

SNP BAME Conveners Annual Report 2019-2020

2020 ends with a major step forward for BAME representation in the party and Scottish public life with SNP BAME Network NEC Delegate Kaukab Stewart duly selected as SNP candidate for Glasgow Kelvin. We're delighted that she will make history as Scotland's first BAME woman MSP at Holyrood in May 2021. We dearly hope that she will be joined by Cllr Michelle Campbell in Renfrewshire North & West and by others on the Regional Lists. MSPs selections saw a record 22 BAME SNP members put themselves forward for selection as constituency MSPs. However much more work is needed to make sure that BAME communities are properly represented at Holyrood to reflect Scotland as we know it truly is.



October 2019 Party Conference saw a record number of BAME delegates proposing, seconding and speaking on conference resolutions on equalities, international issues such as the India's repression of democracy and self-determination in Kashmir. SNP BAME members spoke on poverty inequality, education and independence!

This progress follows on from 2019 where we hosted an excellent Spring Conference fringe meeting with Ben McPherson MSP then minister for Europe and Migration. SNP BAME Network maintained high social media profile and community activism throughout Scotland. Our AGM November 14th 2020 will have a record attendance of BAME members and supporters with over 70 registered.



WHAT OUR MEMBERS HAVE DONE in 2020

In education several members played notable roles raising issues of racism in education and curriculum – through Scottish Association of Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE) notably Naira Dar, Dr Nighet Riaz,

Farah Farzana, and Fatima Joji who in her own right become a high profile media voice on BAME community and independence.

Cllr Junaid Ashraf of North Lanarkshire and Cllr Graham Campbell from Glasgow both ran for election as Glasgow University Rector alongside John Nicolson MP – the SNP providing 3 of the 5 candidates in the race to replace Aamer Anwar - which was unfortunately cancelled due to Covid in March. They also both appeared in ground-breaking 2019 BBC Scotland documentaries – Graham in Black & Scottish <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00098n0> and Junaid in Young, Asian and Scots <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000chp8> which were re-broadcast in 2020.

Several of us attended the Cross Party Groups on Racism and on Islamophobia as leading BAME politicians Anas Sarwar and Humza Yousaf faced a barrage of online racist abuse. This carried over into our own SNP BAME activists who have experienced similar since we were so successful in getting 22 BAME candidates to stand for selection as MSPs in 40 constituencies. Sadly it will be an ongoing issue having to protect high profile SNP BAME members from this kind of treatment.

WORK OF THE CONVENER AND THE NETWORK

After lockdown in March the BAME Network Steering Group hosted monthly National BAME Meetings via Zoom allowing members from the Caithness & Sutherland Highlands to the Borders lowlands – from east to west and Central Scotland - to fully participate. Up to 40 members attend regular monthly Zoom calls. **BAME Network host National Zoom meetings every middle Saturday of the month.**



The key moment of this year was the death of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter immediate period after saw our Convener busy coordinating BLM activists to create the conditions for a new Black-led anti-racism movement to emerge. SNP BAME Network recorded and distributed written and video statements on Black Lives Matter <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=969384243503320> .

Issues raised by the BLM movement are not going away. BAME Convener Cllr Graham Campbell held a Zoom forum June 8th for SNP MPs, MSPs and Councillors in the aftermath of Black Lives Matter events across Scotland on June 7th. This was massively oversubscribed from by BAME communities inside and outside the party.

SNP politicians listened to Black and Asian Scots experiencing – ***Institutionalised Racism blighting their daily lives. BAME people of all ages in all parts of Scotland reported facing daily racist insults abuse and discrimination in work and public services as well as exclusion in all social, educational and work settings.***

A total of 182 registrations break down as follows.

- 126 Black and Asian people living in Scotland (members and non-members).
- 21 MPs.
- 10 MSPs.
- 18 Councillors.
- 7 Researchers for parliamentarians unable to make it.

The feedback was extremely positive with the biggest message from both politicians and attendees that:

"This has to be the start of something that leads to meaningful change. Being listened to is great - being heard is better."

A more detailed report of the findings and suggestions from this Politicians meeting with BAME communities will be presented at Conference. **This IS just the start of the conversation.**

Cllr Junaid Ashraf and Cllr Danish Ashraf proposed and moved a resolution at North Lanarkshire Council in August - the first Council to formally recognise the need for changes to tackle institutionalised racism in response to BLM. Glasgow City Council followed suit in September with Cllr Graham Campbell proposing resolutions calling for measures to increase the BME workforce, decolonise the curriculum and to review slavery linked street names and statues in Glasgow.



On Black history and Scotland's slavery legacy Our BAME Convener Cllr Graham Campbell has spoken to many audiences online and attended several online rallies – notably relaunching the Justice for Sheku Bayoh campaign with Aamer Anwar at the STUC. He also did interviews for the BBC, Sky News, Eorpa, STV and CBBC Newsround marking Black History

Month. He was STUC Black Workers Committee guest speaker for its annual anti-racism lecture – a first for an SNP speaker.

We backed the Nigerian communities of Scotland in support of their campaign to oppose police repression of the ENDSARS movement – with our Convener speaking at the socially distanced George Square event and Glasgow City Council passing an emergency resolution calling on the UK and Scottish governments to demand action from the Nigerian authorities to end violence and disband the discredited SARS armed police unit.



Finally it would be remiss of us not to mention the hard work of so many BAME activists over the last few years. A year in office with Graham as the SNP's first ever BAME Convener - elected by Conference delegates on the NEC – he was ably supported especially by Fatima Joji, Ruwan Uduawirage-Perera, Danish Ashraf, Junaid Ashraf, Jennifer Roberts, Julia Stachurksa, Mizan

Rahman, Michelle Campbell, Dr Nighet Riaz, Farah Farzana and Kaukab Stewart. However all this progress would not have been possible without the tough groundwork done over several years by Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh who pushed for the BAME network representation at Conference laying the groundwork for much greater BAME activism within the party and in the wider movement for Independence.

Yours for Race Equality in Scotland
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