

Dear Mr Henshaw,

Anne Marie Waters has kindly published your letter on her website and as someone who also has concerns about Islam I would like to take this opportunity to point out some facts before your upcoming programme on the 9th November on the 'far-right'/extremism in the UK. If your programme fails to deal adequately with and give suitable prominence to these issues, in particular the ECHR ruling and the fears of ex-Muslims quoted below, I will be making a formal complaint to Ofcom.

I will also add, my letter has not been initiated in any way by Ms Waters or others mentioned in your letter to her and has been prompted purely by frustration at the continued misrepresentation of my concerns and the lies by omission on the nature of Islam-sharia that continue to be perpetrated by the media. A few of these have been documented in this blog:

<https://lancastrian1.wordpress.com/2017/02/23/how-the-media-mislead-by-omission/>

I will be inviting others with similar concerns to use this letter as a template to let you, ITV and probably Ofcom know their views which are supported by a considerable weight of evidence, hence the number of links.

Firstly, I would like to address your labelling ordinary people like myself who have concerns about Islam-sharia as 'far-right'. I also wish to correct your portrayal of people like myself as sheeple who are being manipulated and led by figures such as Anne Marie Waters or Tommy Robinson (Stephen Yaxley-Lennon). Nothing could be further from the truth as my views are guided by what I observe from a wide variety of sources on Islam-sharia.

The basis of these concerns about Islam runs far deeper than the surface jihad terror attacks which seem to be the limit of what your programme will address. Rather they are concerned with the base values of Islam-sharia which are best summated in this key ruling by the ECHR:

Source: “Annual Report 2003 of the European Court of Human Rights, Council of Europe”

Noting that the Welfare Party had pledged to set up a regime based on sharia law, the Court found that sharia was incompatible with the fundamental principles of democracy as set forth in the Convention. It considered that “sharia, which faithfully reflects the dogmas and divine rules laid down by religion, is stable and invariable. Principles such as pluralism in the political sphere or the constant evolution of public freedoms have no place in it”. According to the Court, it was difficult to declare one’s respect for democracy and human rights while at the same time supporting a regime based on sharia, which clearly diverged from Convention values, particularly with regard to its criminal law and criminal procedure, its rules on the legal status of women and the way it intervened in all spheres of private and public life in accordance with religious precepts.

A copy of the original source document can be found on the ECHR website:
http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Annual_report_2003_ENG.pdf

In particular, these individual elements of this concise summary are worth highlighting:

- is stable and invariable (meaning pretty much unchangeable)
- pluralism in the political sphere/the constant evolution of public freedoms have no place in it

- its criminal law and criminal procedure
- its rules on the legal status of women
- the way it intervened in all spheres of private and public life in accordance with religious precepts (All encompassing)

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=content/echr-judgement-relating-sharia-law-2003>

In summary: "sharia is incompatible with democracy and human rights". It needs to be clearly stated here that sharia is derived from and draws its authority from Islamic texts, the Quran, Sira Rasul (biography of Muhammad) and the hadiths. It is notable these concerns about the nature of Islam-sharia underpin the ECHR decision, upheld by the Grand Chamber on appeal, to allow the banning of a political party by Turkey in the 1990s because they wanted to introduce sharia as the law of the land.

Further, it is notable that on the basis of this ruling the Council of Europe are now investigating the compatibility of being a signatory to the 1991 Cairo Declaration of Human Rights, signed by 57 Islamic countries, which subordinates human rights to sharia and membership of the ECHR. Further details, including source documents, are available in the links below.

<http://www.exmuslim.org/islam-and-human-rights.html>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=tags/cairo-declaration-human-rights>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=tags/echr>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/tags/slavery>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/tags/hudud-punishments>

Also, the voices of ex-Muslims and their personal experiences/views are sadly, rarely if ever heard in the media and represent further grounds for serious concerns. Sharia Watch UK has a small number of human aspect stories, mostly from individuals of Muslim heritage which can be found in these links. They represent a variety of differing experiences which are generally overlooked/ignored by organisations such as Hope Not Hate and Mr Lowles, your apparently designated chairman.

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=content/worth-less-aynaz-anni-cyrus>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=authors/shazia-hobbs>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=authors/abdullah-sameer>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=authors/kamal-azmy>

<http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=content/ex-muslims-islam-problem>

“They will never tackle the hate we receive from other Muslims. I am a brown queer ex shia muslim. These orgs dont care about the hate I get.”

<https://twitter.com/ShiaApostate/status/925082575839875072>

Also, a non-Muslim perspective from someone who was resident in Saudi Arabia for a time:

<http://annierulebritannia.blogspot.co.uk/2017/06/saudi-arabia-middle-east-paradise-my.html>

The above alone clearly constitute sufficient grounds for serious concerns by any reasonable person (the man on the Clapham Omnibus test) about the values of Islam-sharia and the effect on the UK and our society of the growth of Islam here. A [ComRes poll](#) in 2016 and reported [here](#) show a majority in the UK feel that “Islam isn't compatible with British values”. That is in the face of the continued

media lies by omission mentioned above.

