

Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Palestine

25th January 2023 6-7.30 pm

Minutes

Chair: Pauline McNeil MSP

Present

MSPs

Pauline McNeil MSP

Mercedes Villalba MSP

Maggie Chapman MSP

Peter Boyar MSP

MSP Apologies

James Dornan MSP

Sarah Boyack MSP

Katy Clark MSP

Non-MSP Attendance

There were 25 Non-MSP Group Members in attendance

Welcome from Chair

Chair welcomed the group to the first hybrid meeting of the group and commended the numbers joining remotely.

Presentation

- **A Frontline View- on the ground concerns in the occupied territories (Halla Keir, Medical Aid For Palestine)**

It was highlighted that the routine obstruction of and attacks upon Palestinian health workers that are seeking to reach and treat the wounded is increasingly causing injuries to paramedics and damage to ambulances whilst denying and delaying care.

Further highlight was given to the election of a new coalition government in Israel, which includes politicians from far right parties taking on ministerial roles with responsibilities including policing and settlement expansion raising fears that violence and violations against Palestinians and their rights are set to continue and most likely worsen the new government has announced a raft of proposed legislative and policy positions which includes relaxing open fire regulations and expanding immunity from prosecution for Israeli security forces, promoting and expanding settlements in the West Bank, including E Jerusalem, and furthering the de facto annexation of Palestinian territory.

Accelerating plans to forcibly displaced Palestinians from their homes in Area C of the West Bank, and that includes more than 1000 Palestinians in Massafra Yata, where we saw school debt demolished just a couple of months ago, as well as a renewed push and to forcibly displaced Palestinians from the channel area.

It was noted that there is growing need for access to mobile primary healthcare services for Bedouin communities living in isolated areas of the West Bank, threatened with demolitions and forcible displacement who lack access to personal healthcare facilities and an increased need for safe spaces and psychological support for young people and children affected by the violence and the increased inaccessibility and fragmentation of healthcare services such as burns treatment and cancer care due to movement restrictions and the discriminatory permit system.

In response MAP are expanding their emergency response, providing essential supplies, equipment and training to local partners, including hospitals and paramedic teams that are treating the wounded whilst also working with partners to help keep essential healthcare services running for communities threatened with demolitions and expulsion.

Looking forward MAP will renew focus on policymakers to take concrete actions and the need for an urgent expansion of international aid to support Palestine's ailing health care system.

This focus will include a checklist for self determination and sustainable development and how these can be translated into tangible policy practices and policy initiatives. Which MAP agreed to pass on to the CPG Secretariat.

Discussion

The group discussed the upcoming 75th anniversary of the Nakba on the 15th of May and proposed holding an event in the Scottish Parliament to mark the event and set a precedent for future years.

It was suggested that any event could also portray the history of Palestine and unique, enduring culture.

The Secretary agreed to look into the feasibility of hosting the event.

ENDS