

SHARIA LAW



BRITAIN'S BLIND SPOT

Contents

Muslim Council of Britain

Islamic Sharia Council

Muslim Association of Britain

Federation of Student Islamic Societies

The Cordoba Foundation

British Muslim Initiative

Green Lane Mosque

East London Mosque/London Muslim Centre

Islamic Forum of Europe

iEngage

Islam Channel

Islamic Human Rights Commission

London Central Mosque (Regent's Park Mosque)

Mosques engaged in underage marriage

Approach of the legal profession

Sharia Law – Britain’s Blind Spot

Introduction

Sharia Watch UK seeks to highlight and expose those movements in Britain which advocate and support the advancement of sharia law in British society. We seek to explain and describe sharia law in relation to specific issues – primarily the treatment of women, freedom of speech, finance, and the marketplace.

Sharia Watch UK believes in freedom of religion, but we say that its practice must remain within the laws that have been set down by Parliament. To this end, we aim to expose the ways in which sharia law operates in Britain in contravention of the law. We will also highlight the areas in which sharia advances within the parameters of the law.

We call on the UK government to recognise that the establishment of a sharia state, or campaigning for such, is *itself an extremist position*. We base this on the fact that a sharia state would involve profound mistreatment of women and girls (including forced marriage and unequal legal status), the implementation of barbaric punishments (including stonings and amputations) and the complete destruction of freedom of speech and democracy.

We urge the UK government to immediately cease all funding of groups with such extremist political views, to arrest and charge people where there is evidence of any breach of laws, for example incitement to violence against women or Jews, and to ensure that laws on public order and discrimination are upheld equally across all communities irrespective of religion, cultural beliefs or background.

We urge the UK government to make a clear, unequivocal and public denouncement of sharia law and Islamist ideology, and to ensure all laws which prevent extremism are applied to the groups named in this report.

Sharia Watch UK makes a clear distinction between Muslims as human beings, and Islam as a system of belief. We believe strongly that all Muslims should be afforded equal human and civil rights alongside all other citizens. We believe equally strongly that Muslims must also be burdened with the same responsibilities as all other citizens. However, we assert that Islam is a belief system like any other and as such is liable to scrutiny, criticism, and ridicule and that it is the democratic right of all British citizens to be free to discuss any belief system, and to hold any opinions on that belief system, as they see fit.

We wish to make it clear that the information contained in this report is intended to inform both the British public and our elected representatives of the true beliefs and political philosophy of various “mainstream” Islamic organisations in the UK. We ask that the government recognises the extreme nature of such beliefs and condemns these accordingly.

We would like to stress that all of the information contained in this report can already be found in the public domain.

Muslim Council of Britain

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is perhaps the most prominent of Britain’s “mainstream” Islamic organisations. Founded in London in 1997, the organisation describes itself as *“a national representative Muslim umbrella body with over 500 affiliated national, regional and local organisations, mosques, charities and schools.”*

The Muslim Council of Britain has received several hundred thousand pounds of taxpayers’ money, despite evidence of its links with extremists and its own extremist beliefs. Cabinet ministers have condemned the MCB for its boycott of Holocaust Memorial Day.¹ In 2009 the British Government cut ties with the Muslim Council of Britain after Daud Abdullah, the Deputy Secretary General, became a signatory to the Istanbul Declaration, which calls for attacks on British troops and Jewish communities.²

Representatives of the Muslim Council of Britain feature regularly in the media, particularly at moments of significance involving Islam. For example, following the murder of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich, London, senior MCB representative Ibrahim Mogra appeared alongside the Archbishop of Canterbury in a joint message of condemnation and reconciliation. Similarly, Mogra acted as MCB spokesman on the issue of child sex grooming in cities around England. The MCB worked with the police, the NSPCC and other Muslim groups to raise awareness of this problem.³

Following the exposure of a number of mosques across Britain which had agreed to marry underage girls (see below), Mogra was again interviewed by numerous media bodies, as representative of the MCB. He told the *Daily Mail*: *“UK law does not allow the marriage of underage girls and that’s all that matters to us here. In this country, it is illegal, it is forbidden and no imam should be allowed to conduct the marriage of an underage child.”*⁴ It should be noted that Mr Mogra’s opposition to child marriage was not based on any moral concern for the child or indeed for women’s rights generally.

Following the London underground terrorist bombings in 2005, a number of Muslim organisations came together to form the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (NIMAB), the aim of which was, according to the new group, to regulate mosques and to ensure that extremism was not being preached. This initiative was reported by the BBC in a highly positive light. The report stated that four of the largest Muslim organisations in Britain, namely the MCB, the Muslim Association of

¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4582736.stm>

² <http://standforpeace.org.uk/mohammad-afzal-khan/>

³ <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/Senior-Leicester-Muslim-leader-calls-community/story-18644699-detail/story.html>

⁴ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2447720/Clerics-18-mosques-caught-agreeing-marry-girls-14-Four-imams-investigated-undercover-operation.html>

Britain, the British Muslim Forum, and the Al-Khoei Foundation, shared the government's concern about radicalisation in mosques.

Furthermore, the MCB was described by Baroness Shirley Williams as "*a sensible organisation*" on BBC's *Question Time*, and representatives of the organisation regularly appear as guests on the BBC, including its Sunday morning discussion programme *The Big Questions*.

Sharia Watch UK believes that the MCB is itself an extremist organisation. We further believe that the portrayal of this group by the mainstream media as the moderate face of Islam facilitates the cover-up of this fact and hides from the public mind the true nature of the organisation and the beliefs and motives of its senior representatives. This report aims to provide a more factual analysis of the MCB and its representatives so that the public can have a clearer picture of Islamic extremism in Britain.

Some of the key figures of the Muslim Council of Britain are:

Muhammad Abdul Bari

Mr Bari was the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain from 2006 until 2010. He has also served as president of the Islamic Forum of Europe (below). In 2003 he was awarded an MBE for services to the community. In 2005 he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He has also served as chair of the East London Mosque (below) and has sat on the Greater London Authority's Faith Advisory Group and the organising committee for the 2012 London Olympic Games. He has also written, on several occasions, for the *Guardian* and *Independent* newspapers.

Bari has referred to homosexuality as "*unacceptable from a religious point of view*" and encouraged "*modest*" dress: "*You shouldn't be revealing your body so much that it can be tempting to other people*". He has also argued "*on adultery and living together, we should try to go back to the history-old, religiously-informed style of life that helps society*".⁵

Upon taking office as Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Bari told the *Telegraph* he aimed to encourage Britain to adopt "Muslim ways" which would include "arranged" marriage.⁶

Omer El-Hamdoon

El-Hamdoon is active in the Muslim Council of Britain, the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Muslim Association of Britain, and the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board. In a debate with the One Law for All campaign El-Hamdoon publically endorsed death by stoning as a punishment for adultery. He has also called for "Islamophobia" to be made a criminal offence in Britain.⁷

Farooq Murad

⁵ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-492814/UK-Nazi-Germany-careful-tackling-terrorism-says-Muslim-leader.html>

⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1520887/British-should-try-arranged-marriages.html?pageNum=3>

⁷ <http://www.politics.co.uk/comment-analysis/2013/03/15/comment-lord-ahmeds-comments-do-not-reflect-muslim-jewish>

Murad has held the post of Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain. In a BBC interview in 2013 Andrew Neil asked Murad if he supported the statement: *“A female is encouraged to remain within the confines of her home as much as possible, she should not come out of the home without need and necessity”* (this was a fatwa, or religious ruling, issued by a British mosque). Murad first argued that the quote must be taken in “context” and that the practice of Muslim women was contrary to this. Neil then questioned Murad on this statement: *“It is generally impermissible for a woman to travel a distance of more than 48 miles unless accompanied by a male relative, even if the purpose is to attend a religious gathering”*. Neil informed Murad that the above statements, and similar beliefs, were being preached to young British Muslim women and emanating from mosques affiliated to the Muslim Council of Britain. Murad answered: *“within personal practices, there may be certain advice or publications available, but people make their choices”*. He insisted that the MCB was working on “standards” for its affiliated mosques and *“many of these things will fall under that scrutiny”*.⁸

Sir Iqbal Sacranie

Iqbal Sacranie was the founding Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain. He was honoured as an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1999, and was knighted by the Queen in 2005.

