ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION: ADVOCATING FOR THE AYATOLLAHs

BY EMMA FOX

“Al Quds Day is a universal day to support the oppressed against the oppressor”
IMAM KHOMEINI

HJ
Henry Jackson Society

CENTRE ON RADICALISATION & TERRORISM

DEMOCRACY | FREEDOM | HUMAN RIGHTS

May 2019
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emma Fox is a Research Fellow in the Centre on Radicalisation and Terrorism.

Emma’s work specialises on UK extremist networks and their exploitation of institutions within civil society.

She was previously the Director of Student Rights - analysing the vulnerability of students to extremism within Higher Education. As Student Rights Director, Emma published the ‘Extreme Speakers and Events: 2017/18’ and ‘Profiting from Prejudice: How Mend’s ‘IAM’ Campaign Legitimised Extremism’ reports. Her work has been published across the national media; including in The Daily Telegraph and The Times.

Emma holds a first-class degree in Classical Civilisation from the University of Leeds.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is a London-based advocacy group established in 1997, inspired by the worldview of Ayatollah Khomeini and the revolutionary, theocratic societal aims he established in the Islamic Republic of Iran. IHRC has gained prominence in recent years for its pro-Hezbollah Al-Quds Day parades, its controversial ‘Islamophobia Awards’ and the anti-Semitic rhetoric espoused by the group’s senior figures. However, less attention has been given to IHRC’s wider extremist links and terrorist sympathies. There is also a lack of understanding as to how extremist groups can exploit the charitable sector; obtain public funds; acquire status via academic associates; attain international recognition; and influence governments.

• IHRC is an institutionally pro-terrorist and anti-Semitic organisation. Senior figures have espoused support for violent jihad, expressed sympathy for convicted terrorists, and advocated for the extraction and eradication of ‘Zionists’. Campaigns have supported high-profile associates of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Hezbollah. Events have hosted representatives from PFLP and Hezbollah, and have been used to seek out those “looking for martyrdom”. One IHRC briefing claims that use of force against Israel can include the “destruction of installations” on her territory and “the financial, logistical and informational support” of Hezbollah. Some remarks, views or material advanced by individuals associated with IHRC, or at IHRC-organised events, may warrant criminal investigation with regard to S.11-13 Terrorism Act 2000 and S.1-4 Terrorism Act 2006.

• IHRC’s alignment with the Iranian state’s foreign and domestic agenda is typified through IHRC co-founder and director Saied Ameli’s appointment to President Hassan Rouhani’s Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution in 2019, having previously served as a member of Ayatollah Khamenei’s Supreme Council of Cyberspace. Despite Ameli’s role as a senior Iranian state official, he has continued to play an active role at IHRC.

• IHRC advisors have expressed sympathy for martyrdom and jihad, as well as support for militant resistance movements. Multiple advisors have been linked to overseas proscribed groups. This includes Muhammad al-Massari, a “key influence on young jihadists” who previously helped establish a press office for Osama Bin Laden in London.

• IHRC sells literature authored by Islamist and Salafi–Jihadist ideologues, including one book that is banned in UK prisons. This includes publications that have inspired violent Islamist movements across the globe, such as Sayyid Qutb’s Milestones, Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi’s work on jihad, and writings by Ibn Taymiyyah. They have also sold Abdullah el-Faisal’s violent interpretations of the Qur’anic hadith. Convicted of inciting racial hatred in this country, el-Faisal is currently fighting extradition from Jamaica to the US, where he is accused of recruiting for the Islamic State terror group (IS). Proceeds from the bookshop go towards the organisation’s subsidiary charity, IHRC Trust.
• IHRC has acquired UN Special Consultative Status, European Commission funds, and public subsidies through its charitable affiliate, IHRC Trust. IHRC Ltd is also an accredited immigration advisor. It is particularly concerning that several academics who have engaged with IHRC have recently gained government and cross-party parliamentary influence. This includes Salman Sayyid, who co-authored the APPG on British Muslims’ definition of Islamophobia, and Sadek Hamid and Tahir Abbas who were selected by the Commission for Countering Extremism to research extremism.
# CONTENTS

1. **INTRODUCTION**  
   
2. **SENIOR FIGURES AND ADVISORS**  
   
3. **AFFILIATED PROJECTS AND PARTNERS**  
   
4. **SUPPORT OF TERRORISM**  
   
5. **PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LEGITIMISATION**  
   
6. **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**  
   
7. **CONCLUSION**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SENIOR FIGURES AND ADVISORS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. AFFILIATED PROJECTS AND PARTNERS</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. SUPPORT OF TERRORISM</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LEGITIMISATION</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) was established by Khomeinist activists in 1997 as part of the legacy of Kalim Siddiqui, a British Muslim activist and pro-regime leader of the ‘Muslim Parliament’. The organisation, based in London, has achieved media notoriety in recent years for its controversial campaigns and vocal pro-Hezbollah views. Most well-known for its annual Al-Quds Day parade and controversial ‘Islamophobia Awards’, IHRC toes a strict Khomeinist line and echoes Iranian-state foreign policy objectives. However, in reality, little is known about the organisation – its origins, funding, affiliate projects and partners. It has seemingly evaded sufficient scrutiny from authorities, and its support for the Lebanese Shiite militia has been categorised as merely political, in line with British law until early 2019. This assumption is demonstrably erroneous, but IHRC continues to enjoy political status and academic credibility for its activities.

This report examines the extremist activity of IHRC, and details the ways in which the organisation has acquired influence, credibility and funds from mainstream society to bolster its work. It is structured as follows:

Section 2 profiles the organisation’s senior figures and associates, highlighting key concerns regarding their views and associations with extremism.

Section 3 explores the organisation’s affiliated projects and partners, IHRC’s guest speakers and the journals closely associated with the directors.

Section 4 provides the most disturbing examples of IHRC’s promotion and glorification of terrorism. This includes the activities that occur at Al-Quds Day rallies; sympathy with, and support of, convicted terrorists; events extolling the virtues of the Palestinian Intifada [violent uprising]; promotion of literature that has been banned in UK prisons; and selling of merchandise depicting guerrilla fighters with weapons. It is evident that the Khomeinist ideology and anti-western worldview that underpins the organisation and all its activities sanctions, legitimises and, at times, encourages terrorist violence.

Section 5 details how IHRC has attained international recognition, academic credibility and public funds particularly as a consequence of its affiliate charity and accredited partnerships.

The report concludes with a series of policy recommendations which, if enacted, would thwart the loopholes currently exploited by extremist groups in order to mainstream their agenda and gain access to the public purse.

A note on methodology and definitions

All the information used in this report is open source.

IHRC has publicly declared that the limited company (IHRC Ltd) and the trust (IHRC Trust) are “two entities that make up IHRC”.¹ It states that this structure was “originally devised after advice from the Charity Commission in order to keep the charitable arm of the organisation separate from the political and lobbying arm”.² A note on the IHRC Trust site states that “The Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust was set up to support the

² ibid.
charitable works of The Islamic Human Rights Commission Ltd. The two organisations are separate entities that cooperate to further charitable causes in the UK and abroad”. The relationship between the two bodies is currently subject to an investigation by the Charity Commission; however, this report proceeds on the basis that IHRC Trust is an affiliate charity of IHRC Ltd.

In line with the UK government, as laid out in the national Counter-Extremism Strategy, this paper considers extremism to be the:

Vocal or active opposition to our fundamental [British] values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

In line with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, this paper considers anti-Semitism to be a:

Certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Relevant examples include:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective – such as the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

---

In line with the UK Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), this paper considers terrorism to be the:

Use or threat of action, both in and outside of the UK, designed to influence any international government organisation or to intimidate the public. It must also be for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.6

This paper adheres to the UK list of proscribed terrorist organisations in its contemporary format. It is noted that Hezbollah (also spelled Hizballah, Hizbullah and Hizbollah) was fully proscribed in March 2019, before which the designation covered only the military wing (External Security Organisation in 2001; extended to the group’s entire military apparatus in 2008).7 This paper is concerned with the expression of support for Hezbollah’s military activities.

---

2. SENIOR FIGURES AND ADVISORS

This report contends that IHRC promotion of extremism, support for overseas terror groups and extreme anti-Semitism is institutional, permeates the Commission at every level, and is a by-product of the Khomeinist, Islamist and anti-western ideology that underpins the organisation and its activities.

The following section profiles IHRC’s senior figures and advisors, highlighting their most egregious links to extremism. This includes chairman Massoud Shadjareh’s support for violent jihad, director Arzu Merali’s award-winning recognition by the Iranian government, and advisors who have been linked to proscribed terrorist organisations.

