

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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Reports and Events Update

FCO Meeting

A meeting between the Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien and a delegation from the Muslim community was held on Thursday 21 November at the Foreign & Commonwealth Offices (FCO). The MCB was represented by the Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie and Tanzeem Wasti, Vice Chair of the MCB European & International Affairs Committee.

The meeting covered a range of policy issues. The delegation expressed their serious concern over the UN resolution adopted regarding Iraq which could be interpreted as a pretext for military action. The minister explained that the purpose of the UN resolution was to ensure that the Iraqi regime complied fully with the Inspectors and disarmed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The delegation emphasised that there were other countries who possessed WMD including Israel which posed a greater threat to the region. Therefore if the UN wishes to be impartial then all countries who possess WMD should be treated in a similar manner. The meeting also discussed India's non-compliance to the UN resolution to carry out a referendum. Breaches of human rights by Russians in Chechnya were also discussed.

Iftar Reception hosted by US Ambassador

On Monday 18 November, Iqbal Sacranie; Mahmud Al-Rashid, Chair of the Europe & International Affairs Committee; Tanzeem Wasti, Chair of the London Task Group; Shibani Akbar, Chair of the Social Affairs Committee and MCB Central Working Committee Member, Imam AbdulJalil Sajid attended an Iftaar Reception hosted by Ambassador of the United States at his residence.

The iftar was also attended by religious and community leaders, academics, journalists, Muslim Parliamentarians and diplomats from Muslim countries. Amongst those attending were Dr Zaki Badawi, Muslim College; Hani el-Banna, President of Islamic Relief; Prof Abdel Haleem, School of Oriental and African Studies; Dr Farhan Nizami, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies; Yusuf al-Khoei, Al Khoei Foundation; Dr Anas Al Sheikh, the Association of Muslim Researchers; Azzam Tamimi, Liberty for the Muslim World; Baroness Uddin; Lord Ahmed; Lord Patel; Lord Bhatia; Mr Khalid Mahmud; Mr Ahmed Versi, Muslim News and a number of other senior Muslim journalists.

The ambassador addressed the gathering and stressed the importance of dialogue and understanding between communities. The MCB Secretary General was invited to say a few words and he also emphasised the need for a proper understanding of Islam. He stressed that in this holy month of Ramadan Muslims worldwide are praying for a peaceful resolution to the crisis in the Middle East. In particular he underlined the need to avoid military action in Iraq which will result in the death of thousands of innocent civilians and the devastation of the Iraqi infrastructure. The attendees had the opportunity to meet people from other faith communities and the staff of the American Embassy.

Muslim Primary Wins School Organisation Committee Backing

A proposal for a new voluntary - aided Muslim primary school won the backing last night of the London Borough of Wandsworth's School Organisation Committee. The committee, which is made up of local Headteachers, Church Groups and Councillors, gave the go ahead to set up a state-funded primary school in the new premises to be built in Gatton Road, Tooting, London.

The Al-Risaala Education Trust currently runs an independent preparatory school in Balham. Pupils here will be able to move to the new 420 place school when it opens in September 2004. Almost half the pupils will come from outside the borough. This is expected to ease the impact on other local primaries. The committee was told that more than 600 responses had been received during consultation with only seven objections.

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Iqbal Sacranie and the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Haroon Karim welcomed the decision and said: "We are now part of the family of schools in Wandsworth. Voluntary aided status would enable us to meet the expectation of parents and the community for academic excellence within the framework of a strong commitment to the moral and social development of the children under our care. Muslims in Britain wish to contribute towards the maintenance of the highest moral values and discharge their obligations and responsibilities to the pluralistic society in which we live".

They also said: "We wish to express our deep appreciation and gratitude to the Leader and his fellow Councillors of the Borough of Wandsworth as well as the officers who had worked closely with us over the last few years, providing the necessary guidance and assistance which has resulted in successful a outcome. The support received from other faith communities and in particular from Bishop Tom Butler of Southwark and Bishop Trip of the Roman Catholic Church was extremely helpful. We also wish to thank the staff, parents, pupils and all in the community for their overwhelming support."

Breaking Fast with IANL

On Saturday 16 November, Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the MCB, attended an Iftar held by Mr Bashir Sattar, the Chairman of the Islamic Association North London (IANL). He spoke on the work of the Muslim Council of Britain and for the need for community members to be involved with the work of the MCB.

GLA Meeting

A meeting was held between religious faith leaders at the Greater London Authority (GLA) Headquarters, chaired by Ken Livingston, Mayor of London on 21 November. Dr Abdul Bari, MCB Deputy Secretary General and Dr Abdul Raheem Khan, Vice Chair of the London Task Group, represented the MCB at the meeting. The attendees were informed that the Mayor of London has

taken the decision to have direct contact with religious leaders on points of concern. He made the suggestion that the working group be formalised and requested that important faith groups be invited to become members to meet regularly at the GLA under his chairmanship.