During the so-called “Rushdie Affair” – when author Salman Rushdie was forced into hiding following the publication of his book *“The Satanic Verses”* which was deemed offensive to Islam – Sacranie said: *“Death, perhaps, is a bit too easy for him his mind must be tormented for the rest of his life unless he asks for forgiveness to Almighty Allah.”*⁹

The Muslim Council of Britain has endorsed and supports the use of Islamic sharia law in the UK.

The Islamic Sharia Council

The Islamic Sharia Council runs the largest network of sharia “councils” in Britain; it facilitates a court-like system of family law which has resulted in a *de facto* parallel system on family issues.

On family matters, Islamic sharia law purports that domestic violence is permissible; that women should not have unilateral rights to divorce; that child custody be decided in favour of fathers (when the child has reached a specific age) irrespective of the circumstances; that a woman’s testimony is worth half that of a man; and that pre-pubescent “marriage” is acceptable.

According to Channel 4’s *Dispatches* (below), the Islamic Sharia Council was represented by Lord Nazir Ahmed with the aim of discussing *“the introduction of Islamic divorce laws in to the UK constitution”*. Lord Ahmed had, according to *Dispatches*, claimed to represent “all Muslims” in this regard.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNWg512Hia8>

⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/books/1989/feb/18/fiction.salmanrushdie>

The Islamic Sharia Council was investigated by the BBC's *Panorama* programme in 2013. An undercover reporter posing as an abused wife was advised by Suhaib Hasan (below) to "correct" herself if she wished to avoid abuse.¹⁰

Attitudes to women which are routinely expressed by members of the Islamic Sharia Council are a cause of great concern.

Some of the key figures are:

Maulana Abu Sayeed

Sayeed has held the post of Muslim "chaplain" at UCL Hospital and head of the Islamic Sharia Council. In 2010 he courted controversy when he referred to marital rape as "impossible". In an interview with *The Samosa* blog Sayeed argued that it was "not Islamic" to classify non-consensual marital sex as rape. He said: *"Why it is happening in this society is because they have got this idea of so-called equality, equal rights. And they are misusing these equal rights in every single aspect of human conduct. That's why. It is one aggression against another, and that is bigger aggression against minor one."*¹¹ When asked what he considered to be the bigger aggression, he replied: *"To call it rape. Rape is a criminal offence in this country; man will end up in prison for three, five years or more."* He agreed with the statement: *"non-consensual sex is the minor aggression, and calling it rape is the major aggression."*

In a Channel 4 documentary aired in 1995¹², Sayeed was revealed as one of three war criminals to flee Bangladesh to live in Britain.

The documentary alleges that his task in Bangladesh was to draw up killing lists of people suspected of involvement in the liberation movement. The names were then handed to the Pakistan army who, with the help of local collaborators, would execute those on the list.

In addition to preparing hit lists, the Jamaat and Al-Badr squads (of which Sayeed was alleged to have been heavily involved) were also guilty of organising mass rapes and the abduction of women for rape by Pakistani soldiers.

Haitham al-Haddad

Haitham al-Haddad is a senior figure and "judge" at the Islamic Sharia Council in east London. He is the chair and operations advisor, and a trustee, for the Muslim Research and Development Foundation. Despite expressing some deeply worrying views Mr Haddad is a regular speaker on the British university circuit and many have come in for criticism for hosting him. In 2014 alone he has so far spoken at Kingston University ("Sisters Week") and the School of Oriental and African Studies.

Haddad has been publically recorded making the following statements:

¹⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-22044724>

¹¹ <http://hurryupharry.org/2010/10/26/war-criminal-sharia-judge-backs-rape-in-marriage/>

¹² http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2osdXob48Y&feature=player_embedded#!

- “We must reflect on the reality of the conflict between us and the Jews, the enemies of God, and the descendants of apes and pigs.”
- “Sisters please don’t show your husband that you are competing with him. I know that many women in the West and unfortunately in many Muslim countries, because now they are following the same style and they don’t want to show that women are inferior to husbands, to their husbands or to men, and they don’t want to show that they are not equal. In fact, this equality between the two genders is a very evil thing.”
- “So until you apply [for divorce], until you are granted that, you are legally his wife and if he wants to sleep with you, unless there is a very fundamental or there is a huge problem, which I cannot mention now, you have to give him his right.”
- “A man should not be questioned why he, OK, hit his wife because this is something between them. Leave them alone. They can sort out their matters among themselves. And even they said that the husband, the father of the daughter, she is married to a man, he should not ask his daughter why you have been beaten or hit by your husband. Why? Because al-Islam is looking for the bigger picture in order to keep the relationship between the husband and wife together.”
- “Sisters, I highly recommend that all sisters wear niqab in this country, forget about whether it is obligatory or not.”
- “Who is going to put a system to stop fornication? Or to lash those who fornicate? Who can put a legislation to stone the adulterers and the adulterer? Who can do that? It is the lawmakers. Those who can do that are the people in charge. Those who are having power. Those people they can establish the Islamic system in its totality.”

Haitham al-Haddad openly “advises” women on marital matters, child custody matters, and matters of divorce and domestic violence at the Islamic Sharia Council in London.

Suhaib Hasan

Thought to be the most senior “judge” at the Islamic Sharia Council, Hasan has courted controversy on several occasions including a recording by the BBC’s *Panorama* advising a woman to “correct” herself if she wished to avoid violent assault by her husband. He also lied to the undercover reporter, who had posed as a wife complaining of marital violence, telling her she would lose her home and children if she reported violence to the police.

Hasan was also secretly filmed by Channel 4’s “*Undercover Mosque*” programme and was recorded as stating: “*Allah has decreed this thing that I am going to be dominant, the dominance of course is a political dominance. The chopping the hands of the thieves, the flogging of the adulterers, the flogging of the drunkards, then jihad against the non-Muslim*”.

The Muslim Association of Britain

The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) has for several years been heavily involved with the anti-war movement, often working closely with the Stop the War Coalition (StWC). It is also closely

linked with the Muslim Brotherhood. At a StWC conference in January 2003 an MAB speaker said that the MAB was proud to be associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

In a public debate with One Law for All in 2011 Omar El-Hamdoon, president of the MAB, defended the right of a man to beat his wife (as long as no mark is left on her body) and indicated that he thinks there should be stonings and amputations under an Islamic state.

Osama Saeed was a spokesperson for the MAB during its alliance with the StWC. He has also been the MAB's representative in Scotland. In 2005 Saeed wrote an article in the *Guardian* calling for the restoration of the Islamic caliphate, which he said should be governed by sharia. He said opponents of this proposal "give credence" to the idea that the West is conducting a war on Islam, and called on Britain and the US to support the project.

