

Foyso! Choudhury MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian Region



ISSUE 12 - 2023



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

A busy last couple of weeks in the Scottish Parliament and with community activities but my thoughts have been with the situation in the Middle East. It is utterly tragic that innocent lives have been lost, in such horrific ways, in both Gaza and Israel. We must see every life as being equal and stop the dehumanisation of people to ensure a credible route to lasting peace in the region.

Myself and Anas Sarwar are calling for:

- Immediate release of hostages
- More humanitarian aid into Gaza
- End to rocket fire in and out of Gaza
- Focus on peace process and a two state solution.
- Israel to adhere to International Law. There is no justification for collective punishment and the targeting of civilians
- An immediate ceasefire.

Scottish Labour and I continue to believe strongly in the cause of peace in the region through a two-state solution that delivers security, peace and freedom for all through a sovereign state of Israel and a sovereign state of Palestine with an end to occupation and the siege.



MSPs joined the Vigil for a Cease Fire In Gaza. We took a minute of silence for peace in the Region and across the World.

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Lothian Region (Scottish Labour)

POLICY



This month in the Scottish Parliament, I hosted a roundtable focusing on Human Trafficking and the implications that the Illegal Migration Act 2023 will have upon human trafficking/ modern slavery in Scotland. At this event we heard from several experts, stakeholders and third sector organisations about the ways that it will impact asylum seekers and victims of modern slavery and a productive discussion about what can be done.



Additionally, I have spoken in Parliament in a number of important debates including on the Powers of the Scottish Parliament, the importance of supporting Scotland's culture sector, child poverty statistics and the #SaveOurPools campaign.

I have also questioned the Scottish Government on issues relating to in-patient waiting times, the implementation of the anti-racist curriculum principles, funding for Police Scotland and Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete in schools in West Lothian.

MOTIONS

I have raised a number of congratulatory motions in the Scottish Parliament over the last few months. These include congratulating Scotland's National Men's Football Team on qualifying for Euro 2024, celebrating the Asian Catering Federation's 7th Asian Restaurant Awards, and celebrating 20 years of One City Trust.



I have also raised motions on a number of important issues such as the importance of the School Milk Scheme in Scotland, which provides an important role in children's growth and development. I also lodged a motion highlighting the Edinburgh Trams Service running 24-hours on weekends in Edinburgh during the Festival in August, which allowed for many to travel home safely throughout the festival.



CASEWORK

HEALTHCARE



I have been concerned to learn that constituents in my region have been told that their dental surgery will soon no longer be accepting NHS patients. As finding an NHS dentist has been extremely difficult for my constituents in some areas anyway, this decision highlights yet another concern about the availability of vital NHS services. We cannot allow our access to integral healthcare to essentially become determined by our income, instead we must protect access for all. I questioned First Minister Humza Yousaf MSP on this during the Scottish Parliament's First Minister's Questions and I am awaiting a follow-up letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to pursue this issue further. However, I am committed to continuing to try to raise this important matter in the Scottish Parliament and I will do all I can to pursue this important matter of access to NHS dental care for all.

OPERATIONS

Long waiting times for operations continues to be a problem that several constituents are being forced to deal with. A lot of my constituents write to me expressing their concern that they are having to wait such a long time and are often living with painful conditions, that need urgent treatment. Waiting times hit a new record with more than 820,000 patients, well over 1 in 7 Scots, being stuck on waiting lists. Patients rightly expect the NHS to be there for them when they are sick, but under the SNP that is being put under threat. For example, despite cancer cases being predicted to rise by 22% in Scotland by 2040, the latest figures show that more than 1 in 4 patients waited longer than 62 days between urgent referral and treatment. The SNP have been complacent, allowing long waits for NHS treatment to become the norm.



POLKEMMET ROAD

Fantastic to visit Polkemmet Road and see that the pedestrian crossing is finally in place.

Great to see the excitement of the children who can now cross the busy road safely on their way home from school.

Well done to local community after almost 2 years of campaigning.

