

Cross-Party Group on Building Bridges with Israel

Wednesday 4th September, 18:30

Online only

Minute

Present

MSPs

Jackson Carlaw MSP

Fergus Ewing MSP

John Mason MSP

Alexander Stewart MSP

Jeremy Balfour MSP

Tess White MSP

Sharon Dowey MSP

Douglas Ross MSP

Stephen Kerr MSP

Jamie Halcro-Johnston MSP

Invited guests

Lavie Tidhar

Non-MSP Attendees

22 others

Apologies

Rachael Hamilton MSP

Paul O'Kane MSP

Russell Findlay MSP

Murdo Fraser MSP

Convener's Welcome

Jackson Carlaw MSP, Convener opened the meeting by welcoming all members. He mentioned that we are not with the embassy tonight, but instead focusing responsibility on the economic, educational, and cultural links between Scotland and Israel. Jackson introduced the group to guest speaker, Israeli author Lavie Tidhar to discuss his book *Adama*.

Approval of new member

Russell Findlay MSP's request to join group was approved unanimously. Proposed by Fergus Ewing MSP, seconded by Stephen Kerr MSP

Members contributions

Jackson invited Deputy Convener Fergus Ewing MSP to say a few words. Fergus spoke about the events of October 7th 2023 and that nearly a year later and hostages have still not been freed. He mentioned he was concerned that the debate in Scotland has become very one-sided and the importance of working towards peace between Israel and Palestine.

A non-MSP attendee made the point that the Israel/Palestine conflict has been singled out as the most emotive conflict in the world.

John Mason MSP discussed the National Jewish Assembly.

Jackson Carlaw MSP mentioned he will be in London the following week and, amongst other meetings, will be at the Israeli embassy for one such meeting.

Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes from 15th November 2023 were approved unanimously. Proposed by John Mason MSP seconded by Fergus Ewing MSP.

Guest Speaker – Lavie Tidhar

Jackson gave the group background on Lavie Tidhar and his book *Adama*

Lavie spoke about the genesis of book, his upbringing in a kibbutz, the role of strong women in the book and the future of the series.

Stephen Kerr MSP asked Lavie & Jackson what each of them learned from the book.

A non-MSP attendee mentioned that they have now ordered the book & invited Lavie to visit Scotland in person.

Lavie said that there are a number of other excellent up-and-coming and well-established Israeli writers, but that he himself writes in English rather than Hebrew.

Any Other Relevant Business

Jackson mentioned the next meeting is the AGM and thanked everyone for their contribution.