2.1 Massoud Shadjareh

Massoud Shadjareh is chairman of IHRC and one of the organisation's most vocal and prominent spokespeople. He is credited on IHRC’s website as having helped to set up the organisation in 1997 alongside other Islamic activists.8 Shadjareh is an outspoken supporter of Ayatollah Khomeini,9 and has denied that human rights abuses take place in Iran.10 In 2012, his authorisation to travel to the United States was withdrawn, although the reason for this remains unclear.11

Alongside IHRC’s wider campaigns for individuals convicted of terror offences (see Section 4.2), Shadjareh was a vocal advocate for Aafia Siddiqui, speaking alongside extremists such as Moazzam Begg and Shakeel Begg for her release in 2010.12 Siddiqui, known as Al-Qaeda’s highest-ranking female associate,13 was sentenced to 86 years in prison for attempting to shoot US security officials in Afghanistan.14

Shadjareh has described liberal Muslim Maajid Nawaz as a “hate preacher” on BBC News, for which the broadcaster was forced to apologise.15 However, he has somewhat softer views of Islamist clerics Abu Qatada and Abu Hamza (see Section 4.2). Commenting after Qatada’s eight-year legal battle with the British authorities over terrorism charges, Shadjareh questioned the evidence behind the cleric’s convictions and disputed his links

---

10 'Massoud Shadjareh of the IHRC denies human rights abuses in Iran', YouTube, 6 October 2015, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RhPNeiD6k, last visited: 14 May 2019.
11 'Press Release – Chair of IHRC denied entry to US', IHRC, 7 August 2012.
to terrorism. In a similar manner, when extremist preacher Abu Hamza al-Masri was convicted of supporting terrorism, Shadjareh complained that Abu Hamza had been “demonised”.

Moreover, Shadjareh has repeatedly endorsed violent resistance against the state of Israel (see Section 4.3). For example, after a study by the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) detailed how the Palestinian Authority curriculum taught martyrdom and military resistance, Shadjareh supported the material in an interview with RT (formerly Russia Today). Shadjareh argued that criticism of the curriculum was apologetics for the “Israeli Zionist occupation”, and that Palestinians have “the right to resist” and “teach their children” as they see fit. When probed further about the promotion of violence, Shadjareh stated that one has to “look at the reality” of the situation and recognise that [Palestinian] children have been “brutalised by these [Israeli] soldiers on a daily basis”.

Shadjareh’s endorsement of violent resistance was also promoted in a panel discussion on Iranian State television with presenter Roshan Muhammed Salih (see Section 3.1). The conversation saw the guests criticise the Palestinian Authority for engaging in political negotiations with Israel, and legitimising the peace process and two-state solution. Shadjareh contended that “resistance seems to be the only way forward” and when asked whether this notion of resistance was the message of the Al-Quds Day march (see Section 4.1), he responded, “Indeed it is.”

Furthermore, Shadjareh has been filmed promoting virulent anti-Semitism, most notably at Al-Quds Day rallies, at which he makes regular rousing speeches. On one occasion, Shadjareh claimed that the Israeli government had been healing IS fighters in order for them to kill more Muslims. He has expressed support for violent jihad in Palestine, calling to the crowd, “You know people are rushing in large numbers from Britain, from Europe, from all around the world, from Arab countries to go and do jihad in Syria. What about jihad in Palestine? Why not even a single one of them have gone to fight for Palestine for over 65 years?” He has also been pictured draped in the flag of Hezbollah.

Furthermore, Shadjareh has been filmed promoting virulent anti-Semitism, most notably at Al-Quds Day rallies, at which he makes regular rousing speeches. On one occasion, Shadjareh claimed that the Israeli government had been healing IS fighters in order for them to kill more Muslims. He has expressed support for violent jihad in Palestine, calling to the crowd, “You know people are rushing in large numbers from Britain, from Europe, from all around the world, from Arab countries to go and do jihad in Syria. What about jihad in Palestine? Why not even a single one of them have gone to fight for Palestine for over 65 years?” He has also been pictured draped in the flag of Hezbollah.


19 ibid.

20 ibid.


22 ibid., 1:01.

23 ibid., 2:10.


2.2 Arzu Merali

Arzu Merali is a co-founder and director of research at IHRC. She is an author for the magazines *Palestine Internationalist* and *Crescent International*, both of which promote a strong Khomeinist and pro-Hezbollah editorial line that will be discussed later in this report (see Sections 3.2 and 3.3).

Merali’s apologeticism with regard to Hezbollah is evident from an article she wrote for *Middle East Eye*, a news outlet linked to US-Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) Interpal, after the Shiite militia was fully proscribed under UK law. The article was published on 28 February 2019 and is entitled ‘Is the UK pushing a false narrative on Hezbollah?’ In it, Merali criticised Home Secretary Sajid Javid’s decision, claiming that it “is further proof of the bankruptcy of the idea of anti-terrorism as anything other than a political device to criminalise dissent”, and accused the “media” (particularly the BBC) of biased coverage of Hezbollah, “the group responsible for more than a decade of guerrilla resistance”.

Merali’s pro-Khomeini, anti-secular and anti-West worldview can be seen in a panel discussion entitled ‘Strike The Empire Back: legacies & examples of liberation from neo-colonialism & white supremacy’, that took place in 2014. According to Merali, “We know who the enemy is, we know that it’s the West, it’s the NATO countries and on a more philosophical level it’s the structure … the white supremacist structure or the liberal structure … that we’re all essentially suffering at the hands of.” Merali went on to lament that IHRC has to engage with “entities that are part of a structure that we simply can’t accept”. She later called Iran’s Islamic Revolution “one of the most successful events” with a “vibrant legacy”, although admitted it had encountered several problems. As further indication of Merali’s Islamist ideology, in a publication co-authored with IHRC director and Iranian state official Saied Ameli (see Section 5.1), she argued that her findings on Muslim attitudes towards the law and Islamophobia necessitate the British government to recognise “Shariah [Islamic law] as a Solution”, and allow for a dual legal process in the UK.

Moreover, Merali has spoken alongside several extremist activists. In 2011, she appeared on the Islam Channel segment ‘Gaza – The Muslim Response’ alongside presenter Ibtihal Ismail Bsis, and panellists Sultanah Parvin and Dahlia Maarouf. Parvin was representing pan-Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir as deputy media spokesperson in the UK, and Maarouf...
was representing Interpal. Although appearing here as an Islam Channel presenter, Bsis has also acted as deputy women’s media representative of Hizb ut-Tahrir UK. In July 2015, a recording leaked to the BBC showed Bsis propagating several extremist and conspiratorial views, including claiming that British authorities fabricate the threat posed by Islamic State.

Moreover, Merali has concerning links to the Iranian regime. Beyond authoring several publications with Iranian state official Saied Reza Ameli (see Section 5.1), in 2016 Merali received an Iranian government human rights award in Tehran, alongside Bahrainian Shiite cleric Issa Qassim. The ceremony was opened by Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli Larijani, chief of Iran’s judiciary, who in 2018 was subject to US sanctions over alleged human rights abuses. The ceremony was attended by other senior Iranian officials and ambassadors of Islamic countries to Iran. While in Tehran, both Merali and Shadjareh addressed the semi-official Tasnim news agency, criticising western opposition to Iran.

2.3 Nazim Ali

Nazim Ali is a director of IHRC and a pharmacist based in central London. He has come to prominence as one of the key spokespeople of the annual Al-Quds Day march (see Section 4.1).

Ali has been recorded claiming that “Zionists” were responsible for the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, and that they “give money to the Tory Party to kill people in high-rise blocks”. His conspiratorial remarks extended to the Rabbis on the Board of Deputies, the main representative body of the Jewish community in the UK, who he declared had “blood on their hands”. Ali further alleged that “Zionists” control the media output of the BBC and that they are “baby killers”. In 2017, the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) charity sought a private prosecution against Ali for his statements, claiming he had committed an offence contrary to Section 5 of the 1986 Public Order Act.

43 Islamic Human Rights Award 2016 Jointly Goes to Bahrain’s Cleric, IHRC Co-Founder’, Iran Front Page News.
47 ibid.
48 ibid.
49 ibid.
denied by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and the decision was later upheld by the High Court after appeal.\(^50\)

It is clear that by expressing scorn for “Zionism” – as opposed to “Judaism” – Ali has been at liberty to make several anti-Semitic remarks. He has been reported as stating at an Al-Quds Day march, “We are fed up of the Zionists. We are fed up of their rabbis. We are fed [up] of their synagogues”, before approaching a group of counter-demonstrators and singing, “Bye, bye Zionists.”\(^51\) Ali’s use of the term “Zionist”, which was highlighted by the 2016 Chakrabarti Inquiry Report as a frequent euphemism for “Jew”,\(^52\) is made further problematic when he condemns the “Zionist Israeli terrorists” who formed part of the counter-demonstration of the Al-Quds march.\(^53\) The interchangeable use of these terms is a characteristic employed throughout much of IHRC’s work. Of particular concern, in its 2000 press release detailing the group’s opposition to former Middle East envoy Lord Levy, IHRC stated, “Lord Levy is an unashamed Zionist who is accordingly a staunch supporter of Israel.”\(^54\)

Ali has also sought to defend allegations of anti-Semitism by referencing the Neturei Karta fringe sect of the Jewish community which supports the work of IHRC. The Neturei Karta is a group of anti-Zionist Hasidic Jews who have attracted particular controversy over their engagement with the work of high-profile anti-Semites, including former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Nation of Islam’s Louis Farrakhan.\(^55\) The group has also been filmed at the Al-Quds Day march calling for the destruction of Israel and burning Israeli flags.\(^56\) Although representing only 0.03% of the global Jewish community, the Neturei Karta receives significant attention from extreme Islamist groups at pains to demonstrate that their views are not anti-Semitic.\(^57\) The most explicit example of this form of tokenism by Ali can be seen in several anti-Semitic contentions he made in a clip uploaded to YouTube in 2017.\(^58\) In it, Ali alleged that it is within Zionists’ “genes” and their “genetic code” to “occupy” other people, referred to “European alleged Jews”, and warned against the “imposters” of the Board of Deputies.\(^59\) However, he finished the diatribe by claiming that it is the Neturei Karta who are “the true Rabbis” and the only legitimate representative of the Jewish community.\(^60\)


\(^{54}\) ‘Jews and Muslims Unite to Make a Stand Against Zionist Oppression’, YouTube, 18 June 2017.


