk

Interfaith Meeting

Mahmud Ahmad Ijaz, a member of the MCB helped to organise an interfaith meeting at St Andrews Church in Streatham on September 11. Also involved were Jewish and Christian representatives who all worked together to give a message of peace and cooperation between all communities. The event was a success and closed with the distribution of lavender seeds for all to sow which would represent peace.

Funeral Service of Baroness Young

The Funeral Service of Baroness Janet Mary Young was held at St Andrew's Church, Oxford on Friday 13 September at 3pm. The private Committal took place the same afternoon at Oxford Crematorium. The welcome and introduction was given by The Rev Stephen Coe and the Blessing was conducted by The Right Rev'd. Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester.

Those that attended the funeral from the MCB were Former Secretary General Yousuf Bhailok, Vice Chair of the Membership Committee and London Task Group, Dr Raheem Khan, Chair of the Social Affairs Committee, Shiban Akbar, and former Deputy Secretary General, Basil Mustaf. They joined the family for refreshments in the Parish Room following the service. The funeral service was also attended by Theresa May, Chairman of Conservative Party.

Committees Update

Media Committee

Letter to Daily Mirror

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB Media Committee, wrote to the Daily Mirror regarding John Pilger's article published on 16th September 2002 thanking them for the courageous printing of the article which vividly described how hellish life for ordinary Palestinians has become under a very brutal Israeli occupation.

Inayat went on to say: "Israel has been in breach of many UN resolutions for over 35 years now, yet there is no question of the United States attacking them to force them to withdraw from the occupied territories and to allow the Palestinians to live with dignity in their own homeland. To adapt the PM's words, it is Israel that is the real 'international outlaw'."

Letter to Chairman of Carlton Communications

Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of The MCB, wrote to Mr Michael Green, the Chairman of Carlton Communications on 23rd September to express incredulity at his reported criticism of John Pilger's documentary: "Palestine Is Still The Issue", saying "Israel will never achieve peace and security by

oppressing another people." The letter called for evidence that the film was 'factually' and 'historically incorrect' as Michael Green was quoted as saying in the *Jewish Chronicle* on 20 September 2002.

The MCB asked whether the statements attributed to Mr Green were accurate; if so then the MCB fears this would result in a massive squandering of the goodwill earned by Carlton for showing the film: "Notwithstanding this, our central purpose for writing is to ascertain whether it is the official policy of public-service broadcasters to ensure Israel's immunity from criticism". For full text see the Media Section of The MCB Website at <http://www.mcb.org.uk>.

Social Affairs Committee

Muslim Women's Helpline Lunch & Seminar

Shiban Akbar, Chair of the Social Affairs Committee and Dr Reefat Drabu, Chair of the Women & Family Affairs Committee attended the Muslim Women's Helpline (MWHL) Lunch and Seminar held on Saturday 14 September at the Islamic Centre of England, Maida Vale. The seminar was entitled "The individual and collective challenge for twenty first century Muslims in upholding Islamic marriage and family values." Speakers included Osman Sheikh from Coventry, Khattib Shahnawaz Haque from London and Mufti Barakatullah from London. This was followed by open discussion amongst participants.

Culture & Race Relations Training

Shiban Akbar gave a morning session - "Learning points in Muslim Community and Police Liaison" - as part of the Culture and Race Relations (CRR) Training of Thames Valley Police at the St. Aldate's Police Station in Oxford. Next ones are on 2 Oct & 9 Oct at the same venue.

Muslimaat UK Event

On Saturday 21 September, an event was organised by Muslimaat UK held at the East London Mosque entitled "September 11: a year on". Shiban Akbar attended and gave a talk on the topic. The items discussed included what Muslims should do at a time like this, and covered duties, responsibilities and obligations.

Europe & International Affairs Committee

Qatar National Day

The Qatar National Day Celebration reception was held on Thursday 19th September by the Embassy of the State of Qatar at Claridges. Iqbal Sacranie, Mahmud Al-Rashid, Chair of the Europe & International Affairs Committee and Tanzeem Wasti, Chair of the London Task Group represented the MCB.

Saudi National Day

The Saudi National Day Celebration reception was held at the Dorchester on Monday 23rd September. Iqbal Sacranie and Tanzeem Wasti, represented the MCB.

Liberal Democrat Conference

Mahmud Al-Rashid attended the Liberal Democratic Conference in Brighton on 23 September. The conference debated Iraq.

Education Committee

The Education Committee held their first meeting on 15 September. A number of items were discussed including the production of a Ramadan Magazine for schools which will confirm and publicise Islamic Regulations on fasting for children, to be distributed to all primary and secondary schools. Other programmes that were discussed included a series of meetings and workshops to be organised for Muslim parents to encourage them to join governing bodies.

Mosques & Community Affairs Committee

The Mosques & Community Affairs Committee met on 19 September at the Islamic Cultural Centre. Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra was endorsed for the position of Chairman and Brother Ayub Laheer was appointed Secretary of the Committee. The meeting discussed the way forward through inviting imams and mosques to draw up guidelines for good practice in mosques and how best to maximise the use of mosques. The committee also discussed a number of other objectives for the year, including plans for a National Mosques Open Day insha'Allah and the provision of Muslim burial spaces in cemeteries. The Committee requests that more Central Working Committee members come forward to join or recommend members.