Media Visit to Bahrain

The Secretary of the Media Committee, Inayat Bunglawala, visited Bahrain between 20 - 22 November to deliver a short series of lectures as a guest of the Discover Islam organisation. Inayat was also interviewed for one hour on the weekly Bahrain TV programme 'Highlights'.

Inayat used the opportunity to provide an update on the situation of Islam and Muslims in the UK, as well as the reasons behind the publication of the new MCB book, The Quest For Sanity.

Committees Update

Media Committee (MC)

Meeting with BBC

On Monday 18 November 2002, members of the MCB media committee met with senior executives at the BBC to discuss ways to improve the coverage of Islam and Muslims on TV and Radio.

The BBC representatives included Stephen Mitchell, Head of Radio News; Vin Ray, Head of News Gathering and Mark Popescu, Editor, Ten O'Clock News. The MCB representatives included the Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie, the Assistant Secretary-General, Daud Abdullah, and the Secretary of the Media Committee, Inayat Bunglawala.

Media and Mobilization

The Secretary of the Media Committee, Inayat Bunglawala, took part - on behalf of the MCB - in a panel discussion on "Media and Mobilization: The Role of Prejudice, Propaganda And The Media In Pursuing The War" organised by the Royal Institute of International Affairs on Monday 25 November 2002 in London.

Research & Documentation Committee (ReDoc)

RE Syllabus Launch

Dr Aziz Sheikh, Chair of the Research & Documentation Committee attended the launch of the new RE syllabus for the London Borough of Brent on Tuesday 29 Oct. 2002.

Muslim Demographics

Dr Jamil Sherif, Secretary of the Research & Documentation Committee (ReDoc) and ReDoc member Mohibur Rahman participated in a Radio Ummah programme on Muslim demographics on 21 November.

Social Affairs Committee (SAC)

A working Iftaar with Radio for Development

On Friday 22 November, Shiban Akbar, Chair of SAC, invited Iqbal Sacranie; Dr Abdul Bari; Hussain Shefaar, Chair of the Youth Committee; Dr Abdul Hayee, member of the MCB Education, Employment & Training Committee and Dr Ali Qirbi, Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland at Dublin to meet with James Greenshields, Director of Radio for Development (RfD) to provide an update on the Youth and Citizenship project.

The project hopes to equip young people with skills that will allow them to participate as active citizens within their communities and beyond, providing them with greater confidence to challenge injustice and inequality. The meeting also served to transfer the project lead to the Youth Committee remit although the Social Affairs and Education, Employment & Training Committee will continue with their involvement. Dr Ali Qirbi kindly hosted the Iftaar in London.

"Forced" Marriage Interview

Shiban Akbar was interviewed by the Muslim News for her considered critique on the report on Forced Marriage "Community Perceptions in Forced Marriage" commissioned by FCO which was launched on Monday 11 November at the FCO office. Her views will be published in the next issue of the Muslim News.

Prisoners' Welfare

On 26 November Dr Abdul Raheem Khan, representing the MCB Social Affairs Committee, visited Belmarsh Prison accompanied by Salah El-Hassan, General Secretary of the National Council for the Welfare of Muslim Prisoners (NCWMP). They met with a number of Muslims detained under the Terrorist Act and noted their specific concerns which will be addressed as effectively as possible. Significant matters were reported directly to the relevant prison officers.

New on the MCB Website

- New entries and updates to the Muslim Statistics, Media and Committees sections
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The Quest for Sanity

Letters of Appreciation (Cont'd)

I would like to communicate ... the importance of the analysis made in the book "The Quest for Sanity- Reflections on September 11 and the Aftermath".

MC Roberto Calzadilla, Charge d'Affaires, Embassy of Bolivia, London

The Quest for Sanity...is another excellent publication, though one must feel deeply ashamed at the way some Muslims have suffered in this country. The trouble is changing attitudes is a long, slow business but we must all persist.

Lady Jane Lloyd, Chiswick

For the full listing of reviews please see the MCB web site

***The Quest For Sanity* makes an ideal Eid Gift.
Don't forget to order your copy from the MCB Office.**

**Special Eid Offer Price:
£10.00 including postage and package.**

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

Events

Event: **Shariah Banking**

Date: 28 November 2002

Held By: LDA Dinner Lecture Series

Venue: City Hall, London

Contact: Iqbal Asaria, Chair, Business & Economics

Information: This lecture on Shariah Banking is part of the LDA Dinner Lecture Series on 'Money, Credit and

Entrepreneurship'. For further information contact the MCB Office.

Event: **FCO Human Rights Day**

Date: 10 December 2002

Held By: Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Contact: Mahmud Al-Rashid, Chair of the MCB Europe & International Affairs Committee

Information: The MCB Europe & International Affairs Committee will have a stall and will be holding an exhibition. For

further information contact the MCB Office.

