

English Supplement

Al-Muntada

Of the Iraqi Association

www.iraqiassociation.org

**IRAQI
ASSOCIATION**

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Facing the challenges ahead, together



Iraqi Association held its 25th Annual General Meeting on 20th January 2013 in Hammersmith, the Charity's chair, Mr Muhy Mahmoud presented Trustees' report and accounts ending 31 March 2012. It was followed by a detailed report on the work of the Iraqi Association during the course of the past 12 months. It was reported that the Iraqi Association has helped 1471 people from different backgrounds and needs, and most were vulnerable local residents of elderly and young people. It was also noted that the move from Palingswick House to Norland House in Shepherds Bush, led to fear and uncertainty among users and members of the charity. Iraqi Association was one of the 15 charities to be evicted by the Hammersmith Conservative led Council.

The meeting heard the consequences of this move and how it has affected the potential development of the charity's volunteerism, as the pressure of space and users' expectations have decreased volunteers placements. The other point which was discussed was the reality check on embarking on a capital project during the current austerity climate, and whether the focus should be on leasing. The new Trustees were asked to study this further and to consider

a better office space to cater for the charity's daily work, the Trustees will take into account the previous consultation meetings which were held with users and members.

The meeting also reported the successful 25th anniversary celebration events of the Iraqi Association in October and November last year. The jubilee anniversary covered different activities, targeting the general public, as well as users of the charity. The activities were held included an exhibition, poetry reading, interactive discussion on the community's history in the UK, seminars on topical community integration, Iraqi film showing by Iraqi directors, and a cultural evening. We are grateful for the backers and sponsors, including the Iraqi Cultural Centre in London and other individual supporters.

The AGM was attended by members and users of the charity, including other grass-root Iraqi non profit organizations with messages of support for the excellent work of the Iraqi Association and its Jubilee anniversary. The meeting also thanked our local MP Andy Slaughter, and the work of David Anderson MP, who presented the Early Day Motion on 6 November 2012 in the House of Parliament in support of the Iraqi Association 25th Anniversary, and its work as a non-

sectarian organization.

The election of the board of Trustees took place during the AGM, with a number of changes taking place.

The AGM also highlighted the challenges ahead, particularly the current austerity period and its impact on Iraqi Association's work because of the cutback of local services. Nowadays, the referral from other agencies to Iraqi Association has increased by three folds.

The panel of discussion also mentioned that despite a shoestring budget, Iraqi Association continued to service its users, and stressed that resource development must be one of the top priorities. The meeting also noted the success of the IraqChild project and its important role to help orphan children.

The Board would like to thank the staff, and volunteers for their hard work over the past year. We equally are very grateful for the support of funders and donors.



Volunteers Wanted...

Our Charity provides skills and experience in areas of administration, confidence building, work environment, IT skills and communication with different age groups of people. Minimum hours 7 per week for the period of three to twelve months. For further information please contact Jabbar on 02070232650.



Join us and make a real difference.

British Parliament will debate Iraqi Kurdish Genocide

The current campaign to win formal recognition of the Iraqi Kurdish genocide is gaining an important stage. The British House of Commons will debate a motion calling for formal recognition of the mass murder of Kurdish people in Iraq as genocide. The news follows a tireless campaign for recognition, supported by more than 27,500 British citizens, who have all signed an e-petition demanding justice for the murdered Kurds.

Robert Halfon, the Conservative MP for Harlow, said unless the genocide is recognised internationally, people cannot be brought to justice. Meg Munn, Labour/Co-operative MP for Sheffield Heeley said that the debate would have a wider resonance given events in Syria. Fabian Hamilton, Labour MP for Leeds North East cited good cross-party support for a debate.

Jason McCartney, who served as a Royal Air Force officer in the no-fly zone in Zakho, said it would be a fitting tribute to have the debate on the 25th anniversary of Halabja chemical attack. Nadhim Zahawi, Conservative MP for Stratford-on-Avon, said that his father fled Iraq because "his only crime was to be Kurdish and not willing to join the Ba'ath party," said that Britain has been heavily involved with the Kurdish people going back to Sykes-Picot, but more recently with Sir John Major who saved the Kurdish people with the no-fly zone and Tony Blair who is seen as the liberator of the Kurds.

Such a debate would also focus on the UK Government's current position that it prefers to follow judicial precedent rather than take the lead itself. It may take time to shift the British Government's position. A debate, which allows Parliament to give its formal support, would be very useful in this process.



www.parliament.uk

25th Anniversary of Iraqi Association

Early Day Motion 689

Main content

Session: 2012-13

Date tabled: 06.11.2012

Primary sponsor: David Anderson (Labour party)

Sponsors:

Peter Bottomley (Conservative party)

Mike Gapes (Labour party)

Alan Meale (Labour party)

Jim Shannon (Democratic Unionist party)

That this House warmly congratulates the Iraqi Association on its 25th anniversary; notes that the Association, which became a charity in 1990, was established in response to the need by the Iraqi community, whatever their race, ethnic origin, language, religious or political background, to create an identity in Britain, spread awareness of its achievements and needs and to encourage and develop viable humanitarian projects in Iraq; and wishes the Association well in the future for the sake of the many Iraqis in this country and for relations between Iraq and the UK.

Scottish Refugee Council challenges inaccurate reporting



The Scottish Refugee Council has lodged a complaint with the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) in January 2013 against the

Scottish Daily Mail which ran a front-page story that inaccurately reported the rates of asylum applications in Scotland as compared to the rest of the UK.

Entitled 'Crisis as Asylum Seekers target Scotland', the article implied that asylum seekers are arriving in Scotland in the hope of an increased likelihood of their asylum claim being granted.

In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that asylum seekers are deliberately 'targeting' Scotland. The vast majority of asylum seekers are dispersed to Scotland on a 'no-choice' basis by the UK Border Agency. The Scottish Refugee Council has previously complained to the PCC about a Scottish Daily Mail article. In February 2012, the paper was forced to print an apology and correction after publishing our complaint regarding its misleading article about the legal bids of asylum seekers was upheld.

Gary Christie, Head of Policy and Communications said: "We are disappointed that when other newspaper headlines focus on real crisis facing refugees in the world, such as the tens of thousands of people fleeing Syria, the Scottish Daily Mail chooses to fabricate a 'crisis' of its own in Scotland."

Seen inaccurate reporting?

Have you seen inaccurate or inflammatory reporting about asylum issues? Write to the editor and let him know that it's unacceptable, or make a complaint directly to the Press Complaints Commission.



IRAQI ASSOCIATION (IA)

The Iraqi Association is a non-profit organisation that exists to enable Iraqis to settle and integrate in this country with rights to express their cultural identities. Our work aimed at Iraqis, by providing volunteerism, advice, public health support, counselling, training, employment guidance, information

services, and organising cultural events. It is also our mission to raise awareness about relevant events in Iraq and the integration process in this country."

Our Aims and Methods:

We provide the following services to our clients regardless of their race, ethnic origin, language,

and gender, religious or political background.

- Face-to-face support session
- Group empowerment session
- Workshop advice session
- Training session
- Outreach work
- Client-led information