A report compiled by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty in 2007 made the following claims about the Muslim Association of Britain:¹³

- MAB was set up in 1997 by Kemal el-Hebawy, who was at the time the London-based spokesman in Europe for the Muslim Brotherhood.

- One Executive member is Azzam Al-Tamimi, a Hebron-born academic who has called himself a "sympathiser and supporter" of Hamas. Many of his articles seek to rationalise the religious inspiration and righteousness of the suicide bomber (though they are careful to eschew active support). He advocates the "dismantling of Zionism" — clearly meaning the Israeli national entity. (See articles quoted on <http://memri.org>)

- Tamimi is not just a sectarian Palestinian nationalist. He is a religious ideologue — he teaches theories associated with Islam at Markfield Institute of Higher Education, an institution established by the Islamic Foundation. He heads up the Institute of Islamic Political Thought. On that group's board of advisers is Dr Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi.

- Qaradawi is the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. MAB invited him to Britain in July this year to head up the "pro-hijab" conference organised by MAB and hosted by the Greater London Authority. Qaradawi was embraced by Ken Livingstone as a "moderate" but has seriously debated the necessity of putting homosexuals to death. (These views can be read on islamonline.net)

Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS)

The Federation of Student Islamic Societies is an umbrella organisation to which the majority of university Islamic societies belong. The British Government's Prevent¹⁴ Strategy review of 2011 said: "FOSIS has not always fully challenged terrorist and extremist ideology within the higher and further education sectors." The Prevent Strategy, according to the Home Office, "seeks to stop people

¹³ <http://www.workersliberty.org/node/3026>

¹⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.” FOSIS however has fallen far short on numerous occasions in offering any assistance to this aim.

Speakers at FOSIS events have included¹⁵:

- Azzam Tamimi, who has called for Israel’s destruction, spoken lovingly of the *“great jihad of Hamas and Islamic jihad,”* and heaped praise on *“Imam Khomeini.”*
- Daud Abdullah, the disgraced former (Jamaat-linked) Muslim Council of Britain official who signed the Istanbul Declaration, which calls for attacks on Jewish communities and British soldiers abroad.
- Ibrahim Hewitt of the *“Specially Designated Global Terrorist”* group Interpal, which raises funds on behalf of Hamas.
- Junaid Ahmed of the Jamaat-controlled Islamic Forum of Europe, who has referred to Hamas terrorists as *“heroes”*.
- Muhammad al-Kawthari, who has called for adulterous women to be stoned to death and ruled that violent jihad is *“personally obligatory for all the Muslims.”*
- Haitham al-Haddad, who supports Hamas and wants *“Muslims to prepare themselves for jihad, all over the world.”*
- Muhammad Alshareef, who thinks that Muslims should be *“proud”* homophobes who hate, shun and harass gay rights campaigners and Jews.

FOSIS came to wider public attention in 2013 when events which it had organised were found to be imposing gender segregation on university sites. These revelations came to the attention of the Prime Minister in late 2013 when Universities UK, a body which describes itself as the *“voice”* of British Universities, issued guidance stating that it would be an infringement of a speaker’s right to free expression if he could not demand to speak to gender segregated audiences, and that gender segregation was permissible for *“genuinely held religious beliefs”*. It was revealed at the time that not only were women being made to sit at the back of a segregated room at some events, but were also barred from speaking, and asked to pose any questions by writing them down in advance (with no requirement for men to submit their questions in advance).¹⁶

Universities UK withdrew its guidance following strong condemnation of gender segregation from the Prime Minister. Segregation has continued unabated however.

¹⁵ <http://standforpeace.org.uk/federation-of-student-islamic-societies-fosis/>

¹⁶ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2524183/Female-students-banned-speaking-Islam-seminar-University-Leicester.html>

In December 2013 a poll carried out the by the *Times Educational Supplement*¹⁷ found that of 46 universities that responded, 29 did not have prohibitions against gender segregation in place. According to anti-extremism campaigner Chris Moos:

*"The Students' Union of the University of the Arts London has opposed calls to ban gender segregation, and claims it has the backing of its university. The SOAS University "Muslim Christian Dialogue" society has issued a statement of support for "both segregated and mixed seating in any event". At the same time, an attempt to outlaw forced or directed, but specifically not 'voluntary' segregation at the University of Edinburgh, was met with fierce resistance by the student body, including claims that disallowing segregation would be "Islamophobic" and "racist"."*¹⁸

FOSIS itself insists that its events are voluntarily segregated, but its own guidance suggests it may not be entirely committed to this notion. In its guidance on how to run Islamic societies, FOSIS prescribes¹⁹ that committee members *"maintain segregation between brothers and sisters, keeping interaction between them at a minimum"*.

Chris Moos continues:

"Worryingly even some elected student officials go so far as to openly advocate segregation. Joe Killen, welfare and diversity officer at Goldsmiths Students' Union opposes bans on segregation based on an alleged "importance of segregation in political movements." The Women's Officer of King's College London Students' Union, Shaheen Sattar, who is also a National Union of Students delegate, has gone as far as demanding that "gender segregation should be respected, if not tolerated, in institutions of higher education", as it was "firm to the principles of Islam"."

In April 2013 Baroness Warsi, Minister for Faith and Communities, attended an event organised by FOSIS.²⁰ Baroness Warsi attended the event despite the fact that Theresa May, the Home Secretary, had ordered the Civil Service to withdraw from a graduate event organised by FOSIS and had refused to meet its leadership.

Omar Ali is the President of FOSIS. He is also active with the Muslim Council of Britain (see above).

Cordoba Foundation

The Cordoba Foundation was founded by Anas Altikriti, a former president of the Muslim Association of Britain. He has been a frequent contributor to the *Guardian* newspaper and has worked closely with the Stop the War Coalition. He has also been a European Parliamentary candidate for the Respect Party. Altikriti, replying in *The Times* to allegations that MAB is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, replied: *"MAB is an independent British organisation. Links with others extend simply*

¹⁷ <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/gender-segregation-allowed-as-long-as-it-isnt-forced/2009599.article>

¹⁸ <http://www.secularism.org.uk/blog/2014/03/gender-segregation--universities-and-student-representatives-continue-to-fail-their-students-miserably>

¹⁹ <http://fosis.org.uk/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/408-h>

²⁰ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/conservative/10022536/Baroness-Warsi-and-the-demons-of-hate.html>

to shared ideas, values and expertise, in which the Brotherhood is indeed rich, with around eight decades of experience.” He also argued: “Calls for an Islamic state by some corners should not scare us nor should it bring about a negative reaction.”

The Cordoba Foundation claims that its primary aim is to *“Promote dialogue and the culture of peaceful coexistence among cultures, ideas and people.”*²¹ This aim is entirely inconsistent with the desire for an Islamic state as expressed by the founder Mr Altikriti.

According to Melanie Philips in 2011, The Cordoba Foundation had received £38,000 of public money from Tower Hamlets Council which helped to fund a debate entitled *“Has Political Participation Failed British Muslims?”*, at which a senior member of the extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (a group which campaigns for the global application of sharia law) was invited to contribute.²²

Mr Altikriti has also been the spokesman for the British Muslim Initiative.

British Muslim Initiative

British Muslim Initiative (BMI) is an organisation that claims *“to fight racism and Islamaphobia, combat the challenges Muslims face around the world, encourage Muslim participation in British public life, and improve relations between the West and the Muslim world”*.