\(^{57}\) ibid.

\(^{58}\) ibid.
2.4 IHRC Advisors

Since its establishment in 1997, IHRC has described several individuals with whom it has worked as “advisors” to the organisation, although it is unclear precisely what formal role or impact they have made to the group. Past print editions of IHRC’s monthly newsletters identified contemporary advisors, although currently there is no central place in which they are listed. A considerable number of these individuals have a history of extremist and pro-terrorist views, and many have been linked to proscribed terrorist organisations.

Extremist-linked IHRC advisors include Achmad Cassiem, head of the Khomeini-inspired[61] South African Islamist group Qibla[62] and its offshoot People Against Gangsterism And Drugs (PAGAD), which are designated terrorist organisations by the US State Department. Another example is Muhammad al-Asi, who has doubted the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust,[64] expressed support for the “liquidation” of Israelis and sanctioned death for those who insult Islam.[65] He has also promoted 9/11 conspiracies[66] akin to those of fellow IHRC advisor Ibrahim Zakzaky, who claimed that Jews helped orchestrate the attack.[67]

The Islamic Centre of England’s Sheikh Mohammad Saeed Bahmanpour is another IHRC advisor, who has declared “we are all Hamas, we are all Hizbullah”[68] and made violent anti-Semitic threats. On one occasion, Bahmanpour warned Zionists that their “days are numbered”[69] and declared that the time will come when “we will free the world” of Zionists.[70]

Other advisors linked to extremism include Hamid Algar, who reportedly refused to condemn suicide attacks against Israelis, advocated armed jihad against the “enemies of Islam” and denied the Armenian genocide.[71] Also listed is Fahad Ansari,[72] who has expressed sympathy for martyrdom and jihad, described Al-Qaeda ideologue Anwar al-Awlaki as “inspirational” and written a glowing piece in Crescent International magazine about the

---

[66] ibid.
Taliban, claiming that “they were the best thing that Afghanistan had experienced in decades”. Of particular concern, IHRC has previously listed Muhammad al-Massari as an advisor, whom The Telegraph dubbed in 2005 “the voice of Al-Qa’eda”. Al-Massari helped establish a press office for Osama Bin Laden in London (for which he received personal thanks), claimed it was legitimate for Muslims to kill British troops and used his website to depict the murder of three British soldiers in Iraq. The Telegraph noted that Islamism experts considered him to be a “key influence on young jihadists”. 

---

76 ibid.
3. AFFILIATED PROJECTS AND PARTNERS

IHRC is closely linked to several organisations and individuals with a history of extremism. This includes Iranian-state television PressTV, ‘pro-resistance’ magazines Palestine Internationalist and Crescent International, and pro-terrorist group CAGE, with whom it has partnered on several occasions.

3.1 PressTV

PressTV is an Iranian state-funded media outlet that broadcasts in English. On 20 January 2012, UK communications regulator Ofcom revoked the channel’s broadcasting licence under section 238(4) of the Communications Act 2003.79 However, the channel remains available to UK viewers online.80 PressTV had breached licence rules for managing editorial oversight from Tehran with a broadcasting licence held in London.81 PressTV had been fined £100,000 the previous year after airing an interview with imprisoned journalist Maziar Bahari, conducted under duress.82 Bahari was detained for filming anti-government protests and was forced to make a confession on air under threat of execution.83

PressTV is the principal media network that hosts IHRC speakers and promotes its events.84 PressTV presenter and former Head of News Roshan Muhammed Salih (see Section 2.1) has spoken at several IHRC events and has hosted the organisation’s senior figures on his PressTV programmes.85 Salih is also editor and founder of the Islamist website 5Pillars, which hosts advertisements for IHRC87 and expresses support for an Islamic caliphate, sharia penal codes and “physical” jihad.88 Salih has appeared at IHRC events both as a representative of 5Pillars89 and as a journalist for PressTV.90 5Pillars co-sponsored

---

91 ibid.
IHRC’s 2014 ‘Islamophobia Awards’ event (see Section 4.4),91 where Salih presented an award.92 That year, Charlie Hebdo magazine was nominated and subsequently awarded ‘Islamophobe of the Year’ for “racist journalism” two months to the day after Islamist militants killed 12 people at its offices for satirising the prophet Muhammed (see Section 4.4).93 Salih has hosted IHRC chairman Massoud Shadjareh on his programme ‘The Sun Will Rise’, the PressTV series that focuses on Israel–Palestine, and has praised violent “resistance” movements in the region.94 Likewise, IHRC has hosted Salih on several occasions since 2013,95 sold his publications96 and honoured him with an award for journalistic integrity “in his efforts to showcase institutional and Western bias”.97

The views of Salih and IHRC bear significant overlap, particularly with regard to their employment of anti-Semitic tropes under the guise of pro-Palestinian activism. Notably, both Salih and IHRC have characterised interfaith activities between mainstream Muslim and Jewish groups as “normalisation” of Zionism, and Salih received criticism in early 2019 for lobbying an Islamic institution to cancel an exhibition highlighting Albanian Muslims who attempted to save Jews from the Nazis, owing to its links with Yad Vashem, a Jerusalem-based Holocaust museum.98 Similarly, on 17 May 2018, IHRC emailed its subscribers to warn of how “Zionists” use interfaith work as an “insidious strategy” and “deceitful attempt” to normalise the oppression of Palestinians.99 The letter further cautioned, “Do not allow your mosque or Islamic centre or organisation to allow Zionists to come in and normalise Zionism and diminish the crimes of Israel. Expose their agenda to one and all.”100

3.2 Palestine Internationalist

Palestine Internationalist is an anti-Zionist online journal edited by IHRC director of research Arzu Merali and IHRC advisor Fahad Ansari (see Section 2.4). The magazine follows a “pro-resistance” perspective and publishes articles sympathetic to Hamas and Hezbollah, both organisations proscribed under UK counter-terrorism legislation. This

95 ‘Massoud Shadjareh on Al Quds Day’, YouTube, 11 June 2018.
100 ‘Hajj 2017 SALE!’, IHRC, 14 August 2017.
includes pieces that advocate for the “dismantlement of the Zionist structure”¹⁰¹ and call for “armed resistance [as] the only way to repel Zionist aggression”.¹⁰²

Several high-profile extremist activists have contributed to *Palestine Internationalist*, including individuals with a history of anti-Jewish sentiment and conspiracism, as well as political campaigners who have funded or supported terrorist organisations. This includes Stephen Sizer,¹⁰³ who was sanctioned by the Church of England for promoting conspiracy theories that Israel was responsible for the September 11 attacks,¹⁰⁴ and former Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) Deputy Secretary General Daud Abdullah,¹⁰⁵ who signed a declaration of support for Hamas, endorsed attacks on British troops and led the MCB’s boycott of Holocaust Memorial Day.¹⁰⁶ The journal has published work by CAGE director Asim Qureshi¹⁰⁷ and activist Yvonne Ridley,¹⁰⁸ who has donated money to Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, promoted virulent anti-Semitism, and appeared “reluctant” to condemn Al-Qaeda in Iraq’s leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.¹⁰⁹

*Palestine Internationalist* promotes the narrative that Israel is an apartheid, fascistic and terrorist state, built upon a racist Jewish-supremacist ideology that seeks to oppress and eradicate Palestinian life. With this in mind, Hamas and Hezbollah are depicted as “liberation” movements, redressing injustice and emancipating the Palestinian population from a powerful western-backed “Zionist regime”. Zionism is demonised to the extent that violence against the “Zionist monster”¹¹⁰ – and by extension its supporters – is presented as a just, fair and moral response to tyranny and oppression.

For example, the “thorny issue” of Hamas suicide bombing and attacks upon civilians are justified, as “Palestine is not involved in conventional warfare therefore the Islamic rules [prohibiting suicide bombing] are not applicable”.¹¹¹ Another article similarly argues that “suicide bombers are a result of the oppression upon the community and not an exhortation of religion”.¹¹² A piece authored by Rachid al-Ghannouchi, leader of the

---


Muslim Brotherhood Tunisian Islamist Ennahdha movement,\textsuperscript{113} sees the issue of Palestine as a “global agenda”, and implores “the entire Muslim nation” to mobilise militarily, economically and spiritually against the Zionist project.\textsuperscript{114}

Perhaps the most disturbing piece is authored by Rima Fakhri, a member of Hezbollah’s political bureau.\textsuperscript{115} In 2006, Fakhri recounted the “story of Israeli aggression” to justify the murder of civilians and the necessity of violence.\textsuperscript{116} In 2009, Fakhri was hosted by IHRC at the University of London’s School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS).\textsuperscript{117}

### 3.3 Crescent International

Crescent International is an Islamist foreign policy magazine of the Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought (ICIT). The magazine has close links to IHRC, with its editorial board of three individuals including IHRC advisors Muhammad al-Asi and Afeef


\textsuperscript{116} ibid.

