

## MP's attend debate about the Hazara Community

City MPs Mark Lancaster and Iain Stewart yesterday attended a debate in Parliament which saw the persecution of the Hazara Community in Pakistan discussed.

With a large Hazara community living in Milton Keynes and having been working both locally and nationally to raise the profile of the problems faced by them, the topic is one which Mark and Iain feel strongly about. The Hazara's are originally from Afghanistan and have suffered from religious and ethnic cleansing following the migration of the Hazara people to areas of Pakistan.

The debate saw the foreign office minister Alistair Burt offer the MP's a meeting with Baroness Warsi, the minister with responsibility over Pakistan and Afghanistan to raise the issue further.

Mark said: "Iain and I have been working with the Hazara community here in Milton Keynes for many years, trying raise the profile surrounding their persecution. I am delighted that the government have agreed to meet with us to discuss the issue further and I hope this is a sign that significant progress can be made surround the Hazara peoples plight in the future."

Iain was one of the speakers in the debate and shared an example of a Milton Keynes-based family whose relative have suffered as a result of the atrocities.

He said: "I am glad that ministers agreed to a meeting on this important issue. Last year, Mark and I had the great honour of attending an annual prize-giving organised by the MK Hazara community. It was a warm and jolly occasion that served to underline the warmth and depth of community spirit among them. This makes it even more galling to learn about the stories of heir kinsmen and loved ones being persecuted, injured and killed in Pakistan."