

## **Global Scotland – Edition 12 – April 2022**

### **SNP Foreign Affairs and Defence Newsletter**

#### **Ukraine Conflict Continues**

As the war in Ukraine continues the SNP have remained committed to the defense of international law and liberal democracy. Speaking in the House of Commons, Alyn Smith MP urged the UK to match sanctions imposed by EU, NATO, and G7 countries, as well as doing more to help refugees move to the UK much quicker. Smith also wrote to the Speaker expressing concern about lobbying of MPs by those with ties to the Kremlin, and has suggested that war crimes committed by Russian forces may constitute genocide.

Meanwhile, Defence spokesperson Stewart McDonald MP wrote in the Scotsman that Russia's invasion of Ukraine must prompt a stronger defense and commitment to international law.

See more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

#### **SNP Backs EWIPA Declaration**

The SNP have backed proposals to limit the use of explosive weapons in urban areas. SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Alyn Smith MP, and the SNP Defence spokesperson Stewart McDonald MP, announced the policy ahead of a crucial UN summit in Geneva. Mr McDonald also spoke at the summit which looked at a potential international declaration limiting the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA).

The policy is one of several that are being proposed in an upcoming paper on the Protection of Civilians produced by the MPs alongside Chris Law MP, the SNP's International Development Spokesperson.

See more [here](#) and [here](#).

## **Poland Assisting Ukraine**

Stewart McDonald MP and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee visited Poland in early April to see how it is helping Ukrainians and coping with the crisis on its borders.

Stewart witnessed first-hand the response of the Polish government, international institutions and NGOs based in the country. He also met with representatives from the NATO Counter Intelligence Centre of Excellence in Krakow, the NGO Polska Akcja Humanitarna, the UNHCR and members of the Polish and Ukrainian foreign affairs committees along the Poland-Ukraine border.

See more [here](#) and [here](#).

## **Saudi Arabia Executes 81 People**

There was widespread condemnation of Saudi Arabia's execution of 81 people in public earlier in March, ahead of the UK Prime Minister's visit to the country.

The matter was raised in the House of Commons by SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson Alyn Smith MP (who grew up in Saudi Arabia during the 1980s) voicing his concerns over the executions. Speaking in the Chamber, he argued that the PM's visit should not go ahead and for the UK's programme of judicial and justice co-operation with the Saudi's should be ended or at least suspended.

See more [here](#).

## **White Helmets Meet with SNP MPs**

Members of the White Helmets met with SNP parliamentarians last month for an honest discussion of their work and the continuing challenges they face on the ground. They provided powerful testimony of the suffering that civilians continue to face at the hands of Assad's regime, with SNP MPs adding it is crucial that the world does not forget about Syria.

See more [here](#).

## **Scotland and the World**

The SNP have been continuing their diplomatic outreach over the spring. SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson Alyn Smith MP met separately with the Norwegian and Azerbaijani ambassadors to the UK.

He also met with US diplomats in March alongside SNP Defence spokesperson Stewart McDonald MP.

See more [here](#) and [here](#).

## **SNP Engaging with Defence Companies**

SNP MPs and MSPs have visited defence firms across Scotland to hear about their views and the vital contribution they make to Scotland's economy and security.

Defence spokesperson, Stewart McDonald MP, was in attendance for the visits to BAE and Thales sites in Glasgow, where he spoke with staff and apprentices about their work.

See more [here](#) and [here](#).

## **UK Failing to Help Refugees with Dodgy Rwanda Deal**

The UK's deal with Rwanda to offload refugees and migrants has been widely criticised for being immoral and potentially illegal, with Alyn Smith MP (SNP Foreign Affairs spokesperson) saying the UK is "once again absconding on its responsibility to help those fleeing conflict and violence."

He and other SNP MPs raised the issue at FCDO questions, which saw the government fail to convincingly answer MPs worries about the effect this disastrous policy will have on refugees.

See more [here](#) and [here](#).

## **Maintaining Scotland's Ties with Europe**

Members of the SNP's foreign affairs and defence teams had a very productive visit to Brussels in mid-April. Alyn Smith MP, Stewart McDonald MP, Carol Monaghan MP and Dave Doogan MP met with representatives from NATO, the EU, Scotland House Europe, the UK Mission to the EU as well as the European Policy Centre over the two-day visit.

Much was discussed, including the upcoming NATO strategic concept, the EU's Strategic Compass, Ukraine, disinformation and how Scotland's voice can continue to be heard in Brussels outside the EU.

See more [here](#) and [here](#).

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