Khan.\textsuperscript{118} Crescent International was initiated by the late Kalim Siddiqui, director of the pro-Iran Muslim Parliament pressure group, who reportedly requested that Ayatollah Khomeini issue the 1989 fatwa and death threat against the British author Salman Rushdie.\textsuperscript{119} Siddiqui later became a determined advocate and prominent spokesperson against Rushdie in the British media, at a time when the writer was under police guard in order to prevent attempts on his life following accusations of blasphemy. As noted in Rushdie’s memoir, Siddiqui wrote a letter to The Guardian, declaring that “we [Muslims] have to support the death sentence on Rushdie”, after which he was granted a private audience with Ayatollah Khamenei in Tehran.\textsuperscript{120} The magazine follows a robust Khomeinist perspective, glorifies Iranian-funded militias Hamas and Hezbollah, and is characterised by extreme anti-Semitism.

For example, articles explore the “Mossad link to 9/11”,\textsuperscript{121} praise convicted Al-Qaeda terrorists, and glorify the “martyrs” of Palestinian resistance fighters.\textsuperscript{122} Historic anti-Semitic tropes are also repackaged for a modern audience. For example, one published letter detailed how “Zionist agents” round up “young Algerian boys to steal their organs”,\textsuperscript{123} and another condemned the “Zionist masters” of America.\textsuperscript{124} One article simply stated, “There is no shortage of violence in the world but most of it originates in the US or through its surrogate, the Zionist State of Israel.”\textsuperscript{125} The global Jewish community are also warned to “condemn Zionist Israel” or risk fuelling anti-Semitism.\textsuperscript{126}

Hamas is labelled a “resistance movement”, a member of the proscribed Islamic Jihad is referred to as a “freedom fighter”, and Al-Qaeda ideologue and recruiter Anwar al-Awlaki is described as “inspirational”.\textsuperscript{127} One article delights in the “relations between Hizbullah, Iran and the Hamas resistance movement in Palestine ... [for it] is an example of unity in practice”.\textsuperscript{128}
3.4 Guest Speakers

IHRC has partnered with various individuals and organisations that have a history of extreme and pro-terrorist views. This includes those that have been hosted by the organisation at its regular Author Evenings. These events see writers, academics and activists promote, discuss and sell their latest work at the IHRC offices in London. Speakers who have expressed terror-sympathising views include:

Asim Qureshi

On 8 October 2018, IHRC hosted Qureshi to talk about A Virtue of Disobedience, his book discussing “the history of oppression”.129 In it, Qureshi covers issues “from torture and extrajudicial killings, to racism and discrimination … resistance and disobedience … faith and virtue”.130

Qureshi is research director at CAGE. He has promoted violent jihad, has refused to condemn Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and stoning, and has described a British suicide bomber’s death as “selfless and sacrificial” and IS executioner Mohammed Emwazi as a “beautiful young man”. 131

Moazzam Begg

On 6 April 2011, IHRC hosted Moazzam Begg to discuss his book Enemy Combatant: The terrifying true story of a Briton in Guantanamo.132 In it, Begg describes his experience at Guantanamo Bay and alleged torture at the hands of US guards.

Begg is Director of Outreach at CAGE. He has argued that Al-Qaeda clerics are “the most credible voices” against IS, labelled two men imprisoned after joining an Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist group as “really good brothers”, and described jihadist Anwar al-Awlaki – whom Begg has personally interviewed133 – as a “prominent figure … who had the US War on Terror mechanism affect him”.134


**Hatem Bazian**

IHRC has hosted American academic Hatem Bazian on several occasions since 2014. He is a regular panellist at its 'Islamophobia' conferences,135 and in 2017 was invited to discuss his book *Palestine ... It Is Something Colonial* at IHRC’s offices in London.136 The 2017 event was chaired by Press TV and attended by Jeremy Corbyn MP.137

Bazian has been heavily criticised for his "sustained record" of intolerance towards Jews.138 This includes equating Israel to the Nazis,139 claiming that Jewish and pro-Israel groups are the driving force behind Islamophobia140 and posting tweets that Israel harvests organs.141 He has also been filmed at a rally calling for an *intifada* [violent uprising] in the US.142

---


140 Ibid.


4. SUPPORT OF TERRORISM

The Terrorism Act 2006 designated incitement to, and glorification of, terrorism as a criminal offence. This criminalises statements that induce or encourage, either directly or indirectly, acts of terrorism. The offence is committed by the publication of statements that glorify the commission or preparation of acts of terrorism (both past and future), and it carries a penalty of up to seven years imprisonment and/or a fine if tried in the Crown Court.

This section overviews some of IHRC’s key campaigns and provides evidence that necessitates investigation in relation to the aforementioned law.

4.1 Al-Quds Day Parade

One of IHRC’s most prominent campaigns is the UK franchise of the Khomeini-inspired Al-Quds Day parade, introduced for protesters around the globe to express support for Palestine and oppose Zionism on the last Friday of Ramadan. It is explicit in its desire for the eradication of the state of Israel. The Ayatollah claimed that Al-Quds Day marked “the duty of all Muslims to liberate the Quds [Jerusalem] and remove this nucleus of evil [Israel] from Islamic lands”. The parade sees supporters, including IHRC officials, adorned with Hezbollah merchandise and waving the group’s flag. Hamas flags also frequently appear. Owing to the full proscription of Hezbollah in February 2019, such overt support for the terror group will now be prohibited.

The parade is supported by Sunni and Shia-Islamist organisations, and it platforms speakers with high-profile connections to the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, in addition to those who have advocated violence against Israel and British troops. For example, past speakers include representatives from pan-Islamist movement Hizb ut-Tahrir, Hamas “special envoy” to Britain Azzam Tamimi, and Daud Abdullah who signed a letter endorsing violence against British troops preventing arms smuggling to Hamas. Supporting organisations have included the Palestine Return Centre, banned in Israel for connections to terrorism in 2010; the Muslim Association of Britain, linked

145 ibid.
149 Bennett, R., ‘UCL students in protest over pro-Palestinian speakers Azzam Tamimi and Miko Peled’, 10 November 2017.
151 ibid.

25
to the Muslim Brotherhood in a 2015 UK government report;\(^{156}\) and the Islamic Forum of Europe,\(^{157}\) labelled a Jamaat-e-Islami front-group by counter-extremism think tank Quilliam.\(^{158}\)

Protestors at the parade call for the annihilation of the Israeli state, glorify Hezbollah and defend all forms of “resistance” against Zionism. This includes IHRC senior figures, two of whom – Massoud Shadjareh\(^{159}\) and Nazim Ali\(^{160}\) – have been pictured wearing Hezbollah clothing at the rally. Shadjareh has stated that the “destruction of the state of Israel is important for all of us” and that the “Zionist cancer” must be “removed from earth”.\(^{161}\) Archives from IHRC affiliate Innovative Minds, a campaign group that supports the rally and uploads photographs and film footage of the parades on its website, demonstrate the extent to which anti-Semitic tropes and the endorsement of violence have become commonplace. Among the Hezbollah flags, placards stated, “We are all Hizbullah”;\(^{162}\) “We are all Hamas”\(^{163}\); “Defend the Intifada [militant uprising]”;\(^{164}\) and chants called, “With blood, with guns – we will free Palestine.”\(^{165}\)

Of particular alarm, children were frequently pictured wearing Hezbollah merchandise,\(^{166}\) which appeared to be sold at the rally,\(^{167}\) and could be seen holding pictures of militia leader Hassan Nasrallah.\(^{168}\) One photograph from the 2018 rally depicts a baby wrapped in a Hezbollah flag.\(^{169}\) Event speakers, who traditionally deliver their speech in front of Hezbollah flags, also glorified Sunni and Shia terrorism. During Al-Quds Day rallies, Yvonne Ridley has stated “Victory to the Hizbullah” and “Victory to Hamas”;\(^{170}\) Sheikh

---


\(^{157}\) Action Alert: Al-Quds Day 2011’, Palestinian Return Centre, 16 August 2011


Bahmanpour has questioned why Hamas and Hezbollah are terrorist organisations,171 and Hizb ut-Tahrir spokesman Taji Mustafa has stated that both Hamas and Fatah are “[our] brothers”.172 In fact, in 2008, Mustafa gave a speech that included a clear nod to jihadist terrorism against Israel, stating that “brave people willing to fight, looking for martyrdom, to liberate this land from the Zionist entity … this Ummah has to unite”,173 akin to Azzam Tamimi’s message at an earlier Al-Quds Day parade that claimed that, in the case of Palestine, “we live for it and we die for it”.174

In addition to expressing tributes for Hamas and Hezbollah, parade speakers have used their platform to proclaim support for other proscribed militias. Open University senior research fellow Les Levidow, who claimed that Hamas is “the most credible force for resisting Zionist terror” and that Hezbollah “organised effective counter terrorism resistance”, took the opportunity to promote the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK),175 a designated terrorist organisation in the UK since March 2001.176

The parade also gave licence to explicit and extreme anti-Semitism. Sheikh Bahmanpour threatened Zionists “your days are numbered”, and warned that “the resistance” will wipe Israel off the map.177 Members of the Neturei Karta (NK) (see Section 2.3) also promulgated virulent anti-Semitism. Placards read, “Zionism is the cause of Mideast bloodshed”;178 a spokesman stated, “Many people in the world today are depicting the Jewish people as a cruel people, something akin to the Nazis … and who can blame them”;179 and NK members were seen burning the Israeli flag to chants of, “Down Down Israel”.180

4.2 “Prisoners of Faith” campaign

IHRC has campaigned on behalf of various individuals convicted of terrorism, whom they determine are victims of oppression, injustice and state-sanctioned persecution. It gives such individuals the title “Prisoner of Faith”, in the same way as Amnesty International campaigns for political prisoners. Some of the most egregious cases are detailed below.