NEW SCOTTISH GALLERIES

I attended the opening of the stunning new Scottish Galleries which opened in September. Visitors can now discover our historic Scottish Art Collection, including world-class works by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Boys. Exploring this new art space was once again a stark reminder of how important funding our culture and art sector is. Our art galleries not only boost our local economies and promote tourism but also, they provide a strong sense of community where we can celebrate our collective art heritage whilst having an emotive experience and letting our minds connect to beauty – reducing our daily stresses!



FESTIVAL OF POLITICS



I hosted my first “Festival of Politics” panel at the Scottish Parliament during summer recess in partnership with CPG Bangladesh, on climate justice and the climate emergency in the Global South.

The panel featured experts in climate advocacy including Professor Saleemul Huq, who was the Director of the International Centre for Climate Change in Bangladesh; Dr Elizabeth Cripps at the University of Edinburgh; Human Rights Solicitor Jelina Berlow-Rahman and Dr Ben Wilson from SCIAF.

The panel discussion focused on the unequal and unjust impacts of the climate crisis on low-lying countries such as Bangladesh and the Maldives that are bearing the brutal costs of climate change and destroying the livelihoods of millions.

The discussion reaffirmed that Scotland must reinvigorate its commitments to net zero emissions, as well as its targets to ensure climate justice elsewhere in the world ahead of COP28.



DUSHERRA

I was delighted to recently sponsor the Dusherra Parliamentary reception organised by the Scottish Indian Arts Forum (SIAF) who have been devoted in inspiring and empowering ethnic communities through advancing arts and culture over the past 29 years. Dusherra is a major Indian festival celebrated every year on the 10th day of the month of Ashvina. It symbolises the victory of virtue over vice. We were joined by Culture Minister, Christina McKelvie MSP; Sir Geoff Palmer; the Indian Consul General Bijay Selvaraj; SIAF President Abhijit Chakraborty and SIAF Founder Mohindra Dhall, who all gave great speeches.



ACF 7TH ASIAN RESTAURANT AWARD



I was honoured to attend the Asian Catering Federation (ACF) 7th Annual Asian Restaurant Awards Scotland at Sheraton Grand Hotel Edinburgh to show my support to the Asian restaurants and catering industry which play a crucial part in Scotland's hospitality scene.

The challenges the sector faces are unprecedented. Just as businesses were recovering from Covid-19 impacts, drastic increases in energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated the situation-not to mention their continued struggle to secure staff. The UK and Scottish Governments must act now to support restaurants to continue thriving in the long-term and avoid any further closures.

OUTSIDE IN ART



Art can have a transformative impact on mental health, wellbeing & sense of belonging. I was delighted to sponsor an 'Outside in Art Celebration' Event to showcase how art can help us explore our differences & celebrate finding a new home & belonging.

OPEN ALL HOURS AWARD

Honoured to have won the Open all Hours Award at Holyrood Political Awards 2023. Thank you to my hard-working team and all who nominated me. It's a privilege to represent my constituents and I'll continue working hard to do so. Well done to all winners and nominees.

LATEST ACTIVITIES



Attended the opening of the new Crisis Scotland Canongate building



Fantastic to be shown around Hermand Birchwood Nature Reserve by Scottish Wildlife Trust



Went to see Empty Kitchens and learnt about their work in distributing food packages to individuals in need



Visited McDonald Road Community Fire and Ambulance Station



Attended the C3R 5 yrs project launch and celebrated their past accomplishments









Dropped in on the first Federation of Scottish Theatre



CONTACT ME

If you need help or advice with any issue or concern, get in touch and book your slot at one of my surgeries.

-  0131 348 6761
-  M1.14 The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh | EH99 1SP
-  FoySol.Choudhury.MSP@parliament.scot
-  @FoySolChoudhuryMSP
-  @FoySolChoudhury
-  @foysol.choudhury

CHECK OUT MY WEBSITE

www.foysolchoudhury.co.uk

