

Report from Jeremy Corbyn MP



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Last weekend (19/01) I attended the funeral of **Nassirudeen Osawe** at Whitechapel mosque. Nassirudeen had lived in Stoke Newington and I met with his family beforehand. He was a victim of knife crime at the Angel and is the 2nd young person in Islington to die from a knife attack in 6 months, following the tragic death of Martin Dinnegan in June 2007.

I support all the campaigns (Government, Police etc) that are trying to encourage young people not to carry knives, and to deter future knife crimes in our community. That these two young men with their lives ahead of them should die in this way is such a waste.

Chief Superintendent Bob Carr and myself addressed the Nth London Central Mosque at the end of Friday (21/12) prayers, to talk about **crime** in the area and I called upon the participants to cooperate with the police in trying to reduce crime and the perceptions of crime.

Housing remains a key priority for our community and from April, the Mayor of London gets control of the London Housing Board and with it, the investment strategy of Housing Associations. I would expect that there will then be an increase in the amount of property developed for controlled rents, either by Councils or by Housing Associations. I made a contribution to the Housing Debate in parliament (27/11) which I include in the “parliamentary intervention” section attached to this report.

I also met Stephen Douglas and his team of directors and chief executives at the Housing Corporation to press the case for new developments in our borough, which would alleviate the housing crisis. I have made it abundantly clear to the local planning authority that unless Arsenal’s plans for Qld Road include a large proportion of homes for rent and a sports centre, I will strongly opposed them.

The people of **Bangladesh** have suffered terribly from reoccurring floods, and also from the political instability in their country. I have met many people in the local community and arranged a special debate in parliament on Bangladesh (28/11) which is attached. Liberation, of which I am Chair, has also done excellent work in raising awareness of the Bangladeshi situation.

I was a guest speaker at the opening session of a very large conference on **Latin America**, “Making Another World Possible” (01/12). I also chaired a special meeting organized by Liberation on Bolivia in the House of Commons which was addressed by the Ambassador - Beatriz Souviron, local resident and journalist - Hugh O’Shaughnessy, as well as Francisco Dominguez and John Crabtree. I include here an EDM (parliamentary motion) which I recently tabled:

That this House recognises the ongoing development of democracy in Bolivia and the improvements in the rights of indigenous people throughout the country; declares its strong support for the Morales

government, despite the political tensions that it faces whilst debating a new constitution; and welcomes the statements made by the EU and all neighbouring countries in support of peaceful democratic dialogue and discussion and rejecting all attempts to violate the government's stability and the institutional bodies elected by the people.

The International Conference against the Wars in **Iraq and Afghanistan** was held at the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster (01/12) and I spoke at the closing session. On the previous evening a magnificent Rhythms for Peace event, including music and poetry, was held at St James Church in Piccadilly.

The Mayor also held his Xmas **peace** party for all peace campaigners, which was well attended (05/12).

As recently as last Monday (21/01) I asked the Minister, yet again, for a date for when British troops will finally be withdrawn from Iraq.

I was guest speaker at a very well attended public meeting called by **St Albans' CND** (22/11) at which I spoke on issues of peace and justice.

As well as the above, my Parliamentary CND work continues.

The Government has, in my view wrongly, attempted to control public sector pay, as a way of controlling inflation, and I think that we should instead be looking at the question of city bonuses as a way of controlling inflation.

Police pay has, like other public sector worker pay been restricted to a 1.9% increase, and I've signed many motions condemning this, as well as having attended a meeting with Jan Berry, Chair of the Police Federation in their support. I spoke on the London Tonight (23/11) program in support of their cause.

As part of the **75th anniversary of the establishment of the BBC World Service Radio**, a series of Reith Global debates with

Gavin Esler had been arranged, and I was invited to take part in a discussion at the first one, held at Bush House (23/11).

The situation in **Gaza** has become absolutely dire so please do get active on this by checking with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign Website:

Meanwhile, I spoke at the (pre-arranged) Camden **Palestine** Solidarity Event (25/11) at the Somers Town Community Centre. I focused on parliamentary pressure and lobbying in support of peace and justice for the Palestine people.