It too has been described as affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

In 2010 Muhammad Sawalha was the president of BMI. He is also a senior member of Hamas (and a founding member of the Muslim Association of Britain). Hamas governs the Gaza strip under strict sharia law and its founding charter calls for the killing of Jews.²³ The “slogan” contained in the charter is this: *“Allah is its goal, the Prophet its model, the Quran its Constitution, Jihad its path and death for the case of Allah its most sublime belief.”*

Sawalha fled to Britain in 1990 having discovered that the Israeli authorities were seeking his arrest. An investigation for the BBC by John Ware made a series of revelations about Sawalha including that he *“master minded much of Hamas political and military strategy”* from London; then went on to describe him as a *“fugitive Hamas commander.”*²⁴

Sawalha has also signed the infamous Istanbul Declaration which, among other things, states: *“The obligation of the Islamic Nation to regard everyone standing with the Zionist entity, whether countries, institutions or individuals, as providing a substantial contribution to the crimes and brutality of this entity; the position towards him is the same as towards this usurping entity.”*

²¹ http://www.thecordobafoundation.com/about_us.php?load=20

²² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2000622/Islamic-extremism-I-warned-years-ago--ministers-admit-I-right.html>

²³ <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/880818.htm>

²⁴ <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/1545/lawfare-in-the-uk-who-is-behind-it-this-time>

A further founding member of the BMI is Azzam Tamimi. In 2004 Tamimi was interviewed on BBC's *Hardtalk*. When questioned on Hamas' intentions for continuing violence, Tamimi answered: "We don't call it violence. We call it legitimate struggle; we call it jihad".²⁵

Green Lane Mosque

Green Lane Mosque is one of the most high-profile mosques in the country. Established in the 1970s, it is located in Birmingham and was awarded the title of "Model Mosque" by the Islam Channel (below) in 2007. Its visitors have included Lord Nazir Ahmed who described it as his "favourite spiritual place".

Green Lane Mosque is the headquarters of the registered charity Markazi Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith UK, which runs several mosques across the country, as well as some Islamic schools.

In 2009 the anti-extremism think-tank the Quilliam Foundation claimed that the mosque hosted "extreme Wahhabi clerics"²⁶ and "fellow travellers of Al-Qaeda". Wahhabism is a fundamentalist form of Islam which is dominant in Saudi Arabia. The mosque responded to Quilliam's criticisms by stating: "*The Quilliam Foundation's latest press release (Saudi extremism continues to influence British Muslims) is a fear mongering exercise to reinforce the prejudices of those who wish to demonise and alienate long-established, mainstream Muslim institutions. Green Lane Masjid refutes the allegation that it has invited speakers that are 'fellow-travellers' of Al-Qaeda, which could not be further from the truth. These speakers are academics who have specialised in Islamic sciences and are well respected in scholarly circles. It is grossly unjust to suggest that they belong to some fringe ideology rather than orthodox Islam. Furthermore they all are well known for their open criticisms of Al-Qaeda and its affiliates.*"

Whether visiting speakers to Green Lane Mosque criticise Al-Qaeda or otherwise does not however settle the matter; extremist Wahhabi Islam is routinely preached at the mosque. On its own website Green Lane Mosque boasts that it has "*excellent contacts with illustrious Scholars throughout the world, especially with Saudi Arabia.*"²⁷ It is these links with Saudi Arabia which were the focus of an undercover investigation carried out by Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme²⁸ in 2007.

The following is a list of quotes taken from lectures and sermons preached at Green Lane Mosque:

- *We want Islam and the laws of Islam to be practiced, we want to do away with the man-made laws.*
- *The popular culture [British culture]; if you are a person who gives yourself to that, your mind is going to be controlled by the so-called powers that be who make these man-made laws.*

²⁵ <http://www.danielpipes.org/2813/interview-with-dr-azzam-al-tamimi-institute-of-islamic>

²⁶ <http://www.iengage.org.uk/component/content/article/691-green-lane-mosque-birmingham-responds-to-thequilliam-foundations-al-qaeda-allegations>

²⁷ <http://www.greenlanemasjid.org/About-Us.aspx>

²⁸ <http://vimeo.com/19598947>

- *If I were to call homosexuals perverted, dirty, filthy dogs that should be murdered, that's my freedom of speech isn't it? They'll say no I'm not tolerant, but they feel that it's ok to say something about the prophet.*
- *Verily Allah is going to bring a group of people that he loves and they love him. These people will be soft and kind to the believers, and they will be rough and tough against the kuffaar. They will fight in the cause of Allah, I encourage all of you to be amongst them, to begin to cultivate ourselves for the time that is fastly approaching, where the tables are going to turn and the Muslims are going to be in a position of being uppermost in strength, and when that happens, people won't get killed – unjustly.*
- *The prophet Mohammed practically outlined the rules regarding marriage prior to puberty. With his practice, he clarified what is permissible, and that is why we shouldn't have any issues about an older man marrying a younger woman; which is looked down upon by this society today, but we know that the prophet Mohammed practised it. It wasn't abuse or exploitation, it was marriage.*

In two-way video links from Saudi Arabia, beamed directly to the mosque, fatwas (religious rulings) are issued:

- *Jews and Christians who do not follow the prophet Mohammed are kuffaar, they will go to hell.*
- *Anyone who helps or defends an apostate or a pagan or an atheist, or anyone who attacks Islam, will be cursed.*
- *Tell your children to pray when they are 7, and hit them when they are 10.*
- *Men are in charge of women, wherever he goes, she should follow him, and she shouldn't be allowed to leave the house without his permission.*

The undercover reporter was advised of a secret internet chatroom run by the mosque. Here, the following messages were broadcast:

- *No one loves the kuffaar, no one loves the kuffaar. Not a single person here from the Muslims loves the kuffaar. Whether those kuffaar are from the UK or from the US, we love the people of Islam and we hate the people of kufr, we hate the kuffaar.*
- *Allah has created the woman, even if she has a PhD, deficient – her intellect is incomplete.*
- *It takes two witnesses of a woman to equal the one witness of the man.*

In DVDs of lectures sold at the mosque, the following messages are conveyed:

- *If you leave off the prayer out of negligence, then you are a kaffir. If he dies like that, you have to bury him with the kuffaar. You can't marry him.*
- *Muslims shouldn't be satisfied with living in other than the total Islamic state.*
- *Whoever changes his religion from Islam to anything else, kill him in the Islamic state. If the Imam wants to crucify him, he should crucify him. The person is put up on the wood and he's left there to bleed to death for three days.*

- *What is sad to see is that for many parents, they send their children to the kuffaar school. They allow them to mix with the kuffaar, so that the lifestyle and the beliefs of the kuffaar become deep-rooted in the hearts of the kids.*
- *By the age of 10 it becomes an obligation on us to force her to wear the hijab, and if she doesn't wear the hijab, we hit her.*

Following the broadcast of *Undercover Mosque*, a police investigation was launched – both to investigate the speakers who expressed the comments above, and the programme makers. A statement from the Crown Prosecution Service included the following:

“West Midlands Police have completed their investigation into the Channel 4 Dispatches programme 'Undercover Mosque' broadcast in January 2007. The police investigation initially looked at whether there had been any criminal offences committed by those featured in the programme and following careful consideration by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), West Midlands Police have been advised that there is insufficient evidence to bring charges against those individuals featured within the programme.

