

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

6 Muharram 1425 AH, Friday 27 February 2004

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Reports and Events

Vacancy for MCB Executive Director up to £40k

The Muslim Council of Britain is an umbrella body for British Muslim organisations. Since its formation in 1997 it has aimed to be a broad based, representative and democratic organisation, accommodating and reflecting the diversity of Islam and serving the needs of the community in Britain.

Due to a considerable increase in workload there is now a recognised need to have a dedicated professional to fulfill the enormous potential that exists, so that the contribution of the staff and volunteers can be harnessed effectively.

We are looking for an all round manager to execute the work of the MCB. The candidate must be someone who is knowledgeable about Islam, Muslim religious practices and traditions and have awareness of the diverse needs of British Muslims. This will be combined with a practical commitment to advancing community development with British Muslim communities and organisations. A minimum of 3 years of professional experience gained in a managerial role, preferably in the voluntary sector, with a successful track record in managing organisations, people and resources is essential.

All applications must be received by post no later than 5 p.m. 29 March 2004. Please do not send applications by email.

The MCB values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity. Further information and an application form can be downloaded from our website: www.mcb.org.uk from 2 March 2003. The MCB kindly requests that its affiliates assist in the advertisement of this position by placing a prominent notice of this vacancy on their newsletters and websites between 2 to- 28 March 2004.

Home Secretary pressed to face concerns

An MCB delegation comprising Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the MCB; Sadiq Khan, Chair, MCB Legal Affairs Committee; Shibani Akbar, Chair, MCB Social Affairs Committee; and Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary, MCB Media Committee, met the Home Secretary, David Blunkett and the Home Office Minister, Fiona Mactaggart on Tuesday 9 December 2003 to express the widespread sense of disquiet and alarm in the Muslim community over the manner in which anti-terrorism legislation is currently being applied and to continue discussions on the work of faith groups in civil renewal and the issues of poverty and social exclusion. An outcome of the meeting was an undertaking from the Home Secretary to look at statistics provided by the MCB which suggested that there was a worrying discrepancy between the number of arrests and the numbers eventually charged and prosecuted. The Secretary General noted "We made sure the Home Secretary was aware of the depths of anxiety and concern in our community about the abuse of anti-terrorism powers. This type of behaviour is undermining years of constructive engagement between the government and the Muslim

community. We also made it clear that, whilst some good work has occurred to address equality issues, a lot more needs to happen. We obtained commitments from Home Office Ministers to work with us to identify problems and achieve solutions together. We hope we got our points across and it was certainly a constructive meeting."

Concerning the British detainees at Guantanamo Bay, the Home Secretary clarified press reports to the contrary, saying that he believes the detainees should either receive a fair trial with proper appeal procedures or they should be released. The MCB's position remains that a military tribunal cannot be regarded as constituting a fair trial.

For the full press release please refer to www.mcb.org.uk. An urdu version of this Press Release is also available.

MCB urges greater transparency from Police

MCB Representatives Sadiq Khan, Chair of the MCB's Legal Affairs committee, Reefat Drabu, Chair of the MCB's Women and Family Affairs committee and Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB's Media committee met with Home Office officials Senior Counter-Terrorist officials Robert Whalley, Director of the Counter-Terrorism Unit, and Mr Bob Milton, the National Coordinator of Ports Policing on 22 January 2004. The message conveyed by the MCB was that a public climate of cooperation and trust can be restored through greater transparency regarding the use of anti-terror powers along with an assurance that "the police are also policing themselves" and refraining from wrong-doing in the name of fighting terror. This was the first of a series of meetings which have been organised between the MCB and Home Office officials representing the counter-terrorism, ports policing, faith and race equality policy units.

"There needs to be a real partnership between the British Muslim community and the police to help ensure that we defeat the common threat of terror that is facing us all. There are concerns in the community that police powers may be being abused and this can lead to resentment and mistrust at a time when we all need to cooperate to ensure the security of our country." said Sadiq Khan, Chairman of the MCB's Legal Affairs committee.

For the full press release please refer to www.mcb.org.uk

WMD inquiry: we need the whole truth

In a press release issued on 3 February 2004, the Muslim Council of Britain made clear that any inquiry into Iraq's hitherto elusive Weapons of Mass Destruction must not be limited to the quality of intelligence received but must also investigate the reasons why our government took us to war against Iraq. It should establish when the decision was made to launch the pre-emptive war: was this prior to the availability of specific intelligence? If the answer is yes, then the intelligence services are not alone responsible and others need also to be brought to book.

"In light of what we have learned over the past few months, many in Britain are now convinced that the Blair government had already made the fateful decision to go to war against Iraq alongside the United States regardless of the outcome of deliberations at the United Nations or the findings uncovered by the UN Weapons Inspection Team." A specific objective of the inquiry must be to establish when the decision was made to launch the pre-emptive war. Was this prior to the availability of specific intelligence? If the answer is yes, then the intelligence services are not alone responsible and others need also to be brought to book," said Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain.

For the full press release please refer to www.mcb.org.uk

French hijab ban

The unjust ban on the wearing of headscarves in French state schools following the vote by French MPs on 10 February has been widely deplored. Earlier, in December 2003, British Muslims were aghast at the French Government's decision to endorse the recommendation by the Stasi Commission to ban Muslim girls from the right to wear head scarves at school. The MCB issued a press statement on 17 December 2003 calling on the French President Jacques Chirac to revoke the ban.

Meeting with O'Brien

Concern over the ban was conveyed to Mike O'Brien MP, Minister of State at the FCO, on 18 December by a delegation led by Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, MCB Deputy Secretary General, and including Mrs Najwa Abdul Wahab, Vice Chair of MCB's Women & Family Affairs Committee, Ms Shibani Akbar, Chair of MCB's Social Affairs Committee, Dilwar Hussain of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, Othman Moqbel, President of Federation for Students Islamic Societies (FOSIS) and Hasan al-Banna, President of the Union of Muslim Students (UMS). Mike O'Brien emphasised that "Integration does not mean assimilation. Indeed the British identity embraces different nationalities (such as the Welsh, Scotch, Northern Irish, English as well as many other immigrant communities and heritages) and religious traditions. Diversity is a part of our strength and an important part of Britishness".