I also joined a number of MPs and others who spoke at a large public meeting on **Palestine** which was organized by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign lobby in parliament, following on from a successful of parliament that day (29/11).

No doubt there will be many more events held towards helping the people of Palestine.

I was invited to be one of the judges for **Islington Primary School's debating competition** at the Barnsbury Centre in Offord Rd (29/11). I watched an excellent final event between St Joan of Arch and William Tyndale schools which was won by the latter, though only just.

The Factory Community Centre is currently closed to enable building works to be completed for the opening of the children's centre there. Its annual meeting was therefore held in the Mayville Community Centre, N16. This was extraordinarily well attended and was a real tribute to the work of the Factory.

Islington Council quite correctly awarded the Freedom of the Borough to **Arsenal's Ladies Football Team** following their quadruple success in winning the Women's Premiership, the FA, League and European Cups (26/11). I was delighted to join in the celebration and later tabled the following EDM in parliament:

That this House congratulates Arsenal Ladies on being awarded the Freedom of

the Borough of Islington; congratulates them on being the most successful women's football team in Britain; further congratulates them on winning the women's FA Cup, League Cup, League and UEFA cup last season; and believes their success will inspire more women to take part in football.

I was a member of a panel of judges at **Islington Arts and Media School's** (IAMS) Speak your Mind event (30/11), where 4 local schools: Ambler, St Marks CE, and Pakeman had been given the opportunity to make a short film. The event was absolutely excellent and a real credit to the teachers and the children. The films were high quality productions which were shown in the IAMS school hall, giving primary school children an invaluable glimpse of secondary school life. A week later, IAMS students cooked an excellent lunch for local elderly people, accompanied by an excellent performance of "Oliver" in the school hall. I thoroughly enjoyed the event (07/12).

Islington Unison (30/11) held one of their regular open days at the Town Hall as a way of encouraging people to join the Union. As a member of the branch, I was pleased to support this.

Newington Green Winter Festival (22/12) was a huge affair with the excellent band, Timmerhorst on top form. The band have since assured us that we have had our photographs published in most of the newspapers in northern Germany where I believe they are very popular.

I was invited by the excellent Reverend Melanie Toogood to be a guest at their weekly service at **St George's** church on the theme of human rights and justice (02/12). Afterwards we enjoyed tea and mince pies in the church.

The **George Padmore Institute** (02/12) held its annual Christmas lunch above the New

Beacon bookshop on Stroud Green Road which I attended.

I met with representatives from the excellent **Islington Voluntary Learning Centre** (04/12) to discuss the future of the centre.

As part of **Transport** for London's welcome investment of nearly £50m in the reconstruction of Highbury and Islington Station, they are also proposing a new traffic layout for **Highbury Corner** (05/12). An exhibition to launch this reconstruction was held at Highbury Fields Baptist church, which I attended, putting forward my views that the area immediately in front of the proposed station piazza should become traffic free apart from buses and cycles, as it is the best form of interchange between the underground and bus service.

Later in the month I attended (14/12) one of a series of 6 monthly meetings with officials of Transport for London and Islington Council concerning traffic arrangements and public transport facilities for Arsenal matches, where there is still a problem of large numbers of people trying to get onto the tube network to get away from matches.

I met with Andy Burnham MP (Chief Secretary to the Treasury) on a visit to the **Willows Children's Centre (N7)** and an excellent discussion ensued between staff and carers making use of this wonderful government funded facility.

Emily Thornberry MP and I jointly hosted a **community reception** (11/12) in the House of Commons for representatives of community organizations and public services.

The **Migrant Training Company** gives very good quality training to young migrants coming to London, often in literacy and numeracy and computer skills. Many of the students go on to get good jobs for further education and I was invited to present certificates of achievements to those who had successfully completed their courses (06/12).

I participated in a seminar at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) on “**Elections and Democracy in Africa**” (11/12) organized by Explo Nani-Kofi. I recounted my experience in monitoring elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006.

One of our local schools, **Highbury Fields**, is undertaking an excellent examination of the situation in Darfur. I was invited to go to the school where I took part in the discussion with 60 pupils, and we discussed what could be done to support the people there who are victims of such horrendous violence.