“West Midlands Police acknowledge the concerns that some parts of the programme may have been considered offensive, however when analysed in their full context there was not enough evidence to bring criminal charges against any individual. ACC Anil Patani for West Midlands Police said: ‘As a result of our initial findings, the investigation was then extended to include issues relating to the editing and portrayal of the documentary. The priority for West Midlands Police has been to investigate the documentary and its making with as much rigour as the extremism the programme sought to portray’”.

West Midlands Police then complained to Ofcom that the programme had been subject to such an intensity of editing that recorded speakers had been misrepresented, and that this had created an unfair, unjust and inaccurate perception of both some speakers and sections of the Muslim community within the West Midlands.

A subsequent Ofcom report found: *“Undercover Mosque was a legitimate investigation, uncovering matters of important public interest... On the evidence (including untransmitted footage and scripts), Ofcom found that the broadcaster had accurately represented the material it had gathered and dealt with the subject matter responsibly and in context.”*

The makers of the programme then launched a libel case against West Midlands Police and were awarded £100,000 in damages.

East London Mosque/London Muslim Centre

The East London Mosque is located in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and was constructed, in its current form, in the early 1980s. The mosque has been visited by several government ministers including Stephen Twigg, Stephen Timms, and Sadiq Khan. Further notable past visitors include Boris Johnson, Ken Livingstone, former Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, and the Prince of Wales.

Public funds to the mosque included a contribution from London's City Hall of £1.3 million, and £500,000 from the London Development Agency to build the London Muslim Centre which adjoins the mosque.

Shaykh Abdul Qayyum is the primary imam at the East London Mosque, and he is also an adviser on matters of sharia on the Al-Qalam website which is a resource aimed at providing *"British Imams and Muslims with authentic referenced expertise on how to properly apply Shari'ah precepts to common place legal and financial concerns."*²⁹ The website contains references to Muslims as "reverts" (a term commonly used to demonstrate the belief that all people are born Muslim) and in one piece of advice, the belief that women comprise the majority of those in hell, is repeated.³⁰

Allegations of extremism have long plagued the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre, particularly with regard to invited speakers. Controversial speakers include:

Moazzam Begg: arrested on terrorism charges in 2014.³¹

Rizwan Hussain: presenter on the Islam Channel (below).

Shakeel Begg: *"And we know jihad in the path of Allah is of the greatest of deeds that a Muslim can take part in."*

Murtaza Khan: *"We believe as much in sharia as any other individual. Those stigmas that you find, you know that we don't believe in the sharia, we don't want the sharia to rise, we don't want people to be governed by the sharia etc, that's just a myth. Every single Muslim is an activist in trying to re-awaken, re-ignite the people to live by the sharia, to accommodate the sharia, to understand the sharia. That's what we all agree at the end of the day. There are some people who have taken it to a different element, that's all we're being wary of. Other than that, we share exactly the same concern inshallah."*³²

Haitham al-Haddad (see Islamic Sharia Council above).

Abdurraheem Green: *"Let us ask if democracy means that sovereignty is with the people, that the people have the right to decide what's halal and haram, and it's up to them, then no Muslim with any mustard seedsworth of imam can agree with this."*³³

Bilal Phillips: *"For us in Islam, we have a natural principle, a natural dividing line, which is for a woman to be considered an adult, or that she may be married and have sexual relations etc. That dividing line is puberty. So whether one in this society, considers that person still to be a child or not, that's not the issue. But it remains legitimate, that if a muslim man in his*

²⁹ <http://alqalam.org.uk/panel-members/shaykh-abdul-qayyum/#more-161>

³⁰ <http://alqalam.org.uk/fatawa/zakah-fatwa/can-i-give-zakah-to-my-husband-if-his-circumstances-mean-he-cannot-support-those-under-his-responsibility/>

³¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26395066>

³² <http://tifrib.com/murtaza-khan/>

³³ <http://tifrib.com/abdurraheem-green/>

50s, even today, wanted to marry a young woman who was nine or ten, and she had reached puberty, it is legitimate.”³⁴

The East London Mosque/London Muslim Centre is repeatedly reported as being organised and run by the Islamic Forum of Europe.

Islamic Forum of Europe

The IFE is based in London but boasts several branches around the UK, as well as affiliates throughout western Europe.

One of the founders of the IFE was Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin, who was convicted of war crimes in Bangladesh in 2013. Also active is Azad Ali, who supports sharia law and is a key figure in the Unite Against Fascism group.

In 2010 a *Telegraph* report claimed that the East London Mosque (above) provides for the IFE's headquarters and that the mosque's chairman was a former president of the IFE. Furthermore, the director and imam of the mosque were trustees of the IFE.

Andrew Gilligan, writing in the *Guardian*, stated that recruits to the IFE are told: *“Our goal is not simply to invite people and give da'wah [call to the faith]. Our goal is to create the true believer, to then mobilise those believers into an organised force for change who will carry out da'wah, hisbah [enforcement of Islamic law] and jihad [struggle]. This will lead to social change and iqamatud-deen [an Islamic social, economic and political order].”³⁵* The IFE is, in its own words, dedicated to changing the *“very infrastructure of society, its institutions, its culture, its political order and its creed ... from ignorance to Islam.”*

In a documentary aired in 2010, Channel 4's *Dispatches* went undercover in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and revealed a side of the IFE which contrasts with their claim to promote tolerance.

Included in the transcript of the documentary³⁶ is the following:

- Speakers at an IFE training lecture declared *“Victory is for Islam and Muslims”* and attendees were instructed to identify *“who the enemies are, both from outside the circle of Islam and within the circle of Islam.”*
- Female members of IFE confirmed that all decisions were made by men. It was also revealed that ceiling-high screens were used to remove women from meetings.
- The IFE requires hopeful members to take an exam, offer an oath of allegiance, and keep their membership secret.
- The IFE reading lists contains a book entitled ‘Let Us Be Muslims’ by Syed Mawdudi. This book urges Muslims *“wherever you are, in whichever country you live, you must strive to*

³⁴ <http://tifrib.com/bilal-philips/>

³⁵ <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/may/19/ife-tower-hamlets-election>

³⁶ <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/andrewgilligan/100060409/britains-islamic-republic-full-transcript-of-channel-4-dispatches-programme-on-lutfur-rahman-the-ife-and-tower-hamlets-the-full-transcript/>

change the wrong basis of government, and seize all powers to rule and make laws from those who do not fear God.”

- According to local MP Jim Fitzpatrick, the IFE is already active in attempting to “change the wrong basis of government”. Fitzpatrick told Dispatches: *“The suggestion is that they have councillors, candidates, standing for different parties, in different parts of the country, and that they encourage their members to vote for those candidates regardless of which political party they are representing in the ballot box.”*
- IFE is particularly engaged with the Labour Party in Tower Hamlets, so much so that the national Labour Party would not allow for independent local candidate selection. A Labour Party spokesman said: *“We’re concerned about people joining for the right reasons and are trying to prevent organizations filtering in who may try taking over the party by signing up and ousting existing members.”*

One person in Tower Hamlets whose links with the IFE have been particularly controversial is the Borough’s directly elected Mayor, Lutfur Rahman. Formerly the Labour leader of Tower Hamlets Council, Rahman was expelled from the party for alleged links with Islamic extremism – including the IFE. Following his expulsion he stood as an independent and was elected Mayor in 2010. Rahman came under fire in early 2014 when the BBC’s *Panorama* revealed that he had awarded two and a half times more money than had been recommended, to organisations run by Muslims.