Meeting with French Embassy

On 12 February, Sabah Al-Mukhtar and Shibani Akbar, Chairs of the MCB's Europe & International Affairs and Social Affairs committees respectively, met Mrs Assia Sixou, Second Counsellor at the French Embassy to underline to French representatives that the hijab ban is a violation of fundamental freedoms. Mrs Sixou stated that the ban is due to be reviewed in a year. A further meeting is going to be arranged with the French Ambassador.

Political Figures Respond

British Muslims have been heartened by the response from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, and also the statements of political figures including Home Office Minister Fiona Mactaggart, Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien and London Mayor Ken Livingstone.

Speaking on this issue, on 18 December 2003 at an Eid Reception organised by the Muslim Weekly, MCB Secretary-General, Iqbal Sacranie said: "It is a matter of pride for us that Muslim women can freely wear the hijab in the UK if they choose to do so. The reality is that Britain today comprises of a multi-faith society, as does France. By outlawing the hijab in state schools, the French government has not only institutionalised Islamophobia but has contributed towards the even further marginalisation and disenfranchisement of that country's Muslim community. We urge our government to engage its partners in Paris and Brussels and work towards the revocation of this unjust ban."

Religious Discrimination Legislation

The MCB, in partnership with The Muslim News, MDUK and the British Muslim Research Centre, has now organised four regional briefings for community workers and advice providers on the new Employment Regulations - a fifth seminar is being conducted on 27th February in Manchester. A multilingual leaflet and poster has also been prepared which is being despatched to all mosques and community centres. The project has been funded by the Department of Trade & Industry.

For further information contact project officer Nusrat Chagtai at the MCB Office 0208 432 0585 or email legal@mcb.org.uk A comprehensive update of the project is available at www.mcb.org.uk/er.html. The update is also available in urdu.

Kilroy-Silk

An anti-Muslim and anti-Arab outburst by Robert Kilroy-Silk (article in The Sunday Express, 4th January 2004, "We Owe The Arabs Nothing") was taken up by the MCB with the Press Complaints Commission, the Daily Express, the BBC and the CRE.

On 6 January 2004, Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the MCB wrote to Ms Lorraine Heggessey, BBC One Controller "It is truly galling to see an Islamophobic presenter like Kilroy enriching himself over a number of years courtesy of a publicly funded body such as the BBC. Kilroy-Silk is - as you must know - a man who positively revels in airing his anti-Arab and anti-Muslim views...Kilroy-Silk writes a weekly column for the Sunday Express in which he often gives vent to his bigoted and ill-informed ideas about what is happening in the world (and) appears unable (or unwilling) to distinguish between the terrorists who perpetrated the Sept 11 atrocities and the ordinary Arab peoples who constitute a population of over 200 million."

Kilroy-Silk's article stated: "We're told that the Arabs loathe us. Really?... What do they think we feel about them? ... That we admire them for being suicide bombers, limb-amputators, women-repressors?" In his letter, Mr Sacranie noted that "This seems to be a clear case of indiscriminate generalisation and as such, blatantly racist" going on to urge the BBC to take urgent and appropriate action. This was also stated in a press release, issued on 7 January 2004.

On 8 January 2004 an Early Day Motion was tabled by Lynn Jones MP on Robert Kilroy-Silk's comments: "That this House deplores the racist comments directed at Arab people... and calls upon

the BBC to consider Mr Kilroy-Silk's position within the Corporation." The Kilroy chat show was suspended by the BBC on 9 January, pending investigation, upon which Mr Sacranie commented "Britain's Muslim and Arab communities, indeed all right-thinking people in this country, will be relieved to see that the BBC is treating this matter in a prompt and serious way."

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB Media committee wrote an article which was published in the Sunday Express on 11 January 2004 entitled 'Why Kilroy Was So Wrong'. The article makes clear the shortfalls in Kilroy's assertions, by describing the historical, linguistic and social facets of the Arab and Muslim world and can be found online at <http://www.mcb.org.uk/09-01-04.html>. A further press release was issued by the MCB on 12 January 2004 dismissing Kilroy's expression of 'regret' over the Sunday Express rant. "The 'regret' that Kilroy is now expressing - after the BBC suspended his chat show - about his breathtakingly racist anti-Arab rant is plainly disingenuous and an obvious attempt to save his well-paid career."

On 13 January, Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB Media Committee wrote to The Times in response to a letter printed on 12 January 2004 in which he pointed out a number of "red herrings" which Kilroy-Silk had raised in his defence. "It is true that the earlier version of the same Kilroy column... referred to 'Arab countries' but that is because a Sunday Express sub editor had added the word 'countries' in order to make Kilroy's ignorant rant less inflammatory. In the (republished) version ... we got Kilroy's original unadulterated and clearly racist polemic which denigrated all Arabs – not merely Arab countries." Further, Kilroy-Silk had raised the issue of freedom of speech but entirely disregarded the law on incitement to racial hatred.

On 16 January, Robert Kilroy-Silk stepped down as presented of the Kilroy programme. Applauding the BBC for taking a clear principled stand on this issue, the MCB expressed relief and regret that Kilroy-Silk "continues to defend the indefensible and has used every excuse to exculpate himself from taking responsibility for the writing of his own breathtakingly racist words. He blamed the Sunday Express, his secretary, the BBC, the CRE and also the Muslim community itself. He also hid behind the noble principle of freedom of speech. Yet no responsible government allows unlimited freedom of speech, and especially not freedom to incite hatred of an entire people. Events in Nazi Germany during the second world war showed what can happen when we allow the demonisation of whole groups of people."

In a letter to the Editor of the Sunday Express on 1st February 2004, Inayat Bunglawala "set the record straight" by presenting extracts from Kilroy's past columns. For MCB Documentation to BBC on Kilroy-Silk's previous statements refer to <http://www.mcb.org.uk/kilroy.pdf>

MCB Secretary General speaks on Corporate Social Responsibility

Iqbal Sacranie presented a paper at the Corporate Social Responsibility Seminar held in Singapore on 23 and 24 February 2004. He noted that "Muslims have much to contribute to the wellbeing of our nation and it is the prime task of our socially responsible Corporations to act as enlightened enablers to tap the creative potential in the diversity we have". He also cited the recent development of halal

financial products, "responding to advocacy from the Muslim Council of Britain and other organisations the ex Governor of the Bank of England, Sir Eddie George, provided commendable leadership to make the launch of retail Shari'a compliant products possible in the UK. We now have high street banks marketing Shari'a compliant home finance products throughout the country".