The most high-profile “Prisoner of Faith” is Omar Abdel-Rahman (the “Blind Sheikh”), convicted of conspiracy in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and planning a “war of urban terrorism” in the US.181 Upon his death, IHRC labelled Rahman a “martyr” and a “man of principle and unshakeable faith”.182 The organisation also claimed that Rahman’s conviction had been “set up by the US government solely for his influential religious and political views”.183

---

171 ibid.
182 ibid.
In 2004, IHRC published a press release condemning the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual and political leader of Hamas. IHRC stressed that the "right to defend oneself and one’s land is enshrined in the UN Charter" and lamented that “an octogenarian quadriplegic has joined the ranks of so-called terrorists”.

In 2006, IHRC lamented the conviction of Abu Hamza al-Masri. In a press release entitled ‘Reaction to Abu Hamza Verdict – Free Speech for Some but not All’, IHRC stated that it was “saddened” by the verdict, “notwithstanding Abu Hamza’s controversial character and views”. Abu Hamza had been found guilty of inciting murder, encouraging racial hatred and possessing a document for terror purposes, for which he was imprisoned for seven years.

Later in 2006, IHRC campaigned for the release of “prominent Muslim scholar” Anwar al-Awlaki, when he was detained by the Yemeni authorities for involvement in an Al-Qaeda plot. Al-Awlaki is now recognised as one of the terror group’s leading ideologues. He was a senior figure in Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP), was linked by US authorities to airline bombing plots, and had sought to use poison to kill American citizens. Former US President Barack Obama designated him “directly responsible for the death of many Yemeni citizens” and as “directing efforts” to murder American civilians. He was killed in Yemen by a US drone strike in 2011.

In 2010, IHRC supported Aafia Siddiqui, who is linked to 9/11 ringleader Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. Siddiqui is currently serving an 86-year prison sentence in the US for attempted murder and assault of US nationals, officers and employees in Afghanistan. IHRC was part of a coalition calling for her release.

---


88 ibid.


94 ibid.


In 2011, IHRC criticised the arrest and deportation of Sheikh Raed Salah, an Arab-Israeli activist who was banned from entering the UK.\(^{199}\) He was due to attend a House of Commons meeting with three Members of Parliament, including Jeremy Corbyn.\(^{200}\) Salah was the leader of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement, opposed to the Oslo peace accords, and closely aligned to Hamas – although legal in Israel.\(^{201}\) He had promoted anti-Semitic 9/11 conspiracy theories and reportedly accused Jews of using children’s blood to bake bread.\(^{202}\)

In 2014, IHRC criticised the treatment of Abu Qatada, who had been deported to Jordan after an eight-year legal battle with the British authorities. Its press release stated that the cleric had been “demonised in Whitehall” and that “the British government was engaged in a concerted, unremitting campaign of persecution against him simply because he was considered to hold unsavoury views which included challenging western foreign policies towards Muslim countries”.\(^{203}\) Qatada was regarded as Osama bin Laden’s “top man in Britain” and described by judges as central to Al-Qaeda’s terrorist activities in Britain.\(^{204}\)

IHRC has also supported other individuals linked to the Muslim Brotherhood,\(^{205}\) Hezbollah\(^{206}\) and the Taliban.\(^{207}\)

4.3 ‘Intifada’: Venezuelan Embassy event

IHRC’s support for militant struggle against Israel is particularly apparent from the organisation’s ‘Intifada’ event in 2010 at the Venezuelan Embassy.\(^{208}\) The Palestinian intifada refers to the armed uprisings of 1987–1993 and 2000–2003 against Israel that took place in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.\(^{209}\) The event hosted pro-Hamas\(^{210}\) and pro-Hezbollah\(^{211}\) speaker Azzam Tamimi and pro-Hamas\(^{212}\) and pro-Hezbollah\(^{213}\) speaker


\(^{201}\) Ibid.

\(^{202}\) Ibid.


\(^{210}\) Bennett, R., ‘UCL students in protest over pro-Palestinian speakers Azzam Tamimi and Miko Peled’, 10 November 2017.


George Galloway, and featured a video segment of convicted terrorist Leila Khaled who addressed the audience.

During the event, Shadjareh called for “expanded support for the Palestinian struggle” and claimed that Palestinians “couldn’t rely on the international community ... they had to rely on themselves, using whatever means they had. If all we have is stones, then we use stones.” He later stated that “those who stood up must be proud of themselves, and they should be considered by us as heroes. If it has taught us nothing else, Intifada has taught us that we must all stand up against our oppressors.”

Fellow speakers Azzam Tamimi and George Galloway further glorified Palestinian resistance fighters and justified terrorism against Israel. According to IHRC, Tamimi claimed, “Intifada, for many, means that death is more honourable than life. It is a reaction to extreme injustice ... are you to be blamed for using every means at your disposal in your struggle against that enemy?” It was then argued that the second intifada was superior to the first, as both Hamas and Fatah were better established and experienced: “More weapons were available. The resistance was very effective.” Arguing in favour of both political and military opposition to the state of Israel, Galloway claimed that “Hamas and Fatah were both necessary components of the resistance struggle”.

Leila Khaled was also a listed panellist, with a recorded 20-minute interview for the event shown at the start of the evening. Khaled is a prolific member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), an EU and US-proscribed terror organisation. In 1969, Khaled hijacked an American aircraft and held two Israeli passengers as hostages for three months, and the following year was arrested on board a flight to Amsterdam with two grenades. Despite being released, Khaled has never renounced violence and has remained a senior member of the PFLP. During the recorded interview, Khaled spoke in glowing terms about militant opposition to Israel. She refuted that a violent reaction could be seen as terrorism - “terrorism is occupation and not resistance” - and claimed that political negotiations are futile: “there is no use except to revolt”.

From IHRC’s reporting of the event alone, it is clear that the organisation both justifies violent attacks against Israeli civilians and provides a platform to those who commit such attacks.

---

215 ibid.
216 ibid.
217 ibid.
218 ibid.
Note
In July 2006, IHRC published a briefing “to assess the legal position of a response to Israeli aggression and policies towards Lebanon and the Palestinian people”.224 In it, IHRC states that Lebanon has the right to self-defence, the right to call for military assistance from an entity of its choosing, and thus “any support for Hizbullah defending Lebanon is lawful under international law”.225 IHRC further claim that any use of force against Israel must be proportional, and this is described as including “the destruction of installations on the territory held by Israel” and “financial, logistical and informational support of Hizbullah”.226 Israel’s state ideology is stated as being “based on a racial concept of the superiority of the Jews over all other humans”, and a “temporary occupation of Israel and a regime change” is suggested as a manner through which to restore peace and security in the region.

No individual is cited as the author of this document. At the time of its publication, Hezbollah’s External Security Organisation had been proscribed by the UK government.227

4.4 ‘Islamophobia Awards’
Every year, IHRC holds an awards ceremony to highlight high-profile individuals or organisations that, they argue, stoke Islamophobia. Although this is promoted as a satirical event, nominees appear to be legitimate figures of hate for the organisation. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that all of the individuals nominated for such an award are regarded by IHRC as genuine promulgators of anti-Muslim hate.

Past nominations have included the journalist Douglas Murray and liberal Muslim Maajid Nawaz, both outspoken critics of the organisation.228 Also featured have been Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu, former US President George W. Bush,229 and Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi.230 Nominees have ranged from western politicians (Presidents’ Barack Obama and Donald Trump)231 and Muslim groups that combat misogyny and extremism (Inspire)232 to right-wing media outlets (Fox News, The Sun).233 Individual journalists have also been targeted. Sky News’ Kay Burley was nominated234 after she allegedly dismissed

---

225 ibid.
226 ibid.
complaints of Islamophobia and racism from CAGE, and The Guardian columnist Polly Toynbee was awarded after challenging the notion of Islamophobia as an encroachment on the right to freedom of speech and criticism of religion. Other occasions saw the entire UK government and the Metropolitan Police were nominated for Islamophobia. The most disturbing moment of these award ceremony came in 2015 when satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo was awarded ‘Islamophobe of the Year’. The reason provided was “the publication's racist and Islamophobic journalism”. The award was given two months after the terrorist attack at the Charlie Hebdo offices in France which resulted in the murder of eight staff members.