Rahman’s cabinet in Tower Hamlets is made up entirely of Bangladeshi Muslims. Having changed the council policy, Rahman took over exclusive authority of awarding public money to local groups. Following this, there was a *“clear diversion of funding away from secular bodies serving the whole community to faith-based or religious groups serving only sections of the community.”*³⁷ Awards included:

- Bow Muslim Cultural Centre received £10,000 for work simply described as *“to be confirmed”*.
- The East London Mosque received £10,000 for “professional fees” – the mosque has an income of more than £1 million a year.
- £32,500 of public money was given to Bengali-language newspapers, media organisations and TV stations who have influence among Rahman’s electorate.
- £1,800 to an Islamic religious teachers’ organisation for a day trip to the Isle of Wight.

Complaints from a council officer about awards were ignored.

During his independent candidacy for the mayoralty in 2010, Rahman received the support of the former Labour Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone – who, in supporting Rahman, campaigned against his own party’s candidate. Livingstone has a history of supporting Islamists and was strongly criticised for inviting Yusuf Al-Qaradawi to London; Qaradawi supports female genital mutilation,³⁸

³⁷ <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/andrewgilligan/100266083/lutfur-rahmans-muslim-favouritism-the-evidence/>

³⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/oct/15/female-genital-mutilation-yusuf-al-qaradawi>

wife-beating,³⁹ and believes Hitler's attempt at wiping out Jews needed to be completed.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Livingstone has been a presenter for Press TV, the media arm of the Islamic Regime of Iran – an Islamist state which imposes the death penalty (by stoning) for adultery, hanging for homosexuality, as well as the death penalty for blasphemy and apostasy. Livingstone was selected by the Labour Party to be its candidate for the London Mayoralty race of 2012. Following the BBC *Panorama* exposé in 2014, Livingstone maintained his support for Lutfur Rahman.⁴¹

iEngage

iEngage, also known as Engage, describes itself as a non-profit company which aims to “*help empower and encourage British Muslims within local communities to be more actively involved in British media and politics*”.⁴² In 2010 the group issued a press release stating that it would act as secretariat to a new All-Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia. This committee, chaired by Conservative MP Kris Hopkins with Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes and Labour Peer Lord Janner as vice-chairs, met at the House of Commons in late November 2010 for its launch event. iEngage has however been mired in controversy.

In response to the BBC broadcast “*British Schools, Islamic Rules*”, which provided clear evidence that children in Britain were being taught hatred for non-Muslims, and Jews in particular, the group offered a rebuke which did not dispute any of the claims made (or which did not disagree with the views expressed), but merely contended that the programme singled out Muslims.

iEngage wrote to the Home Secretary Theresa May in 2010 protesting the exclusion from Britain of Zakir Naik. The group centred its objections on Mr Naik's right to free expression; its own website however laments “hate speech” when directed at Islam and Muslims.⁴³ The letter to May states that: “*unless .. speech demonstrates an actual, evidential causal relationship to incitement to hatred or acts of violence, its curtailment is a gross infringement of the right to free expression*”. Included in Naik's objectionable quotes are: “*every Muslim should be a terrorist*”. He also believes that all people are born Muslims, and that the death penalty should be applied to those that propagate against the faith.⁴⁴

iEngage has also attacked the prominent Muslim journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown for her opposition to the burqa and niqab.⁴⁵

³⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/29/religion.uk1>

⁴⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6lZJ-M9xbQ>

⁴¹ <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/ken-livingstone-throws-backing-behind-tower-hamlets-mayor-lutfur-rahman-9228636.html>

⁴² <http://iengage.org.uk/about-us/aimsobjectives>

⁴³ <http://iengage.org.uk/hate-crimes/hate-crimes-2013>

⁴⁴ <http://www.haveeru.com.mv/news/30405>

⁴⁵ <http://www.iengage.org.uk/component/content/article/976-alibhai-brown-continues-her-shrill-crusade-against-burqa-and-niqab-wearers>

Given all of this, it is pertinent to question the beliefs and motives of iEngage, in particular given some of its senior members. Listed on its website (2012)⁴⁶ as trustees are Sir Iqbal Sacranie who was one of the founders of the Muslim Council of Britain (see above) and Mohamed Ali Harrath. Mohammed Ali Harrath is a founder of the Tunisian Islamic Front, a radical Islamist group linked to An Nahda, a Tunisian Islamist party led by Rashed al-Ghannoushi, and aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood. Harrath has stated: *“There is nothing wrong or criminal in trying to establish an Islamic state”*. Harrath believes that a Jewish conspiracy controls the United States and has said: *“Look at the Zionists in the United States. There’s not that great number [sic]. The United States is nearly 300 million. But they have six million Jews living there. Every single one votes and every single one makes sure he influences many votes. And that’s how they command. That’s how it works.”*

In 2011 an article on iEngage claimed that it has also defended the radical group Hizb ut-Tahrir – a group which calls for a global Islamic caliphate under full sharia law.⁴⁷

Also active in iEngage is Azad Ali, who is involved with the Islamic Forum of Europe and Unite Against Fascism. In 2010 Ed Miliband and Harriet Harman were criticised for speaking at an event at which Mr Ali defended the terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah.⁴⁸ In a secret film by Channel 4’s *Dispatches*, also in 2010, Mr Ali was recorded stating: *“Democracy, if it means at the expense of not implementing the sharia, of course no one agrees with that”*.⁴⁹

Islam Channel

The Islam Channel is based in central London and claims to provide *“alternative news, current affairs and entertainment programming from an Islamic perspective.”*⁵⁰ It is a venture of the Dawah Project,⁵¹ a registered charity which aims to “spread Islam” by utilising the media.

In 2010 the Islam Channel offered some insight in to what kind of Islam it intends to spread. On one occasion a presenter defended marital violence by stating: *“it shouldn't be such a big problem where the man feels he has to force himself upon the woman”*.⁵² On a second occasion a contributor confirmed the sharia belief that it is permissible to hit a woman provided no great physical damage is caused. He said: *“In Islam we have no right to hit the woman in a way that damages her eye or damages her tooth or damages her face or makes her ugly. Maximum what you can do, you can see the pen over here, in my hand, this kind of a stick can be used just to make her feel that you are not happy with her.”* Ofcom found the Islam Channel to be in breach of its Broadcasting Code; it did not however impose a fine.