The paper also touched on Britain's role as a leading global arms supplier and "the creeping privatisation of key functions of our armed forces", which have created "difficult dilemmas for our government and led to our Corporations being accused of unashamedly profiteering from death and destruction. On occasions arms supplied by our Corporations have been used against our own forces; and many a times against our social, political and moral interests". The recent case of "our tough-talking Home Secretary pleading for the early release of a British arms dealer convicted of 'waging war against India', illustrates the kind of corners our government can be forced into. This will inevitably compromise any claim to the moral high ground we claim to have on global terrorism and other issues".

For the full text, please refer to the Media/Speeches section at www.mcb.org.uk

Meeting with Board of Deputies

A delegation including Dr Abdul Bari, Deputy Secretary General, Dr Manazir, CWC Member and Dr Abdul Jalil Sajid from the Muslim Council of Britain met with The Board of Deputies on 19 February to discuss areas of cooperation between Muslim and Jewish communities. Areas discussed included work to counter the ban on halal and kosher meat in Britain as proposed by the Farm Animal Welfare Council, arrangements for the practice of religious circumcision and working against xenophobia to protect religious rights of all faith communities in the UK.

Board President Henry Grunwald QC commented: "This was another very positive meeting. Both communities have recognised that we must work together on the issues that we share. We particularly stressed the importance of encouraging people to come out and vote in the forthcoming local and European elections: this is the best way of defeating the BNP."

Eid celebrations

The first joint Eid ul Fitr Reception was held by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the MCB on 10 December 2003 at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, London. The reception was attended by the Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP. Mr Straw affirmed UK support for Turkish entry into the EU and noted that "As part of our work to improve the FCO's understanding of Islam, all our staff going to Islamic countries attend a course specifically designed to increase their basic understanding and appreciation of Islam....That training is just a small part of the Foreign Office's efforts, for some years now, to build a stronger relationship with British Muslims...We also work with organisations like the Islamic Society of Britain, Islamic Forum Europe and the Union of Muslim Students to ensure that the voices of young British Muslims are heard at all levels".

On 23 February the Foreign & Commonwealth Office hosted a reception for Eid al Adha. Mike O'Brien, Foreign Office Minister hosted the reception, and gave a speech focusing on the Guantanamo Bay prisoners. Lord Patel also addressed the invitees. Among MCB representatives present were Unaiza Malik, Assistant Secretary General, Khurshid Drabu, Constitutional Advisor, Iqbal Asaria, Chair of Business & Economics Committee, Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of Media Committee, Afzal Merali, ReDoc member and Shahid Kazi, of the MCB administrative team.

Hajj 2004

In January 2004, Muslims from all parts of the world - including 20,000 pilgrims from Britain - assembled in Makkah for the Hajj. The MCB provided emergency contacts for British pilgrims and liaised with the British Hajj Delegation Medical Team and a contact to provide counselling for those affected by the Jamarat incident.

Ellman's allegations rejected

The MCB issued a press release on 29 December 2003 to rebut allegations made by MP Louise Ellman relating to a prominent Muslim body (and an MCB affiliate) and its members).

Inayat Bunglawala wrote to the Guardian on 19 December 2003 regarding a story about a Palestinian academic and his support for Palestinian groups who are resisting a brutal Israeli occupation. Mr Bunglawala questioned why when citing Ms Ellman's comments, the article did not mention Ms Ellman's background as an apologist for Israel. In response the Guardian's Reader's Editor placed an item in Saturday's corrections and clarifications column stating that it "did not make it clear that the Labour MP Louise Ellman, whose Commons speech was quoted, is a member of the Labour Friends of Israel group and a campaigner against anti-semitism. It should have done."

On 22 February 2004, following a report by the Community Security Trust which claims that anti-semitism in Britain is on the rise, and the CST's attempts to portray parts of the Muslim community as being behind this increase, Louise Ellman MP and Inayat Bunglawala of the Muslim Council of Britain appeared on The Week, ITV London, to debate this issue." The MCB representative unreservedly condemned anti-semitism and xenophobia pointing out that "there is a blur going on between anti-semitism and the state of Israel". The MCB has called on MPs to establish a committee against all forms of xenophobia. Louise Ellman MP, who described herself as a supporter of the Israeli Labour Party, participated in the debate but was considered to have 'overplayed' the findings of the recent Community Safety Forum.

The full discussion can be viewed online at:

For broadband users:

http://www.livingislam.co.uk/22Feb04_TheWeek_BB.wmv

For 56Kb dial-up modem users:

http://www.livingislam.co.uk/22Feb04_TheWeek.wmv

Michael Howard's criticism of BNP welcomed

The MCB issued a press statement on 19 February 2004 welcoming the Leader of the Conservative Party, Michael Howard's, strongly worded criticism of the racist British National Party during his speech in Burnley. The MCB called upon all political parties to work in a calm manner towards alleviating the genuine concerns of many British people .

"For too long, the BNP have been left unchallenged by the political leaders in this country with the result that they have begun making poisonous inroads into several constituencies around the country." said Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain.

Speaking alongside Michael Howard, the former Secretary-General of the MCB, Yousuf Bhailok, urged the Conservative Party to give their full backing to support the comprehensive outlawing of religious discrimination in this country: "The main targets of BNP abuse and their disinformation campaign have been vulnerable Muslim communities. This has to be stopped."

At the same time, the MCB calls upon all political parties to work in a calm manner towards alleviating the genuine concerns of many of the British people – concerns which provide the BNP with an opening to promote their bitter and divisive agenda.

Meeting with Swedish Integration Board

MCB Central Working Committee member Mohibur Rahman accompanied by Saqeb Mueen met with Andreas Carlgren, Director-General of the Swedish Integration Board who was accompanied by two of his colleagues on Tuesday 3 February 2004. Issues discussed related to integration and government, including the role of MCB, with the message that the British approach of promoting multiculturalism has on the whole been more successful than the more interventionist approaches made in mainland Europe, who have tended towards assimilation. Problems hindering integration were discussed such as social exclusion and discrimination along with its benefits including citizenship, rights and responsibilities, participation in public life and that no institutional barriers to freedom of religion existed.