4.5 Intifada Street

Since 2014, IHRC has partnered with Intifada Street arts campaign, founded by activist Mohammad Hamza in Bradford. The campaign lionises global militant “revolutionary” figures and glorifies violence. Hamza himself has stated online that violence against oppression is “not only legitimate but necessary”.

The campaign, in accordance with its namesake which refers to the armed Palestinian uprisings against Israel, depicts high-profile figures who have used violence to generate radical societal change. Colourful graphics portray “resistance” figures such as Black Power icon Malcolm X alongside Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Leila Khaled, one of the leaders of US-proscribed PFLP (see Section 4.3). Several pictures depict terrorist iconography – usually individuals brandishing weapons.

Khaled is depicted with an AK-47; Palestinian youths are painted with slingshots, stones and guns; and Hezbollah chief of staff Imad Mughniyeh is shown in military uniform raising a weapon in the air. Before 9/11, Mughniyeh was listed by US intelligence

---


243 Several graphics are also virulently anti-Semitic. See, for example, hanz-revo, Instagram, 14 January 2014, available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/jKoknAHgsV/, last visited: 15 May 2019.


services as their “most wanted” individual, on account of his responsibility for the deaths of more Americans than any other terrorist.249 One graphic shows Nasrallah holding up a rifle, while using the Syrian regime flag to stab a pile of bloodied corpses that includes Benjamin Netanyahu, Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton.250 Owing to the campaign’s rousing rhetoric, provocative imagery and glorification of violence, Intifada Street can be characterised as pro-terrorist propaganda.

In 2014, IHRC hosted Hamza’s first exhibition, Intifada Street: Revolutionary Arts, at its offices in London, which showcased the artist’s work and provided an opportunity to buy limited-edition prints.251 Since then, IHRC has partnered with Intifada Street on several occasions252 and continues to dedicate a section of its purchasable items online to Intifada Street graphics.253 In a similar fashion, although designed by another artist, IHRC also sell a framed print of convicted terrorist Leila Khaled with a gun, at the time of writing being sold by the organisation for £90.00.254

4.6 Promoted Literature

IHRC sells a large amount of literature both online and in its London store. The publications conform to the organisation’s wider Khomeinist, Islamist and anti-imperialist worldview, with titles related to a range of topics, including Palestine, resistance, slavery, history, Islam, Shiism, Islamophobia, children’s stories and colonialism. There is no suggestion that these topics, in and of themselves, are problematic or extreme. However, among the literature, IHRC has sold a considerable amount of extremist material, including texts that have inspired Salafi-Jihadist movements across the globe and which have been banned in UK prisons. A selection of its extremist material is outlined below:

Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi

IHRC has sold several publications written by the Pakistani Islamist Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi. Of the books sold, topics range from Islamic finance255 and interpretations of the Qur’an256 to faith, fasting, pilgrimage and jihad.257

---

Mawdudi is the founder of the South Asian Islamist group Jamaat-e-Islami (JI).258 His work helped form the tenets of Qutbism (see below), an ideology that has influenced Salafi-Jihadist groups.259 His publication Towards Understanding the Quran has been banned from UK prisons for its opposition to British values.260 IHRC sells the book on its online shop.261 In it, Mawdudi states that Muslims are required to fight in order to end the sovereignty and supremacy of the unbelievers.262

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi

IHRC has also sold a range of publications authored by the Qatar-based theologian Yusuf Al-Qaradawi. This includes books on charity,263 Islamic Jurisprudence264 and ‘Islamic Awakening’.265

Al-Qaradawi is widely regarded as the Muslim Brotherhood’s spiritual leader.266 He has supported violent jihad267 and justified the murder of American civilians, homosexuals, apostates and Jews.268 His work The Lawful and Prohibited in Islam is banned in UK prisons.269 Al-Qaradawi himself was refused a visa to enter Britain in 2008.270

Hasan Al-Banna

Hasan Al-Banna’s books have also been sold by IHRC. Of the publications sold, topics range from theology271 to spirituality272 and martyrdom.273

Al-Banna is the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood. Justice Haddon-Cave included him among his list of “political Islamists and violent extremists”.274 His book The Way of Jihad is banned in UK prisons.275

---

261 ‘Towards Understanding the Quran: Volume 3 (Surahs 7-9 )/Sayyid Abul A’la Mawdudi’, IHRC.
266 Norfolk, A., ‘Alert over Islamic hate books in jail was ignored’, The Times, 28 July 2016.
268 ibid.
269 Norfolk, A., ‘Alert over Islamic hate books in jail was ignored’, The Times, 28 July 2016.
275 Norfolk, A., ‘Alert over Islamic hate books in jail was ignored’, The Times, 28 July 2016.
**Sayyid Qutb**

IHRC has sold a range of publications authored by Sayyid Qutb. The topics range from social justice and Qur’anic commentary to Qutb’s “political manifesto” entitled Milestones.

Qutb is regarded as one of the “founding fathers of modern-day jihadism”. He is described by Justice Haddon-Cave as a “notorious violent, extremist, Islamic ideologue”. Milestones advocates violent Jihad and is banned in UK prisons. The book is widely accepted as “the foundational text for the modern jihadist movement”.

**Abdullah el-Faisal**

IHRC has sold the book 100 Fabricated Hadith by Abdullah el-Faisal. In it, he advocates violent jihad and stoning for adulterers and states that anyone who insults one of Allah’s prophets is a “kafir” and deserves to be killed. Jews are considered “monkeys and swine” and Shia Muslims “treacherous”.

El-Faisal is considered one of the most influential Salafi-Jihadist clerics to have preached in the UK, and is connected to several of Britain’s most high-profile terrorists. This includes 7/7 suicide bombers Mohammad Sidique Khan and Germaine Lindsay, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab “the underwear bomber” and Richard Reid “the shoebomber”. El-Faisal was subsequently convicted for soliciting murder and inciting racial hatred and was deported to Jamaica in 2007. The emergence of IS has seen a “renaissance” of the preacher’s influence, and he has since provided support and facilitated recruitment for the terror group. He is estimated to have played a role in the recruitment of 250 people from the Caribbean. He is currently fighting extradition from Jamaica to the US, where he is considered a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).

---

281 ibid.
282 Norfolk, A., ‘Alert over Islamic hate books in jail was ignored’, The Times, 28 July 2016.
283 ibid.
289 ibid.
Ibn Taymiyyah

IHRC has sold several works authored by Hanbali scholar Ibn Taymiyyah. Titles include *Letters from Prison*,291 *Enjoining Good - Forbidding Evil*,292 and *Being a True Slave of Allah*.293 Ibn Taymiyyah is a medieval Islamic scholar, whose works have been cited by Salafi-Jihadist movements to justify violence. He has written extensively on Shiism despite being a Sunni scholar.294 Two of his most influential teachings are the elevation of jihad to mean physical combat against unbelievers and the legitimisation of rebellion against Muslim rulers who do not enforce sharia (Islamic law).295 His ideas have been considered to “underpin” 25 years of violence in Egypt, including the 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat, and to have helped inspire the ideology of Wahhabism.296 He was quoted as an authority by Osama bin Laden,297 and his fatwa (religious decrees) have also been used by militants to murder apostates.298 The works and legacy of Ibn Taymiyya are highly controversial, causing major dispute among Islamic scholars.299

Note

IHRC has also sold works from Kalim Siddiqui (see Section 3.3),300 Moazzam Begg (see Section 3.4),301 Daud Abdullah (see Section 3.2)302 and Azzam Tamimi (see Sections 3.2 and 4.3),303 who are mentioned elsewhere in this report.

296 *ibid.*
297 ‘Why Study...Ibn Taymiyya, with Jon Hoover’, YouTube, 5 May 2011.
299 ‘Why Study...Ibn Taymiyya, with Jon Hoover’, YouTube, 5 May 2011.
5. PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LEGITIMISATION

Since its inception, IHRC has attained public and political legitimisation through various funding streams, charitable bodies and academia. In part, this is a consequence of its ostensive pursuit, as its name suggests, to contest Islamophobia and promote human rights. However, IHRC’s radical anti-West, anti-Israel and Islamist worldview has found favour among certain left-wing politicians and academics, who have used their platforms to promote the organisation and endorse its work.

5.1 Charitable Status

IHRC has been awarded UK charitable status through the IHRC Trust (1106120). The charity entitles IHRC to receive Gift Aid through taxpayer funds. The stated aims and activities of the charity are “to promote human rights and equality and diversity (in particular good race relations) throughout the world for the benefit of the public.”

There are four registered trustees of IHRC Trust, which is chaired by Raza Kazim. Kazim is a supporter of Hezbollah who is reported to have chanted “Bomb, bomb Tel Aviv” at a rally. He has also acted as a spokesman for IHRC Ltd and has reported on issues related to Al-Quds Day. Although officially separate organisations, IHRC Ltd (04716690) and IHRC Trust also share a registered address. On the Charity Commission’s webpage, only documents from 2014 to 2018 are available about the IHRC Trust. According to the information available, during that time IHRC Trust donated £1,051,500 to IHRC Ltd “for various charitable projects undertaken on behalf of the charity”, and received £248,136 in HMRC Gift Aid.