⁴⁶ <http://www.iengage.org.uk/about-us/engage-team>

⁴⁷ <http://hurryupharry.org/2011/02/20/iengage-more-support-for-hate-preachers-and-islamist-political-parties/>

⁴⁸ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1247432/Ministers-slammed-speaking-meeting-Muslim-justified-killing-British-troops.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/mar/04/islamic-forum-europe-dispatches-gilligan>

⁵⁰ <http://www.islamchannel.tv/pagesv4/AboutUs.aspx>

⁵¹ <http://www.thedawahproject.com/about-us/>

⁵² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/8108132/Islamic-TV-channel-rapped-for-advocating-marital-rape.html>

Later, in 2013, the channel again came to the attention of Ofcom – this time a fine of £85,000 was imposed when a presenter advocated the killing of those deemed guilty of blasphemy. Allama Muhammad Farooq Nizami, in response to a viewer’s question on showing disrespect to the prophet Mohammed, declared: *“there is no disagreement about this. There is absolutely no doubt about it that the punishment for the person who shows disrespect for the Prophet is death.”*⁵³

Islamic Human Rights Commission

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is a non-profit organisation based in London. Its stated mission is to *“work with different organizations from Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds, to campaign for justice for all peoples regardless of their racial, confessional or political background.”*⁵⁴ The group was established in 1997 and has consultative status with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism has written of IHRC: *“The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is a radical Islamist organization that uses the language and techniques of a human rights lobbying group to promote an extremist agenda. Formed in 1997 by its current chairman, Massoud Shadjareh, the IHRC supports jihad groups around the world, campaigns for the release of convicted terrorists and promotes the notion of a western conspiracy against Islam. Shadjareh and the IHRC subscribe to the radical Islamist belief that Jewish conspiracies are afoot to undermine Muslims, and they liken Jews and Israelis to Nazis. Members of the IHRC’s board of advisors have even called on Muslims to kill Jews. They include the Saudi Islamist Muhammad al-Mas’ari and Muhammad al-‘Asi, an American convert to Islam who was banned from preaching at his mosque in Washington, D.C., and has been a frequent visitor to Britain.”*

The group organises an annual “Islamophobia Awards” ceremony⁵⁵ in London and has received messages of support from former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Lord Nazir Ahmed, and Sarah Teather MP, among others.

One nominee for the “Islamophobia Awards” 2014 was Maajid Nawaz⁵⁶, co-founder and Chairman of the anti-extremism think tank the Quilliam Foundation and the Liberal Democrat Prospective Parliamentary candidate for Hampstead and Kilburn in the 2015 General Election. Nawaz had appeared on BBC’s *The Big Questions* in January 2014, together with two LSE students who in October 2013 had been prevented by their university from visibly wearing innocuous t-shirts depicting the prophet Mohammed. The students were told they would be physically removed from their freshers’ fair unless they covered up their t-shirts, and that their t-shirts were “offensive” and

⁵³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-23782159>

⁵⁴ <http://www.ihr.org.uk/about-ihr/about-us>

⁵⁵ <http://www.ihr.org.uk/events/10906-islamophobia-awards-2014>

⁵⁶ <http://www.ihr.org.uk/events/10907-islamophobia-awards-2014-vote-now>

“harassing”. LSE subsequently apologised but only after the students formally instructed a QC and a firm of solicitors.

Nawaz made it clear on the programme that he, as a Muslim, was not offended by the t-shirts and that the students had the right to wear them. Shortly after the programme Nawaz tweeted⁵⁷ one of the images and again said that it was not offensive. He then received a number of death threats⁵⁸ and there was a concerted (but unsuccessful) effort to remove him as a PPC. A central figure in this campaign was Mohammed Shafiq of the Ramadhan Foundation. Shafiq referred to Nawaz in a tweet as “*Gustake Rasool*”, which means “*Defamer of Prophets*” and is a religious and legal charge punishable by a death sentence in Pakistan. Nawaz travels regularly to Pakistan and has family there. Shafiq also tweeted⁵⁹: “*We will notify all muslim organisations in the UK of his despicable behaviour and also notify Islamic countries*”. Shafiq is a member of the Ethnic Minority Liberal Democrats group but, to date, that group and the Liberal Democrats appear not to have taken any action against him.

Rather than take the opportunity to display a firm commitment to a fellow Muslim’s human right to free speech in the face of significant religious intimidation against him, in choosing to shortlist Nawaz for their “Islamophobia Awards” the IHRC seems to have chosen to humiliate and ostracise him, and to reinforce (often deadly) Islamic blasphemy codes.

IHRC supports Hezbollah and has hosted Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, head of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria, at a “Spirit of Islamist Activism” event in London. Sheikh Zakzaky has referred to Jews as “the lowest creatures on earth”.⁶⁰ Hezbollah has been declared a terrorist organisation by the United States, the Netherlands, France, the UK, Australia, Canada, the EU, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

IHRC has also campaigned for the release of Omar Abdel Rahman, currently serving a life sentence in the US for his part in the first attempt to destroy the World Trade Centre in 1993.⁶¹

According to a report in 2010 the National Association of Muslim Police had recommended that British Muslims, when reporting crimes, should also “*report any such actions to the Islamic Human Rights Commission*”.⁶² This is despite the fact that: “*the IHRC some time ago claimed to have cut its ties with the British police and refuses to co-operate with them because it regards the police (in the words of the IHRC’s senior spokesperson) to be “insincere (to put it politely), hypocritical, having double standards”*”.⁶³

⁵⁷ <http://twitter.com/MaajidNawaz/status/422342223460855809>

⁵⁸ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/liberaldemocrats/10588267/Lib-Dem-candidate-receives-death-threats-for-tweeting-Prophet-Mohammed-cartoon.html>

⁵⁹ <http://twitter.com/mshafiquk/status/424575029599543296>

⁶⁰ <http://www.jpost.com/International/Islamic-Movement-preacher-to-address-London-conference>

⁶¹ <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/douglasmurray/100023272/the-truth-about-the-islamic-human-rights-commission-recommended-by-britains-muslim-police/>

⁶² <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/douglasmurray/100023218/the-government-should-ignore-the-national-association-of-muslim-police/>

⁶³ <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/douglasmurray/100023272/the-truth-about-the-islamic-human-rights-commission-recommended-by-britains-muslim-police/>

London Central Mosque (Regent's Park Mosque)

Completed in 1978, Regent's Park Mosque has hosted such distinguished figures as Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and former Home Secretary Jack Straw. It is widely regarded as the most influential mosque in the UK and, according to Channel 4's *Dispatches*, says it is committed to interfaith dialogue.

A year after *Dispatches* investigated major mosques in the UK (in "*Undercover Mosque*"), its team went undercover again. Regent's Park was not shown in a positive light.

Women are not permitted to enter the main hall of Regent's Park Mosque but are provided with separate facilities. *Dispatches* sent a female reporter with a hidden camera to attend some classes for women in the mosque. Children were present when the following recordings were made:

Instructor: *He is Muslim, and he gets out of Islam, he doesn't want any more. What are we going to do? We kill him. Kill. You have to kill him, do you understand?*

Instructor: *The judgment for adultery, what is the law?* Pupil: *Stone him.* Instructor: *Until he dies. And the one who is not married?* Pupils: *Lash him, lash him.* Instructor: *Yes, with 100 lashes.*

Instructor: *If someone make themselves like a man, a woman like a man. The punishment is kill...kill them. Throw them from the highest place. We are not going to be like animals, living like animals. Or to be like the people of Lut (homosexuals), we have to take the judgement, the judgement is to kill them.* Pupil: *The punishment for homosexuals is to throw them from the highest point and then stone them.* Pupil reading from the Koran: *"Then we reduced him to the lowest of the low", so if you throw someone off a mountain, you are reducing them to the lowest of the low, because they are falling off the highest place.*

Instructor: *This is not to tell you to start killing people, there must be a Muslim leader. When the Muslim army becomes stronger, when Islam has grown enough.*

Instructor: *It is not enough that you worship Allah, we have to also in our heart hate what displeases Allah and love what Allah loves. You have to hate what displeases Allah, especially when living in this country, with that non-Muslim.* Pupil (reading from the Koran): *"Verily we are free from you and whatever you worship beside Allah, we have rejected you and there has appeared between us and you hostility and hatred forever, until you believe in Allah alone."* Instructor: *Islam is keeping away from disbelief and from the disbelievers.*

Instructor: *To be a good friend, to give them all our secrets? No, you understand? You don't have to be friends with them, that is not allowed, because loyalty is only to the Muslim not to the kaffir.*