Iran Earthquake

British Muslim charities took immediate steps to provide aid and support to assist the relief work underway following the earthquake in Bam, Iran. The MCB too extends its deepest sympathies to those affected by this calamity. MCB affiliated charities' Iran appeals include Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, Human Relief Foundation and United Kingdom Islamic Mission, UKIM.

A press release issued by Muslim Aid underlines that "An estimated 80% of the city was flattened and local officials say the death toll could reach 30,000. The quake, which reached 6.7, is not a tragedy for Iran alone but for the whole world...Major international effort will be necessary to rebuild the 2,000-year-old ancient city designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site."

Avenue School given religious voluntary aided status

The MCB wish to congratulate The Avenue School, London, in particular Headmistress Jamila Fernandez, on being the third UK school to be awarded religious voluntary aided status.

Soul for Europe seminar

On 8 December 2003, Abdul Jalil Sajid attended a seminar in Brussels organised by Soul for Europe in association with the EU Commission and EU President Office. Dr Sajid introduced the work of the MCB

Seminar participants agreed to schedule a meeting annually and aim to form a Pan European Interfaith network. It was agreed that Soul for Europe would be the representative body on behalf of all faiths at the European institutions. Participants recommended that Article 51 be maintained in EU Constitution and voiced the intention to "Stand together for peace through fostering respect and active cooperation between religious leaders across national borders in Europe."

"Honour" Killing

There was a brain storming session held at the New Scotland yard in October 2003 on the subject of Honour Killing. This was attended by Dr AbdulJalil Sajid and Dr Abdul Raheem Khan on behalf of the MCB. They reiterated that there is no such thing as "honour" killing in Islam. Such acts are considered to be murder and should be treated as such.

Three Faiths Forum

The Three Faiths Forum met at the West London Synagogue in December 2003. Dr Abdul Raheem Khan represented the MCB. The Three Faiths Forum has generated considerable interest in Eastern European countries and states in the Russian Republic who propose to engage in similar activities.

Muslim Safety Forum Meeting

The regular meeting of the Muslim Safety Forum took place on 14 January 2004 at New Scotland Yard. Representing the MCB Dr Khan voiced criticism concerning the manner in which officers had acted during a number of recent detentions. He emphasised that the community had already expressed their anxieties in this regard. There is a clear need for a mechanism to monitor and closely supervise arrests and take required action when appropriate in order to assure the Muslim community of its fair and indiscriminate treatment.

European Social Forum Meeting

Dr Abdul Raheem Khan attended a meeting on 24 January 2004 held by the European Social Forum a subsidiary of the World Social Forum which has the full support of Mayor Ken Livingston. In the light of recent French legislation, Dr Khan spoke at the meeting on the importance of addressing the problem of religious discrimination. Dr Khan also showed support of the aims of the Forum which are to promote fairness and justice for all people, whilst universally campaigning against war and for human rights.

Affiliate News

Notice to MCB Affiliates

The Muslim Council of Britain would like to remind its affiliates that they can advertise events, news and job opportunities nationally free of charge through the MCB website and MCB E-Newsletter.

- To register events go to: http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/event_add.php
- To register community news go to: http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/news_add.php
- To register jobs: send and email to: mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk.

Automatic registration will soon be possible insha'Allah.



Youngsters Raise Over £5000 for HRF's Children's Welfare Projects

In January 2004 local schools, the Interfaith Education Centre and hundreds of students all helped to make the MCB Affiliate Human Relief Foundation's (HRF) annual Children's Campaign a massive success. Youngsters raised over £5000 for HRF's Children's Welfare Projects which will be used in Iraq, Kashmir and the Palestinian Territories.

Twenty-five Yorkshire schools distributed envelopes and held non-uniform days to raise money for the campaign. HRF representatives conducted presentation in school assemblies to offer guidance on fundraising and explore the wider implications of poverty.

Project Coordinator Yousaf Razaq explained how the campaign has been received: "Regardless of age most people want to do something to help when they are exposed to the reality of poverty. At HRF we strive to engage local communities in our work. With the schools campaign we have received a really warm response. £5000 will go a long way in relieving the suffering of children afflicted with poverty. The projects that are carried out with the money will be a continual testament to the hard work of all parents, teachers and students that have been involved.'

For more information please contact Mr Mobeen Azhar at the Human Relief Foundation on 01274 39 27 27 or 07715 00 10 60 Email mobeenazhar@hrf.co.uk

Eid ul Adha Celebration

An Eid celebration was hosted on 8 February 2004 at the South London Islamic Centre under the guidance and support of MCB Affiliates the Council of Mosques-London and Southern Counties and Haidri Idar. Khidmah, the MCB's booklet, was made available to attendees. The programme included addresses by Mohammed Aslam Ijaz, CWC Member, Imam Mutaz-ul-Haq Malik who provided a historical perspective of Eid ul Adha, a keynote address by the Mayor, Cllr Tim Sargant and an introduction to Streetcrime Wardens and the Borough of Lambeth by Christine Knibbs, and Richard Akujobi

Muslim Youth Helpline presented with Phillip Lawrence Award

Youth volunteers of Britain's first helpline targeting Muslim youth have been presented a Philip Lawrence Award for outstanding achievements in good citizenship amongst the community. The Muslim Youth Helpline was one of eight winners to receive an Award from Sir Trevor McDonald and in the presence of the Rt. Hon David Blunkett MP and Frances Lawrence on 9 December 2003 at the London College of Fashion.

For further information, please contact the MYH Office on 0870 774 3518 or e-mail info@myh.org.uk.

Global Protests in Support of the Hijab

MCB Affiliates the Muslim Women's Society and the Muslim Association of Britain organised a protest on Saturday 17 January. Thousands demonstrated in front of the French Embassy in Knightsbridge, London and French Consulate in Edinburgh, in opposition to the recommended ban on the wearing of the hijab, or headscarf, in France. The co organisers were joined by a diverse cross section of the British public including members of other Muslim organisations, other religious groups including Sikh and Jewish organisations, the Green Party, the Liberal Democrats, members of the Stop the War Coalition and many others.

The picket was part of an International Day of Action which saw similar protests taking place in more than 30 countries around the world including major French and European cities, the United States of America, Canada, Indonesia, Singapore, Brazil, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan. The collective message imparted was that any ban on the wearing of the hijab or any similar religious symbol is a grave violation of human rights.