Your letter outlines concerns about the growth in identity politics but singularly fails to separate ideas and people. The issue that fuels my concerns in this context from the content of your letter is your apparent approach of conflating opposition to bad ideas with people. This quote sums up this issue:

What a crucial point! The greatest barrier to dialogue is our failure to separate people from their ideas. When that happens, people become afraid to challenge bad ideas because they feel like they're demeaning the person who holds them. But people are not their beliefs—they *have* beliefs, but they are not *identical* with their beliefs. That's a vital distinction

https://brandonvogt.com/fulton-sheen-need-intolerance/?doing_wp_cron=1507130927.9002470970153808593750

That, in my opinion, will introduce extreme bias into the programme unless the fact that there are good grounds for grave concerns about Islamic ideology are prominently addressed.

Finally, I would like to state my understanding of two widely mentioned quotes from Anne Marie Waters. These are “Islam is evil” and “Islam is a killing machine”. I believe there is good evidence to substantiate both comments which I will briefly summarise:

1. Tariq Ramadan (Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies; Research Fellow of St Antony's College Oxford) is quoted as saying in an [article](#) that “many Muslims consider hudud punishments (amputation, stoning etc.) as barbaric” but that he could only call for a moratorium not a ban on such punishments because **on the whole most Islamic scholars consider them Islamic due to textual references** but that the conditions under which they should be implemented are nearly impossible to re-establish. From the news reports below, it is obvious that several Islamic countries disagree that conditions for implementation aren't established. Therefore even many Muslims are concerned about the values in Islamic texts.
2. Hudud Punishments: These are stoning, amputation of limbs, crucifixion, flogging and execution. Some people wrongly believe that these are only carried by 'extremists'. If that view is true then there are many extremist governments in Islamic countries. It is far from being 'only' Saudi Arabia which is a common misconception as this small sample shows:

Abu Dhabi: [Two separate sentences of stoning to death in 2013](#)

Iran: [Unveil machine to amputate fingers of thieves](#)

Indonesia: [Several instances of flogging](#)

Nigeria: [Women face death by stoning over sex](#)

[Nigerian man faces stoning death](#)

Pakistan: [Christian boy faces death penalty for insulting Islam on Facebook](#)

Sudan: [Second Woman Sentenced to Death By Stoning](#)

Brunei: [Adopts sharia law amid international outcry](#) (2014)

Malaysia: [Amputations & stoning: Malaysia govt backs Islamic penal law](#) (introduced 2016)

These are far from being the only instances or the only states but the geographical spread and recent adoption of these barbaric laws by Islamic states where they were previously not applied shows the claims of apologists for sharia to be false.

3. [The proof of the necessity of killing anyone who curses the Prophet or finds fault with him](#)
This is hosted on a website with a “.uk” domain name and it is possible the owner of that website is resident in the UK. This thinking is a clear threat to free speech which is the cornerstone of our democracy and it is clear from the text that it is based on Quranic verses.
4. Some scholars have estimated that there may have been as many as [270m deaths of non_muslims due to jihad.](#) <http://www.shariawatch.org.uk/?q=tags/genocide>
5. Slavery is still legal under sharia law and it is estimated that [between 140m and 180m people have been victims of Islamic slavery](#) since Islam was founded.

In summary, the above I believe clearly vindicate Anne Marie Water's statements. The acid test here is a simple question asked of many people: “Do you agree with the ECHR ruling above on the nature of sharia law? Yes or No with reasons if you wish please?”. Too many people either simply don't answer or avoid the real question with a response like 'sharia law has no place in the UK'. This is true but it avoids addressing the nature of sharia law and the Islamic texts from which it is derived. It is, as Brendan O'Neill notes in [this article](#) the 'staring at our shoes' syndrome.

For me, one of the most chilling things about terrorism in Britain today is the awkwardness, the staring at our shoes, the national silence that now follows each attack. We don't ask questions, far less get angry

A syndrome your programme outline seems designed to perpetuate by trying to demonise anyone who expresses concerns about the values and ideology of Islam-sharia. I, for one, have stopped 'staring at my shoes' and I am prepared to look the problem squarely in the eye. I hope your programme will do the same rather than demonising the brave people who are speaking out about their concerns regarding the ideas of Islam-sharia. Ultimately, it is only by honestly facing and robustly debating the ideology and values of Islam-sharia that we will stem the growth of the true 'far-right' not the individuals you appear to be aiming to smear in your programme. [These Muslims](#) called for such a debate 10 years ago and it is high time we heeded that call.

Yours sincerely,