At a meeting to promote "interfaith dialogue", members of different faiths gathered for a discussion. When non-Muslims left, the tone of the meeting changed from civil and tolerant to the following:

Instructor: *We feel nothing sometimes going past the church. We don't look at it in disgust and think 'what are those people doing in there?' What they say with their tongues is so vile and disgusting, it's an abomination.*

On non-Muslim faiths, the following is taught: *[The Muslim] shouldn't just be indifferent and say things like 'you go to the church, I go to the mosque', lets all stay together like one big, happy family and all be united as humanity, this is false – it does not work. This concept is a lie, it is a fake and a farce.*

All of the above instructors were trained in Saudi Arabia and told the reporter that they were delivering Saudi teachings. *Dispatches* revealed that the Regent's Park Mosque is heavily funded by the Saudi government and that its director is a Saudi diplomat who enjoys diplomatic immunity. When questioned on the teachings above, Ahmed al Dubayan replied: *"The ICC [Islamic Cultural Centre] is committed to interfaith and cross-cultural understanding. It does not support or condone extreme views, racial hatred, violence or intolerance."*

As well as the speeches recorded above, the bookshop attached to the mosque has been found to be selling DVDs preaching hatred of women in particular. One such DVD features Murtaza Khan (above) who declares: *"The mental capacity of this society teaches you 'I am a woman in my own right, I can get my own job, I can get my own funding, I can get my own welfare, I can get my own flat, I can get my own home, I can get my own state benefit – I don't need you in my life', what is that? Deception of the devil. Man is stronger than women, but men today don't know how to take care of their families, that's why their women walk loose, their women speak loose, and that's their evil society and Muslim society is becoming like that today".*

Several other DVDs including speakers condemning non-Muslims and referring to Jews as "pigs" whose "time will come" were found to be on sale. Ahmed al Dubayan insists that the bookshop is independent of the mosque and that he has objected to the DVDs on sale.

Mosques engaged in underage marriage

In 2013 an ITV documentary found 18 imams at major mosques in Britain agreeing to marry underage girls. One of these mosques was the Central Jamia Masjid Ghamkol Sharif Mosque in Birmingham, the second largest mosque in Britain. The film involved two reporters, posing as the mother and brother of a 14-year-old girl, saying they wished to marry a young female family member against her will.

One of the reporters, posing as an older brother, approached a representative of the Central Jamia Mosque, Ghamkol Sharif, and asked him to marry his 14-year old sister to a 20-year old man. He was told: *"In Islamic law she is ok to get married because she will be the age of maturity"*.

The representative acknowledged that the age of sexual consent and marriage in the UK is 16 but on hidden camera he states: *"Obviously, you take Islam as priority over the law of the land. But then we do consider the law of the land, but then we've got to look at what Islam says and that's why I've got the right from a mufti, they say do it. If anyone, any authority finds out, anyone finds out, then what are you going to do?"* The reporter asks if it is ok for the young girl to live with her new husband following the marriage, and is told: *"She's married, she's married. By sharia, grace of God, she's legal to get married and there's nothing against that. We're doing it because it's ok through Islam but then you've got the kaffirs, the law, the English people, you know, that you know you can't get*

married twice but, by the grace of God, we can get married 4 times. Obviously, Islam has made it easy for us. They don't understand, that's the only problem".

The response of The Central Jamia Mosque Ghamkol Sharif in Birmingham was this: *"though Islamic sharia law allows marriages in special circumstances in the Muslim world when girls reach puberty, with the consent of the girls and parents concerned, we do not live in a Muslim country, so we do not practice that"*. Note, again, the absence of moral condemnation.

Another cleric who agreed to marry the 14-year old girl was Mufti Shams al-Huda al-Misbahi, who preaches at the Jamia Masjid Kanzul Iman Mosque in Heckmondwike near Leeds. The reporter, still posing as a brother, states: *"She's not willing now, but she will be"*. Misbahi responds: *"If you make her willing, she will be willing."* He is then recorded saying that he would perform the marriage without providing an official marriage certificate valid under British law. *"We'll make everything okay by Islam. We'll write down and put it in our records."* Misbahi goes on to tell the undercover reporter that the girl will be able to live with her new husband after the ceremony.

Mufti Misbahi has worked with the West Yorkshire Police as an advisor on community cohesion, and has publicly condemned forced marriage for many years.

In all, 18 out of the 56 mosques contacted agreed to carry out underage marriages.⁶⁴

Approach of the legal profession

In March 2014 the Law Society, which is the representative body for all solicitors in England and Wales, issued guidance, by way of a formal practice note, on how to incorporate sharia law provisions in wills⁶⁵. This guidance contains the following provisions which discriminate against women, non-Muslims, and "illegitimate" and adopted children:

"The male heirs in most cases receive double the amount inherited by a female heir of the same class. Non-Muslims may not inherit at all, and only Muslim marriages are recognised."

"...illegitimate and adopted children are not Sharia heirs."

The guidance does not change the law, and in any case under the English law principle of testamentary freedom testators are free to "discriminate" if they so wish, as long as they provide for their dependants in accordance with the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975.

In response to criticism that it was endorsing discrimination and sharia law, the Law Society's president Nicholas Fluck said⁶⁶:

⁶⁴ <http://www.itv.com/news/2013-10-06/uk-imams-agree-to-perform-underage-marriages/>

⁶⁵ <http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/advice/practice-notes/sharia-succession-rules/>

⁶⁶ <http://www.thelawyer.com/secular-lawyers-threaten-action-over-law-society-sharia-wills-guide/3018087.article>

“We live in a diverse multi-faith, multi-cultural society...The Law Society responded to requests from its members for guidance on how to help clients asking for wills that distribute their assets in accordance with Sharia practice.”

It is a cause of significant concern to Sharia Watch UK that the legal establishment – which if anything should be calling attention to the danger sharia law poses to fundamental legal rights and the rule of law – should choose instead to issue formal guidance on how to use sharia law. Sharia Watch UK believes that in issuing this guidance the Law Society, whatever its intentions, is being seen to legitimise, endorse and give credibility to sharia law, not only in the area of wills and succession but more generally.

Conclusion

The information contained in this report has been obtained from reliable and mainstream media sources, and is already in the public domain.

Sharia Watch UK believes that the teachings being espoused in mainstream mosques and institutions across Britain represent a clear, present and significant threat to women, non-Muslims, Muslims, as well as democracy and freedom of speech. This danger is compounded by the legitimisation of such mosques and Islamic societies which occurs when political figures visit or offer support to such bodies.

We believe that such support sanitises and minimises the extent of the threat posed by these extremist Islamic teachings, and we call on mainstream politicians not only to cease their support for such groups and mosques, but to publically and unequivocally condemn their message and to defend freedom of speech, women’s autonomy, and the rights and freedoms of people of all faiths and none.

Furthermore, we call on government and public figures to recognise the views espoused above as extremist views and to hold people to account for such views; we seek an end to the double-standards that are evident in public discourse on such issues.

We seek an equal application of laws to all people, including Muslims, in terms of gender equality, racial and religious hatred, and the incitement of violence.

We close by asking one simple question: if the information presented in this report is not enough to prompt a wholesale change of approach by the government, then what is?

Sharia Watch UK will send a copy of this report to all members of both Houses of Parliament, and to all government ministers.

Written by Anne Marie Waters, with gratitude to Charlie Klendjian for his contributions.

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