

**Cross Party Group on Building Bridges with Israel**  
**Wednesday 12/11/24**

**Present**

**MSPs**

Jackson Carlaw MSP  
John Mason MSP  
Fergus Ewing MSP  
Stephen Kerr MSP  
Russell Findlay MSP  
Brian Whittle MSP  
Alexander Stewart MSP

**Invited Guests**

Daniela Grudsky, Deputy Ambassador of Israel to the United Kingdom

Non-MSP Group Members: 22

**Apologies**

Rachael Hamilton MSP  
Paul O’Kane MSP  
Murdo Fraser MSP  
Jamie Greene MSP  
Douglas Ross MSP  
Tess White MSP

**Convener’s Welcome**

Jackson welcomed everyone to the AGM & welcomes the Deputy Ambassador. He informs the group about a recent newspaper article about the group & summarises the meeting of the previous AGM which was held in the wake of the October 7th 2023 attacks.

Tess White MSP membership of the group was approved unanimously.  
Proposer: Fergus Ewing MSP, Seconder: Stephen Kerr MSP

Minutes of CPG meeting held on 14th September approved; Proposer: Stephen Kerr MSP,  
Seconder: John Mason MSP

## **AGM**

The AGM elected the officers of the CPG for this session:

**Convenor:** Jackson Carlaw MSP - Proposer: Fergus Ewing MSP, Seconder: Russell Findlay MSP

**Deputy Convenor:** Fergus Ewing MSP - Proposer: Jackson Carlaw MSP, Seconder: Alexander Stewart MSP.

**Honorary Secretary:** Stanley Lovatt - Proposer: Jackson Carlaw MSP, Seconder: Russell Findlay MSP

## **Israeli Embassy Update**

Jackson introduces the Deputy Ambassador of Israel to the CPG.

The Deputy Ambassador remarked on how much she enjoyed her recent visit to Scotland, how important relations between Scotland and Israel are and stated how there is still more work to be done.

The group were given an update on the situation in Lebanon, mentions the surprise & shock of the war that started 13 months ago, alongside the horrors witnessed on October 7th.

Talks about the threat of Yemen, Iran & Lebanon, and how it has stretched the IDF. Talks about the threat of Iranian proxies as seen with the Houthis, furthermore the challenge of the missile/rocket attacks.

The Deputy Ambassador then mentions how the attacks were widely unsuccessful due to Israel's strong defence system.

The importance of bringing Israelis home was brought up as a major goal and are keen to look for a ceasefire in Lebanon

Jackson thanks two non-MSP members for organising the Glasgow vigil and their unwavering commitment despite a hostile counter protest.

Jackson then states that despite this the Vigil was still a success with beautiful music. Jackson also pays tribute to a non-MSP member for the October 7th memorial in the a Synagogue in Eastwood, & the thought provoking, profound documentary 'Screams before Silence' that was shown.

Jackson shows praise to John Mason MSP for his support to the Jewish people & applauds his conduct and dignity during a difficult period.

Jackson asks the Deputy Ambassador how many hostages are still being held & how going against international advice of Israel taking out the leadership of Hamas & Hezbollah, and if

the action of the government has been vindicated by the groups that have been attacking them alongside their expectations of the new American administration:

The embassy confirms there are still 101 hostages still being held. Talks about the elimination of Hamas and Hezbollah leadership, to restore the security that was lost on October 7th. Further states only through security can peace & safety be achieved in the middle east.

The Deputy Ambassador states that the Biden Administration was a major supporter of Israel & that Trump is a supporter of Israel too and that a conversation is to be had.

## **Q&A**

John Mason MSP thanks the people who sent support to him. John asks about the situation with Qatar regarding Hamas. John also asks about future of where this conflict will go.

The Deputy Ambassador shows her support in John's situation and says Qatar has taken a very interesting position for years now, understanding that Hamas are operating from Qatar.

A non-MSP member discusses issues with policing at the vigil.

A non-MSP member talks about the new British Government, and how the ambassador sees relations going forward.

The Deputy Ambassador talks about interests in trade with the UK, and that there are positive relations between the two nations, and they hope this continues.

Brian Whittle MSP states that what happened on October 7th was a horrific attack on life. That he wishes to support Israel as much as possible but is uncomfortable with the loss of life in Gaza & that in the future it will cause more harm than good. Ending with what future is in sight, and what are the Israeli people feeling?

The Deputy Ambassador states that one of the main challenges is fighting such a vicious enemy that hides in civilian populations & is actively trying to cause more destruction.

A non-MSP member talks about the issue of widespread university-based protests.

The Deputy Ambassador states how they try to talk to as many universities as possible to keep that connection. Further stating that the stand against anti-semitism is often led by the students.

Fergus Ewing MSP asks if there is an envoy to the USA, further stating the relationship between the two is critical and for any insights into the future.

The Deputy-Ambassador says there have been diplomatic efforts for a UN resolution that

has been in place since 2006, regarding a ceasefire between the IDF & Hezbollah.

Russell Findlay MSP , thanks Jackson & the Deputy-Ambassador, states the absurdity of the article regarding the CPG. Russell further states how he is appalled by antisemitism on the streets.

The Deputy Ambassador sends her closing remarks of gratitude from the support received by the group. How she is still shocked by how politicised & aggressive the subject has become.

Jackson ends with closing remarks thanking the group for attending.