FOSIS Conference

MCB affiliates The Federation of Students Islamic Societies In the UK & Eire (FOSIS) held a conference on 21 February 2004 entitled "Palestine: A Land Without Peace for a People Without Freedom". The conference, held at the Armitage Centre at Manchester University, was attended by over 800 students. Among the speakers were George Galloway, Dr Norman Finkelstein, Paul Eisen,

Rev Stephen Sizer, Sophie Hurndall, Anas Altikriti and Dr Azzam Tamimi. Dr Finklestein highlighted the damaging effect of the Zionist ideology on interfaith relations and Anas Altikriti, head of the MCB affiliate the Muslim Association of Britain, underlined the need for unity in the face of the great challenges facing student campaigners for Palestinian freedom. For more information contact E-mail:info@fosis.org.uk or see : <http://www.fosis.org.uk/>.

NCWMP Meeting

MCB Affiliates, The National Council for the Welfare of Muslim Prisoners (NCWMP) met at Iqra Trust in November 2003 . The present administration is keen in redefining the role of the National Council. Representing the MCB Dr Khan emphasised the need for a clear understanding of the new role while remembering the welfare and rehabilitation of Muslim prisoners.

Committees Update

Media Committee (MC)

Letter to the BBC

Inayat Bunglawala wrote to Stephen Whittle, Editor at the BBC on 15 February 2004 regarding the Heaven and Earth Show which screened an item and studio discussion on the French hijab ban. Mr Bunglawala raised the concern that of the three guests on the programme, the guest chosen was not truly representative of British Muslim opinion. Ms Namazi, the Muslim representative opposed the wearing of the hijab in schools and all public places. She also opposed Muslim faith schools whereas the vast majority of British Muslim opinion supports the right to wear the hijab.

In response, Chris Loughlin, Executive Producer of the Heaven and Earth Show argued that the discussion was about all forms of religious symbolism in schools, not just Hijab stating "it didn't seem inappropriate to have a Muslim who believed that these things aren't helpful - and a Hindu / Christian with a Sikh education, who felt they were." Inayat responded finding Mr Loughlin's rationale inadequate as it was evident from the discussion that it was "predominantly about the headscarf as were the viewers comments that were shown at the bottom of the screen during the broadcast" therefore making the decision to invite someone who did not support the right to wear Hijab unfair. For the full correspondence refer to the media/letters to editor/producer section at www.mcb.org.uk.

Letter to Sir Menzies Campbell

On 13 February, the Media Committee wrote to Sir Menzies Campbell to express appreciation of his article in the Guardian which drew attention to the unbalanced policy of the UK and US governments in respect to the Middle East peace process which observed that Israel's 'security needs' are given far more weight in London and Washington than the need to end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian lands.

'The Third World War' series on BBC

Following correspondence with MCB media secretary Inayat Bunglawala, on 11 February 2003, the

BBC responded, accepting that the statement "Since 9/11 over 3000 of al-Qa'eda's foot soldiers have been caught including some 600 currently being held at Guantanamo Bay" was an error. "The script should have attributed the claim about the numbers of 'footsoldiers of Al Qaeda' in Guantanamo to the Americans and it was a mistake that it did not", notes Fiona Stourton, Executive Producer of the series. To redress the error, the programme's script was amended and a section regarding Guantanamo was added making it clear that there is no proof that the detainees have links to Al Qaeda.

For the full correspondence please refer to the Media/Letters to Editor/producer section at www.mcb.org.uk

Letter to the Observer

On 11 February 2004, the Secretary of the Media Committee wrote to Roger Alton of the Observer regarding an article by Antony Barnett: 'Islamic Rappers' Message of Terror' published on 8 February with the concern that the reporter "failed utterly to speak to anyone from the mainstream British Muslim community about their thoughts on the matter." The letter requested that the views of ordinary British Muslims and their faith be portrayed accurately in the established media. In response Mr Alton said that the Observer would try to ensure that they "give fair representation all round".

Letter to the Daily Telegraph

On 29 January 2004 Inayat Bunglawala wrote to the Editor of the Daily Telegraph regarding an article on the subject of Weapons of Mass Destruction by John Keegan of the same date. Keegan's article questioned why the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein did "not admit that his WMD were gone and so deprive the Americans of their reason for invading?". Mr Bunglawala points out that Keegan's suggestion belies words from Saddam aired to the rest of the world courtesy of his now famous interview with Tony Benn in February 2003: "There is only one truth and therefore I tell you as I have said on many occasions before that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction whatsoever." For the full correspondence refer to the media section, letters to editor/producer at www.mcb.org.uk.

Islam in the British Media post 9/11

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB's media committee, delivered a presentation on Wednesday 28 January 2004 to visiting media executives from Bulgaria on 'Islam in the British Media post 9/11'. The presentation was given at the offices of the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe in Westminster.

Letter to the Times

On 5 December 2003, Inayat Bunglawala wrote to the Editor of the Times restating the MCB's position on terrorism as an "unquestionably an evil and destructive phenomenon. We have repeatedly condemned it in all its ugly manifestations, whether it is practiced by individuals, groups or states." The letter called attention to increased security due to the belief in a heightened threat of terrorist attack and associated arrests and urged a sense of proportion and impartiality if suspects were brought to trial: "Of the 500 or so arrests that have been made under the Terrorism Act 2000 since 9/11, only two have so far been convicted of any terrorist-related offence...It is surely crucial that those who are

actually charged receive - and are seen to receive - a scrupulously fair trial.”

Letter to the Sunday Times

On 29 December, Joe Ahmed-Dobson, former Chair of the MCB Regeneration Committee, wrote to the Sunday Times regarding an article by Lord Dubs titled: "TV Chiefs Favour Muslims". The letter pointed out that "Lord Dubs' suggestion that Muslims are given more sympathetic treatment than Christians by British broadcasters and particularly by satirists is inaccurate and misses the bigger problem...the real problem is not that television shows undue respect for Islam...we need to increase levels of respect for deeply held, peaceful, religious beliefs across the board, rather than reducing respect for Islam."