---

305 Gift Aid is a form of tax relief. When a donation is made through Gift Aid, charities are able to claim 25 pence for every £1 received. This can be claimed on most donations. To do this, a charity’s details must be registered with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). See ‘Get recognition from HMRC for your charity’, HM Government, available at: https://www.gov.uk/charity-recognition-hmrc and ‘Claiming Gift Aid as a charity or CASC’, HM Government, available at: https://www.gov.uk/claim-gift-aid, both last visited: 15 May 2019.
IHRC co-founder and director Saeid Reza Ameli has claimed to be a former trustee of IHRC Trust. He is founder of the Faculty of World Studies at the state-funded University of Tehran, where he holds a professorship. He is also a senior government official in Iran. On 5 September 2015, Ameli was appointed by Ayatollah Khamenei as a member of his Supreme Council of Cyberspace to serve a four-year term. The Council has since been sanctioned by the US Department of the Treasury for human rights abuses and censorship in Iran, and for support it has given to designated weapons proliferators. On 3 January 2019, Iranian president Hassan Rouhani appointed Ameli as Secretary of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution of Iran, a position he will hold for a four-year tenure. Despite Ameli’s foreign state appointments, he has continued to play an active role in the organisation he co-founded, speaking at IHRC events in the UK and overseeing and authoring research. At the time of writing, Ameli is listed in Companies House records as a “Director” of IHRC, with his country of residence cited as the UK, and his occupation “Lecturer”.

5.2 European Commission Funding

IHRC has obtained a European Commission, Directorate of Justice action grant to conduct research on Islamophobia. The project, entitled ‘Countering Islamophobia through the Development of Best Practice in the use of Counter-Narratives in EU Member States’ (Counter-Islamophobia Kit, or CIK) was based at the University of Leeds’ Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies (CERS). Notably, the project was led by CERS department head Ian Law, who has previously praised the work of IHRC. IHRC was one of a number of partners on the project; others included universities in Belgium, Czech Republic, and...
It is unclear how IHRC became involved in the CIK project. However, it should be noted that Salman Sayyid, an academic in CERS at the University of Leeds and senior lead on the project, has regularly engaged with IHRC and been hosted by the organisation since 2011. Sayyid has promoted three of his books at IHRC author evenings, been a panellist at IHRC’s ‘Institutional Islamophobia’ conferences and spoken at IHRC’s ‘Islamophobia Awards’ (see Section 4.4). He has claimed that “western powers” fail to practise democracy, that Prevent empowers young children to inform on their parents, that the UK government exercises state-sponsored Islamophobia, and that a ‘restored caliphate’ can provide “greater representation for Muslim sentiment and Muslim voices”. IHRC conferences at which Sayyid has spoken have been supported by a plethora of extremist, Islamist and far-Left campaign groups, including, but not limited to, CAGE, Mend, Stop the War, Muslim Council of Britain, Muslim Association of Britain, Federation of Student Islamic Societies, and faith centres such as Lewisham Islamic Centre and the Islamic Centre of England.
The CIK project officer is Amina Easat-Daas, an academic at the University of Leeds’ School of Sociology and Social Policy within which CERS broadly sits. Easat-Daas has previously worked with the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO), a Brussels-based umbrella body whose constituent organisations, former leaders and sponsors are dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood. FEMYSO is the youth branch of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE), cited as part of the Muslim Brotherhood European network in the UK government’s 2015 report into the extremist group.

Both Easat-Daas and Sayyid were speakers at the PalExpo conference in 2017 which took place in London. The event was controversial because its sponsors included groups linked to US and EU-proscribed terror groups, and speakers included individuals who had called for an intifada in America, justified violent jihad and campaigned for the release of an Al-Qaeda associate. Communities Minister Sajid Javid had considered cancelling the event amid concerns that the organisers had expressed support for Hamas.

Two weeks before the CIK project grant was due to expire, it was reported that the European Commission would terminate its £140,000 grant agreement with IHRC. Since the funding was signed off in 2016, the impact of this announcement remains unclear.

5.3 United Nations Special Consultative Status

IHRC was awarded Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 2007, a status it has held since. This is the pathway through which NGOs, non-profit public or voluntary organisations can take a formal role at the United Nations.

---


334 ‘Countering Islamophobia Through the Development of Best Practice in the use of Counter-Narratives in EU Member States’, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds.


337 IHRC was awarded Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council within which CERS broadly sits. Easat-Daas has previously worked with the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO), a Brussels-based umbrella body whose constituent organisations, former leaders and sponsors are dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood. FEMYSO is the youth branch of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe (FIOE), cited as part of the Muslim Brotherhood European network in the UK government’s 2015 report into the extremist group.

338 The event was controversial because its sponsors included groups linked to US and EU-proscribed terror groups, and speakers included individuals who had called for an intifada in America, justified violent jihad and campaigned for the release of an Al-Qaeda associate. Communities Minister Sajid Javid had considered cancelling the event amid concerns that the organisers had expressed support for Hamas.

339 Two weeks before the CIK project grant was due to expire, it was reported that the European Commission would terminate its £140,000 grant agreement with IHRC. Since the funding was signed off in 2016, the impact of this announcement remains unclear.


343 ‘Hate preacher who defended jihad as part of Islamic teaching is allowed into Britain’, Daily Mail, 7 July 2017.


United Nations. In order to obtain Special Consultative Status, an NGO must submit an application with all the required documents, undergo a screening process by the NGO Branch, have a successful recommendation by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, and then acquire approval by the Economic and Social Council member states.

Other Islamist groups that have obtained general or consultative status at the UN include the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), Islamic Relief USA, Human Relief Foundation and Muslim World League. All these groups have been linked to the global Muslim Brotherhood network. Furthermore, IHRC took part in the 2009 Durban Review Conference hosted by the UN, which was boycotted by several liberal democracies including Germany, Italy, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, the US and Israel. This was amid concerns that the event would be used by then-Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad primarily to attack Israel, question the reality of the Holocaust and limit the freedom to criticise religion. During Ahmadinejad’s incendiary speech on the first day of the conference, diplomats from 23 European nations left the conference, and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon took the unusual step of expressing condemnation of the president’s conduct: “I have not experienced this kind of destructive proceedings in an assembly, in a conference, by any one member state ... I deplore the use of this platform by the Iranian president to accuse, divide and even incite.” Moreover, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights released a statement criticising the leader for “equating Zionism with racism”, and further suggested that he ought to have been focusing on “addressing racial discrimination and intolerance in his [own] country”.

346 This includes: copy of constitution/charter and/or statutes/by-laws and amendments to those documents, copy of certificate of registration, copy of most recent financial statement and annual report, copy of examples of the organisation’s publications and recent articles or statements (optional), organisation chart (optional). For more details, see ‘How to apply for consultative status with ECOSOC?’, Inclusive Social Development Department of Economic and Social Affairs, available at: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/civil-society/ecosoc-status.html, last visited: 15 May 2019.


348 Archived page.

349 Archived page.

350 Archived page.

351 Archived page.

352 Archived page.


5.4 Registry of Regulated Immigration Advisors

IHRC Ltd is included on the government’s official registry of regulated immigration advisors.360 This is a list of all authorised organisations that provide immigration advice and services predominantly surrounding claims for asylum, applications for entry clearance or leave to enter or remain in the UK, immigration employment documents, nationality, citizenship, residence, deportation or removal, bail applications and appeals against deportation.361 Immigration advisors are regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) to ensure that they remain “fit and competent” to provide such services.362 The IHRC contact listed is Musthak Ahmed, with the address and contact number listed as IHRC’s office in London.363

Immigration advice and services is divided into three levels depending on the type and complexity of the work involved: Level 1 – Advice and Assistance;364 Level 2 – Casework; Level 3 – Advocacy and Representation. IHRC has obtained Level 3 competency – the highest level of authorisation.365

The current list of possible grievance claims that can be made regarding an advisor focus upon the manner in which the service or advice is provided.366 Concerns regarding extremist or racist views and associations or affiliations with a foreign government – such as the Islamic Republic of Iran which is markedly hostile to western liberal and secular states – are not included. Nevertheless, complaints surrounding “an advisor” themselves are an option, which is perhaps where such concerns could be raised (see Section 6).