In January, after the turmoil surrounding the **Kenya** elections, a statement was made in the house (07/01, on Pakistan and Kenya) and I enclose my intervention.

ITV recorded a program some months ago on the **Andover Estate** with Anne Widdicombe MP visiting the estate, and describing her experience. There were many criticisms of her program and what she had said at the time, and so she returned for another visit (10/12)! I took part in a short debate with her, ensuring she was aware that conditions on the Andover Estate had improved enormously, and that there had also been the introduction of Safer Neighbourhood teams. I regretted the chronic shortage of youth facilities around our borough.

I spoke in the Westminster Hall **Asylum Seekers debate** (13/12) about the situation facing asylum seekers and this speech is included in the attachments at the end of this report.

Included in the very many Christmas events I attended was the annual **Lights of Hope** event for the Peace Garden in Elthorne Park (09/12).

14/12: **Islington Carers' Forum** held their annual Christmas reception at Sotheby Mews Day Centre which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Lambo Day Centre are threatened by closure by the Mental Health Trust Review Board and so I attended a lunch there (18/12) at which I was able to express my support against any cuts.

As a Trustee of the **Dalit** Solidarity Network, I had an interesting meeting with Lord Mark Malloch Brown (08/01), the Minister responsible for Africa, Asia and the UN at which Rob Marris MP and I insisted that he raise this issue at the United Nations and with the government of India. Later, Rob and I met Barbara Follett MP, the minister leading on the new Equalities Bill, in order to request that discrimination by caste and descent be included in UK law (16/01). She seemed quite sympathetic which I am optimistic about.

I participated in the **Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill** (09/01) debate and put forward some significant objections which I sum up just a few of them very briefly here. Firstly, far too many new clauses and proposals were put before the House at the 11th hour, subjecting them to only a very short debate.

Secondly, treaty obligations, - when the previous Prime Minister exchanged a series of letters with several countries in the middle east and north Africa to allow terrorist suspects to be sent back to them, it undermined, in my view, the principle behind international treaty obligations, especially the treaty on torture. I should therefore like the Minister to assure the House that nothing in the amendments would continue that practice. I would hope that our government would return prisoners only to countries that are, like us, signatories to international conventions on basic human rights, such as those on torture and people's treatment.

Thirdly, on reciprocity and constituents arrested and serving sentences abroad: many MPs have made representations to try to get those prisoners returned to this country to complete their sentences here. I feel strongly about this.

Fourthly, the lack of an appeal against decisions. Surely if somebody who has been convicted of an offence and sentenced to prison in this country, where the sentence is passed, is then to be removed to another jurisdiction, where they may be subject to charges that would not apply in an English or British court, they should at least have an opportunity to appeal against the decision. Finally, the fact that so many clauses were not properly debated was wholly unacceptable and I made this very clear in my contribution. Needless to say I was not alone in my anger here.

Ethel Branton was born in Copenhagen St on 10th January 1908 (later moving to Islington North) and a number of people including myself and Emily Thornberry attended her 100th birthday celebration at the Notting Hill Housing Trust in Mildmay Park (10/01).

Sadly:

26/11: **Lucy Arnold** was a very effective young councilor in Haringey who died suddenly and unexpectedly, I joined with other mourners at her funeral at Tottenham Cemetery Chapel. Lucy had campaigned so hard for environmental protection in her borough that the surroundings at that particular cemetery were entirely appropriate.

24/11: I grew up in Shropshire and joined the Labour Party at the age of 16 years wherein my path crossed that of **Peggy Harrison**. These were formative years in my life and I was very active in the Young Socialists, alongside Peggy, who had latterly become the Chair of Education in Telford Council. I had the very sad honour of speaking at an enormous memorial event following her tragic death.

Don't forget my website, where this report, and much more, will appear in a day or two: www.jeremycorbyn.co.uk

My Advice Sessions continue as usual and the number to contact if you wish to seek assistance with a personal problem is: 020 7561 7488

Remember to link up to the TheyWorkForYou website: <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/> if you want regular updates.