Letter to the Sunday Telegraph

On 28 December, the Secretary of the MCB Media Committee wrote to the Editor of the Sunday Telegraph in response to that day's leader column which had criticised the Archbishop of Canterbury for his statements on credit cards and the Guantanamo Bay detainees. "Your criticisms ...were misplaced, ill-mannered and uninformed" said the MCB in its letter to the Sunday Telegraph. For the full text refer to media section, letters to editor/producer at www.mcb.org.uk.

Letter to Sky News

The Secretary of the Media Committee wrote to Nick Pollard, Editor at BSkyB on 1 December 2003 regarding a news item on Honour Killing aired at 7.30 am. One of the issues raised was that fact that the reporter, Lisa Holland did not clarify that the Honour Killing cases cited in the news item occurred among Sikhs, Christians and Muslims although her report focussed almost entirely on British Muslims, thus leaving a misleading impression.

European Reform Think Tank

Inayat Bunglawala, accompanied by Dilwar Hussain and Jamil Sherif, met the Director and staff of the think tank Centre for European Reform on 28 January 2004, for a discussion on Muslims in Britain

England Expects

The BBC consulted the MCB on a forthcoming drama on the far right entitled "England Expects" which is due to be aired in March 2004. Tariq Hameed, Media Committee member reviewed the drama and made a number of observations, noting inaccuracies but stating that overall "The drama is to be commended for its balanced portrayal of Muslim social issues and showing many Muslims to be victims of right-wing racism." The BBC editor replied stating their commitment to improved portrayal and found the feedback to be constructive for the future. For the full commentary please refer to the media section at www.mcb.org.uk.

Research & Documentation Committee (ReDoc)

Evening with the Stars

The MCB ReDoc Committee in collaboration with the Association of Muslim Researchers (AMR) and the Royal Observatory Greenwich is hosting an 'Evening with the Stars' that refers to Muslim

contributions to astronomy and is a prelude to a more extensive programme. This is due to take place on 5 March 2004, commencing at 5.00 pm.

The event will consist of a 30-minute tour of the night sky in the Observatory planetarium followed by observation of the planet Saturn through the Observatory's 28-inch optical refracting telescope, the largest of its kind in the UK. There may also be an opportunity to see some of the Observatory's unique Islamic collection that includes antique astrolabes, qiblah indicators and globes.

ReDoc E-Newsletter

Edited by Shabana Khan, Deputy Chair of ReDoc, this is issued bi-monthly to universities, researchers and students and summarises recent research on or by British Muslims. The fifth newsletter has been published and is now available from redoc@mcb.org.uk

NHS Chaplaincy Survey

This national survey of multifaith chaplaincy provision is now complete and data are being analysed for publication.

GeoDemographics Seminar

Jamil Sherif attended a seminar on GeoDemographics at University College, London on 18-19 February 2004, that examined issues of postcode and household classifications on the basis of lifestyles, socio-economic and cultural factors. Contact was established with a representative from the ESRC -Economic & Social Research Council - and it is hoped that this would lead to MCB involvement when policy is made on social science funding.

Edinburgh Spirituality Festival

ReDoc has been working with the team and MCB will represent British Muslims at this event in terms of two keynote lectures and a concert for peace.

Circumcision issues

Prof Rashid Gatrad represented ReDoc at a joint meeting MCB's Health & Medical Committee, ReDoc and Jewish Board of Deputies in late January 2004.

Basic Skills in Statistics

Professor Aziz Sheikh, Chair of the Research and Documentation committee, has published a new book: 'Basic Skills in Statistics: A Guide for Healthcare Professionals'. Commenting on the book, Monica Fletcher, Chief Executive of the National Respiratory Training Centre says: "Packed full of useful key messages and an excellent glossary of terms, this should be an essential reference book for any budding researchers and anyone wishing to have a greater understanding of research papers."

For further information please refer to <http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/BasicSkillsinstatisticsflyer.doc>

Questionnaire on Politicisation

As part of a PhD thesis by Abdullah Al-Faliq at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University

of London titled "The Changing Patterns of Politicisation of British Muslims in the Light of Arab Political Islam", Abdullah has devised a short questionnaire on the politicisation of British Muslims which he would like people to complete. If you would like to take part in the survey please contact him at afolikisudan@hotmail.com. The questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

London Affairs Committee

Transport for London Meeting

Transport for London invited the Muslim Council of Britain to a meeting in November 2003 to discuss their financial strategies for the current year. In the light of a number of transport related problems and the need for increased government funding, Bob Kiley, Commissioner for Transport for London, indicated that support is required from all London communities.

Young European's Exhibition

The New Young European's Exhibition, organised by the British Council in Brussels and sponsored by the GLA was held on 4 February 2004. The exhibition was primarily focussed on supporting young immigrants and asylum seekers through highlighting their current plight and aspirations in EU countries through the medium of posters and photographs. Keynote speeches were given by Baroness Kennedy and Ken Livingston.

Education Training & Employment Committee (ETEC)

Letter to the Daily Telegraph

The Chair of the MCB Education, Training & Employment Committee (ETEC), Tahir Alam, wrote to the Letters Editor at the Daily Telegraph on 16 February 2004 regarding an article entitled 'Anger over call to teach children atheism in school' in which a false impression has been given of his views expressed, going on to clarify that "The Muslim Council of Britain is not of the view that atheism should be taught within RE. Atheism has no place in RE in fact."

For the full text of the letter please refer to the Media/Letters to Editor/Producer section at www.mcb.org.uk

Asian Leader Article

The Chair of ETEC provided commentary on the issue of introducing the teaching of Atheism in UK schools to the Asian Leader, saying: "Religious Education is very important compulsory curriculum entitlement for all children whether they are Christians, Sikhs or Muslims etc. Childrens' religious heritage should be valued regardless of what religion they belong to. RE should not be 'hijacked' to teach about atheism in any shape or form, it is not a religion."

Women & Family Affairs Committee

Marriage & Relationship Support Grant

Wafa has applied for Marriage and Relationship support grant. The project is "Investigate the causes

of marital breakdown amongst British born Muslims" . Notification of the outcome of the application will be sent in March 2004.

Social Affairs Committee (SAC)

Shakespeare & Islam

On 25 February 2004, the Globe Centre launched a year long 'Shakespeare and Islam' series as part of their education programme. The season is prompted by the 400th anniversary of the first production of Othello.