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee held a meeting on 15 September 2002 at the Islamic Cultural Centre. Items discussed included the intention to create a database of youth work currently carried out throughout the country. This database will then be used as an information resource that would facilitate the coordination of existing activities and focus on those that required further development as well as to highlight areas of work for The MCB. The Committee also discussed plans to liaise with the Government Institutions that are related to youth affairs and hold a meeting with Muslim Youth Groups next year.

Health & Medical Committee

Smoking, Tobacco and Ramadan Conference

A campaign to help Muslims to Stop Smoking has been launched by The MCB, in conjunction with the Islamic Society of Britain and other local 'stop smoking' services.

The initiative was launched at Manchester Town Hall on 18th September when Imams from local mosques and other community leaders signed a Joint Declaration of their intention to promote a smoke-free lifestyle to their entire congregations. Trained advisers were available to speak to the congregations at mosques or to centre-users in the run up to the start of Ramadan. Dr Abdul Aziz Sheikh was among the attendees and also presented a paper on 'The health profile of British Muslims' at the conference.

In a Press Release, Dr Khalid Anees of the MCB Health & Medical Committee said: "There are both religious and health reasons for Muslims to consider stop tobacco use. We are glad to be working jointly with the local NHS services to support members of our communities in this way."

Research & Documentation Committee

9/11 Peace Memorial

MCB Members Homaira Khan and Saddia Malik represented MCB at the 9/11 Peace Memorial held at the London InterFaith Centre on 11 September. They each delivered two readings on the themes of peace and social cohesion.

Caring for Muslim Patients

Dr Aziz Sheikh, Chair of the Research & Documentation Committee, presented a paper on 'Caring

for Muslim Patients' at the Royal College of General Practitioners, London on Tuesday 5 September. This event was covered in Pulse Magazine on 16 September.

Paper Published

Dr Aziz Sheikh has worked together with Dr Richard Ashcroft (Ethics Unit, Imperial College) and Dr Liam Smeeth (Dept of Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine) to publish a paper in the current issue of the British Journal of General Practice on the design and application of randomised controlled trials in a research context.

Events

Event: **Legal Affairs Committee Meeting**
Date: 24th September 2002
Time: 6.00 - 7.00 pm
Held By: The Muslim Council of Britain
Venue: Muslim World League
Contact: For further information contact MCB Head Office

Event: **Muslim Demographics - the way ahead**
Date: Thursday 26th September 2002
Contact: Chair of ReDoc, Dr Aziz Sheikh, c/o MCB office
Information: Topics for discussion include the census output on the religion question

Event: **Million's March For Palestine**
Date: 28th September 2002
Time: 1.00 pm
Held By: The Muslim Association of Britain
Venue: Congregating on Embankment and ending up in Hyde Park
Contact: MAB Head Office: 020 7272 2888 Mobile: 07958 329 879
Information: Play your part in the biggest mobilisation for Palestine in this country ever, insha'Allah. It is a demonstration in support of all the Palestinian people. It is now no longer a concern only for Muslims; but for anyone, Muslim or non-Muslim, who realises and is aware that every human on Earth has a right to live and be treated fairly.

Event: **Muslim Education in Europe Conference**
Date: 27th - 29th September 2002
Held By: The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK), The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (Germany) & The Islamic Centre of Ireland
Venue: Bonn, Germany
Contact: AMSS (UK) PO Box 126, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2UD, UK, Fax: 44 (20) 8940 4014 email: amss@amssuk.com
Information: This conference sets out to coordinate and exchange expertise in monitoring, analysing and assessing the development of education as it affects European Muslims. In doing so, it seeks to develop an educational rationale which is capable of meeting the needs of the Muslim presence in the West.

Event: **Central Working Committee Meeting**

Date: 12th October 2002
Time: 11.00 am - 4.00 pm
Held By: The Muslim Council of Britain
Venue: Leicester
Contact: For further information contact MCB Head Office

Vacancies

Fund Raising Officer at the Muslim Council of Britain

Salary: up to £25,000 per annum gross.

The MCB is an umbrella body of Muslims in Britain which has been in existence for five years. The organisation has a vacancy for a staff member to join its office team based in North West London with responsibilities for

- developing a comprehensive fundraising strategy to raise funds from UK and overseas sources to meet MCB revenue expenditure requirements
- developing and manage action / delivery plans to implement the fundraising strategy
- developing and manage a core of volunteers to assist in fundraising
- reporting to the MCB Treasurer on regular basis and advise him/her on funding situation

Applications should possess

- good English language skills – telephone manner, letter drafting, proposal preparation
- IT literacy – email, Internet usage, Microsoft Office products experience
- experience in developing and implementing strategic business plans
- a track record in revenue fundraising for significant sums
- experience of liaising with a wide range of local, national and international funders
- experience of working with Muslim and non-Muslim organisations from the voluntary, statutory and private sectors

Letter of application with CV and two references should be sent to: The Chair, MCB Finance & General Purpose Committee, the Muslim Council of Britain, PO Box 52, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0XW. The closing date for applications is 27th September 2002.