The series will be made up of lectures and seminars, including some by Prof Nabil Matar, writer of the book "Islam in Britain: 1558-1685". It will also include an exhibition of Islamic art at Somerset House from March to August. For further information refer to the Globe website, <http://www.shakespeares-globe.org>. or request a copy of this season's booklet "Shakespeare and Islam" by emailing your postal address to Catherine Bligh at: continuingeducation@shakespearesglobe.com. Shibani Akbar, Chair of the Social Affairs Committee is liaising with the Globe and can be contacted for further information atsac@mcb.org.uk

Belmarsh Eid Prayers

Shibani Akbar was interviewed by the Guardian on the subject of the Belmarsh Eid Prayers. The article "Belmarsh u-turn on Eid prayers after Guardian query" by Audrey Gilan was printed on 31 January 2004. Muslim prisoners at Belmarsh high security prison had been told that they would have to celebrate Eid a day late because of staff and accommodation shortages. When this issue was raised by the newspaper, Belmarsh realised the potential racial and religious embarrassment of its ruling and told prisoners that they would be allowed to pray on Sunday but the feast to celebrate Eid would still have to be held on Monday.

Commenting on this issue, Shibani Akbar, Chair of the Muslim Council of Britain's Social Affairs Committee said: "It's like telling a Christian they have to celebrate Christmas Day on Boxing Day. For all the hard work that has been done trying to raise the awareness of the Muslim religion in that prison, it's terrible. Adequate facilities should have been put in place."

For the full article refer to: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1135679,00.html

Festival of Faith

A high budget 'Festival of Faith Contribution to Culture' will be taking place in 2006. Details of the Festival will be circulated to MCB affiliates once the information is received. Muslim organisations will be contacted to take part in the festival. If you would like to participate then could you please email your ideas or project proposal to sac@mcb.org.uk

Good Practice Guide

Shibani Akbar participated in the workshop at the launch of the Good Practice Guide of the Public

Transport Needs of Minority Ethnic and Faith Communities held on 4 November 2003 at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, London.

Department of Transport Research

The MCB Social Affairs Committee was involved in a research and telephone interview conducted by Social Research Associates on behalf of the Department of Transport which led to the launch. SAC organised a focus group of women who wear the face veil to talk about their needs and the problems they may have faced whilst commuting within London. The views of the women that a second identity card should be introduced which will not require photographs have been taken on board and included in the video produced for the launch.

Youth Work

The Social Affairs Committee co-ordinated a meeting to discuss youth work on 14 November 2003. The meeting was attended by Mohammed Dhalech the Ofsted Inspector for Youth work and Connexions who has wide experience of training on European level on youth work issues, Abul Khayar Ali of the MCB Youth Committee, Shahed Saleem whose background is in Regeneration and Mosques and Shiban Akbar. The meeting discussed the following:

- Concept paper for community development and youth work
- Exploring the possibility of doing an education and cultural exchange programme between British and European youth
- How to introduce British Muslims to the wider European picture
- How to deliver quality projects
- Pan European Muslim identity

The MCB's involvement could be on the strategic level and in organising the cultural youth exchange

Hijab Ban

The Social Affairs Committee has taken part in various radio discussions and interviews for the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation and other European networks on the subject of the French ban on the hijab.

Health & Medical Committee (HMC)

Islamic Medicine

The MCB Health & Medical Committee and the Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC) London jointly hosted a public lecture by Dr Hussain Nagamia, Chairman of the International Institute of Islamic Medicine & Professor of Surgery, University of Tampa, Florida. The lecture took place at the ICC on Sunday, 21 December 2003 at 1.30pm.

Common Illnesses

At the invitation of Lord Stone of Blackheath Dr Abdul Raheem Khan attended a meeting at the House of Lords in December 2003 concerning the common pressing illnesses affecting various communities. A research based website is being developed to help patients and close relatives by providing very

helpful advice on certain cancers heart disease etc. These are based on patients' own personal experiences and observations.

The Big Smoke

The London Health Commission organised The Big Smoke Conference at the Royal Society of Medicine on 3 December 2003. Representing the MCB, Dr Abdul Raheem Khan spoke on the degree of suffering undergone by the patients and their families. Guest speakers included the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, and Joe Cherner, President of Smokefree Educational Services The conference unanimously called for a ban on smoking in all public places especially in clubs and pubs

Three Faiths Forum Meeting

The Three Faiths Forum Medical branch held a meeting on 12 February 2004. to discuss the important subject of organ transplantation which was attended by MCB representative Dr Abdul Raheem Khan. The view shared by all Abrahamic Faiths represented at the meeting was in support of this form of treatment if a life could be saved with a number of provisos such as prior diagnosis of brain death and well informed consent.

New on the MCB Website

Media/Press Releases -

19 Feb 2004, Muslims Salute Michael Howard's Vocal Anti-BNP Stance
03 Feb 2004, WMD Inquiry: We Need The Whole Truth
23 Jan 2004, Partnership Needed to Defeat Terror Threat Facing Us All
16 Jan 2004, British Muslims Extol BBC for Acting Against Racism
12 Jan 2004, British Muslims Dismiss Kilroy's 'Regret' Over Sunday Express Rant
09 Jan 2004, MCB Welcomes BBC Decision To Suspend Kilroy
07 Jan 2004, BBC Must Take Firm Action After Kilroy's Latest Racist Outburst
29 Dec 2003, Ellman's Smear Against MCB-Affiliated Muslim Organisation Rejected
25 Dec 2003, Archbishop's Call For Tolerance Lauded By British Muslims
18 Dec 2003, British Muslims Welcome MacTaggart's Defence of Hijab And Diversity
17 Dec 2003, British Muslims Call Upon Chirac to Revoke Hijab Ban
11 Dec 2003, MCB Raises Alarm with Blunkett Over Recent Arrests

Media/Letters to the Editor -

16 February 2004 , The Daily Telegraph , Teaching of atheism in schools, letter from Tahir Alam, MCB Education Committee
11 February 2004 , BBC2, Serious error in 'The Third World War ' series, Inayat Bunglawala's correspondence with BBC2
4 February 2004 , Sunday Express , Setting the record right on Kilroy-Silk, by Inayat Bunglawala
29 January 2004 , The Daily Telegraph , Responding to Sir John Keegan

13 January 2004 , The Times , Kilroy-Silk and the April 2003 article red herring
7 January 2004 , Press Complaints Commission , Article written by Robert Kilroy-Silk
7 January 2004 , Sunday Express, Article written by Robert Kilroy-Silk
6 January 2004 , BBC1 , Kilroy and anti-Arab racism, letter from MCB
3 January 2004 , The Guardian , Paper publishes correction following MCB letter
28 December 2003 , The Sunday Telegraph, Support for Dr Rowan Williams, by Inayat Bunglawala
5 December 2003 , The Times, MCB Response to Editorial 'Tough on Terror', by Inayat Bunglawala

Media/Speeches -

10 December 2003 , Secretary General's Speech at the Eid Reception jointly hosted by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the MCB at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, London

Library/Articles & Essays -

28 January 2004 , Propping up the Notion of 'Us and Them' in Guantanamo by Dr. Daud Abdullah
11 January 2004 , Sunday Express 'Why Kilroy Was So Wrong' by Inayat Bunglawala

New on the MCBDirect Website

MCB*Direct* is the Muslim Council of Britain's community information service. The Internet plays a central role in the provision of the service - visit the project's redesigned website at www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect. MCB*Direct*'s objectives are to widen the sharing of information and expertise within the community, increase awareness of best practice initiatives and services, and promote a more informed understanding of Muslims and Islam throughout our society. The project is an initiative of the MCB's Research & Documentation Committee.

MCBDirect Helpline

MCBDirect's helpline number is 0845 1 23 23 63.

MCBDirect has posted many exciting features on the website. These include reviews of books, events, individuals etc.

Books 4 Schools - Sponsor A Books Pack For Your Local School!

International Student Awards 2003/04

Common Questions About Hijab

Chair Of MCB Research And Documentation Committee Publishes New Book For Researchers

Review of 'Allah Gave Me A Nose to Smell'

IFEES Debate – World Hunger – Is GM the Solution?

The Heart of Kashmir by Kash Gabriele Torsello

National Community Cohesion Week

Eid-ul-Adha Message from the Secretary General

Hajj goes Hi-Tech

Homeward Bound: My Journey Of A Lifetime
The Holy Woman by Qaisra Shahraz
Why I Choose To Wear Hijab
What's so Special About the Month of Dhul Hijjah?
Addressing the End of Life Needs of British Muslims
Is Genetically Modified Food the Answer?
Can You Help Oxford's Iqra School?
Has Your MP Signed The Early Day Motion Condemning Kilroy-Silk's Racist Views?
So what exactly have Arabs and Muslims contributed to world civilisation?
So What Exactly Have Arabs And Muslims Contributed To World Civilisation?
BBC Family Exchange
Madressah Project Wins National Award
The Human Capital Deficit In The Islamic Nonprofit Sector
Gardens of Peace – From Vision to Reality
Think Again - An Information Resource for the British Muslim Communities
Muslims New Year Honours
Farewell to another twelve months....
Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace Festival
Mercy Like the Rain and Spring has Come by Shaam
Visual Poems - Interview with the artist -Mustafa (Mark) Evans
Farewell Ramadan, Welcome Eid
Muslim Health Network
Muslim Health and Fitness Centre
Big Link Dinner
Muslim Youth Helpline Award
Bangladeshi children: Fight the decades of underachievement
Muslims and education
Pre-school education

Community News, Events & FAQs regularly updated

The Basis and Basics of Islamic Medical Ethics and Jurisprudence
Counselling For Those Affected By The Jamarat Incident
MP Writes To French Ambassador To Oppose Hijab Ban
Mayor writes to French Prime Minister about plans for hijab ban in French schools
Mastermind contact MCB to find Muslim contestants
What's Stopping You Applying For The Police
BBC: Are You Above Average?
Urgent Appeal For A Bone Marrow Donor
BBC TV documentary

To advertise community new and events please contact mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk

Events

Event:	Halal Meat, Food and Culture
Date:	Saturday, 17 April 2004
Time:	13.30 pm
Held By:	Al- Muntada Al-Islami Trust, Islamic Cultural Centre, Muslim Council of Britain & Food Standards Agency
Venue:	Al- Muntada Al-Islami Trust , 7 Bridges Place , Parsons Green , London,SW6 4HW

Event:	MCB Central Working Committee Meeting
Date:	24 April 2004
Held By:	The Muslim Council of Britain
Venue:	TBA
Contact:	admin@mcb.org.uk

Event:	MCB Annual General Meeting
Date:	22 May 2004
Held By:	The Muslim Council of Britain
Venue:	Brent Town Hall, London
Contact:	admin@mcb.org.uk

Event	Evening of Inspiration tour
Date	Monday 12 April 2004
Time:	18:00 pm
Held By:	Islamic Relief
Venue	Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AP
Information	The Evening of Inspiration is a variety show celebrating Muslim culture for the benefit of needy children around the world. The variety show tour will be held at Aston Event Centre in Birmingham, Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow, and the Royal Albert Hall in London. With an expected audience of 8,400 people reflecting diverse ethnicity and culture, the Evening of Inspiration promises to be an unmissable event.

Event:	Palestinian Conference in Berlin
Date:	Saturday 15 May 2004.
Held By:	Palestinian Return Centre, London , and the Palestinian Community Berlin
Venue:	Berlin
Contact:	The Palestinian Return Centre, London, Tel: 00 44 208 453 0919, Fax: 00 44 208 453 0994 , E-mail: info@prc.org.uk , Website: www.prc.org.uk or The Association of the Palestinian Community in Berlin, Tel: 0049 308133508, Fax: 00491719808990, E-mail: gabusamra@hotmail.com

Information:	This conference has been organised to commemorate the Nakba and reaffirm adherence to the right of return. Participants include: Azmi Bishara – Palestinian leader from 1948 territories, Jamal Al Shati – Head of the refugee affairs bureau in the Palestinian Legislative Council, Khalid Al Tirani – Director of the American Muslims for Jerusalem centre in Washington, Muhammad Khalil 'Aql – Member of the Jordanian parliament from Al Baqa'a refugee camp and Salah Salah – Head of refugee affairs in the Palestinian National Council. Closing date for registration: 15 April 2004
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INTERPAL is a non-political, non-profit making British charity that focuses solely on the provision of relief and development aid to the poor and needy of Palestine the world over, primarily in Palestine and the refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon.

The Muslim Council of Britain

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