IHRC Legal also advertises legal advice surrounding Employment Law, particularly with regard to racial and religious discrimination. This includes such issues as discrimination, unfair dismissal, grievances, support during disciplinary proceedings, whistleblowing and representation at an Employment Tribunal.367

5.5 High-profile Support and Partnerships

IHRC is an official partner of the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF), an international organisation that works to promote intercultural and civil society dialogue.368 ALF is co-funded by the European Commission and the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.369 Since 2005, the ALF has supported a network of more than 4,000 civil

363 ‘Register of Regulated Immigration Advisers’, HM Government.
365 ‘Register of Regulated Immigration Advisers’, HM Government.
society organisations in 42 countries across the Euro-Mediterranean region.\textsuperscript{370} It is unclear precisely what the partnership involves with regard to funding and support. However, it exposes the ease with which extremist groups can abuse international civil society and not-for-profit networks, particularly those with a large database of organisations and weak due diligence, in order to promote their cause and increase their credibility on a wider scale. ALF has partnerships with other organisations that may prompt cause for concern.\textsuperscript{371}

IHRC has also received support from several high-profile figures, including current leader of the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn MP,\textsuperscript{372} and prominent academic Tariq Ramadan.\textsuperscript{373} Corbyn has been filmed praising IHRC, its “sense of values”, helpfulness and positivity in championing human rights across the world, and claiming that the group represents all that is “best in Islam”.\textsuperscript{374}

Indeed, since IHRC launched, Corbyn has spoken alongside several IHRC activists and their affiliate partners.\textsuperscript{375} Of note, he supported the inauguration event of IHRC’s bookshop alongside controversial lawyer Gareth Peirce\textsuperscript{376} and Crescent International’s Iqbal Siddiqui,\textsuperscript{377} and attended Hatem Bazian’s author evening, where he was pictured with extreme anti-Semitic activists.\textsuperscript{378}

IHRC has also received support from former Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams. Dr Williams praised a report authored by Iranian state official Saied Reza Ameli (see Section 5.1) and IHRC research director Arzu Merali (see Section 2.2) in 2015\textsuperscript{379} and has praised the organisation’s Islamophobia Awards on multiple occasions,\textsuperscript{380} including in 2015 when Charlie Hebdo magazine was nominated and subsequently awarded ‘Islamophobe of the Year’.\textsuperscript{381}

\textsuperscript{370} Ibid.
5.6 Academia and Government Influence

Several academics who have engaged with IHRC to varying degrees have recently gained government and parliamentary influence. Of particular concern, the academic who has associated with the organisation for eight years – Salman Sayyid – was recently lauded for co-authoring the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims' proposed definition of Islamophobia. In April 2019, another academic who has engaged with IHRC, Sadek Hamid, was selected by the newly established Counter-Extremism Commission to write a paper on the UK’s Islamist scene.

In November 2018, the APPG on British Muslims published a working definition of Islamophobia in the attempt to combat anti-Muslim prejudice. The document prompted controversy from liberal activists, policymakers and NGOs who expressed concern that the adoption of the proposed definition would risk endangering free speech and counter-extremism efforts and legalise Islamist blasphemy laws. Former head of the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command Richard Walton cautioned that the definition would severely damage the work of counterterrorism police and the intelligence agencies, and “make terrorist attacks more likely to succeed”. The established definition, “Islamophobia is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness”, was coined by Salman Sayyid (see Section 5.2) and AbdoolKarim Vakil. The definition has subsequently been adopted by city councils, the Mayor of London, the Liberal Democrats, the Labour Party and all of the political parties currently represented in the Scottish Parliament.

---


Sayyid has engaged with Islamist fringe groups since 2011.390 Vakil, former chair of the MCB’s Research and Documentation Committee (ReDoc)391 has shared platforms with extremist activists, including Kamal el-Helbawy, Azad Ali and Daud Abdullah.392 It appears that their work on the parliamentary report was not their first interaction with the APPG parliamentarians. In 2017, Sayyid chaired an event at the University of Leeds, promoted by the CIK project (see Section 5.2), in which APPG on British Muslims treasurer Baroness Warsi provided a keynote address and Vakil featured on the panel.393

On 9 April 2019, the Commission for Countering Extremism (CCE) announced the names of the 29 academics and experts they had selected to carry out research on various aspects of extremism.394 Some of those selected have previously engaged with extremist speakers, criticised counter-extremism efforts and, in one case, promoted anti-Semitic views. The CCE selected Dr Sadek Hamid to write on the topic ‘Overview of Islamism’, in which he would map the “spectrum of Islamist worldviews and groups, from those close to mainstream public and political life to the most violent fringe”.395 Hamid has promoted several anti-Jewish conspiracies, including the claims that Israel has an alliance with Al-Qaeda396 and that the Israel lobby “manufactured” the UK anti-Semitism crisis.397 Hamid has endorsed work by pro-terrorist group CAGE398 and the Muslim Brotherhood-linked399

---


395 ibid.


Cordoba Foundation. He has also endorsed the notion of an Islamic caliphate. With regard to IHRC, Hamid has been hosted by the organisation as a guest speaker on a couple of occasions, most recently with Tahir Abbas to discuss their work on political Muslims. Abbas has also been selected by the CCE to produce research on extremism. 

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

• **Issue:** IHRC has been awarded UK charitable status through its subsidiary, IHRC Trust. Such status provides IHRC with government-approved credibility; helps it avoid thorough risk assessment and due diligence by third parties, including NGOs, public bodies and charitable foundations; and entitles the organisation to public funds through tax relief.

**Recommendation:** The Charity Commission should promptly conclude its two-year investigation into IHRC Trust, examining its links with IHRC Ltd, and ascertain whether the charity has been exploited for extremist purposes. The conclusion of its findings ought to be published and a statement issued. This report contends that the actions of the charity alone, profiting as it does from the sale of Salafi-Jihadist material and its declared close affiliation to IHRC Ltd, necessitate sanction from the Charity Commission, which can utilise new powers awarded through the Charities Act 2016.

The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 allows the Commission to direct the winding-up of a charity; to actively disqualify people from serving as trustees; and to issue official warnings to a charity where it considers that a breach of duty, misconduct or mismanagement has been committed. It also gives powers for the government to intervene in the regulation of fundraising. The Commission should look at the following reference points detailed in its published guidance outlining the ways in which charities can be abused for terrorist intent:

• Trustees must be vigilant to ensure that a charity’s premises, assets, staff, volunteers and other resources cannot be used for activities that may, or appear to, support or condone terrorist activities.

• Trustees must not engage in conduct or activities that would lead a reasonable member of the public to conclude that the charity or its trustees are associated with a proscribed organisation or terrorism generally.

• Where a charity representative or a charity’s activities may give, or appear to give, support to any terrorist activity, the Commission expects the charity’s trustees to take immediate steps to disassociate the charity from the activity.

• Indirect or informal links with a terrorist organisation (even if the link or association does not amount to a criminal offence) pose unacceptable risks to the property of a charity and its proper and effective administration.

The Charity Commission should note that IHRC has publicly declared that the limited company and the trust are “two entities that make up IHRC”. This report considers the organisation’s characterisation to be the case.


409 ‘IHRC accuses Charity Commission of Islamophobia’, IHRC, 7 March 2019.
The Commission should also examine the close links IHRC Ltd has with the Iranian government, and consider further examination into the exploitation of the charitable sector by foreign hostile states.

**Issue:** IHRC is included in the government’s official registry for regulated advisors that can provide immigration advice and services.\(^{410}\) The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) regulates immigration advisers to ensure that they meet certain standards.\(^{411}\) The OISC does not appear to consider extremism or terrorism-related concerns within its due diligence procedure. It is further alarming that IHRC is a registered immigration advisor, considering its close affiliation to the Iranian government, which is particularly hostile to western liberal and secular states.

**Recommendation:** The evidence provided in sections 1 to 3 of this report necessitates investigation by the OISC as to whether IHRC ought to be an accredited immigration advisor as promoted by the government. There should also be consideration as to whether a history of extreme views and affiliations, or association with a hostile foreign state, ought to affect an organisation’s application in this regard.

The OISC should integrate such concerns within its due diligence and risk-assessment criteria. This should also be included within its complaints procedure, as at present only concerns regarding an advisor’s service are listed as valid reasons for a grievance claim.

**Issue:** Glorification of violent resistance movements, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Hamas, fail to receive sanction in the UK. The UK government has not designated PFLP as a terrorist entity, and only Hamas’ military wing, al-Qassam Brigades, is on the list of proscribed organisations.\(^{412}\)

**Recommendation:** In light of evidence detailed in sections 1 to 3 of this report, it is clear that UK-based advocacy organisations, such as IHRC, are able to glorify overseas militant groups and convicted terrorists without sanction. The Home Office should conduct a review into the violent activities of the PFLP and Hamas in order to proscribe both groups as perpetrators of terrorism, in line with the governments of the European Union and the United States.\(^{413}\)

\(^{410}\) ‘Register of Regulated Immigration Advisers’, HM Government.


\(^{414}\) ‘How to apply for consultative status with ECOSOC?’, Inclusive Social Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
• **Issue:** IHRC was awarded Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) in 2007, a status it has retained despite public promotion of extremism.

**Recommendation:** The screening process to apply for consultative status with ECOSOC must be amended to include an oversight committee to complete due diligence reviews on all applications to highlight extremism-related concerns. The committee should also be tasked with completing assessments on existing NGOs, in order to ensure that organisations are unable to fall from the necessary standard once admitted.

At present, in order to acquire consultative status, an organisation must complete a profile registration (name, contact details, website) which is then reviewed and authorised.\(^{414}\) The following stage includes completing an online questionnaire and summary, and providing supporting documents (constitution, certificate of registration, recent financial statement, annual report).\(^ {415}\) Next, the NGO Branch reviews the applications (applicant may be contacted for further information/clarification), following which an application is submitted to the NGO Committee (applicant may be asked further questions) and then to the ECOSOC for final authorisation.\(^ {416}\) It appears that scrutiny of an NGO’s submitted application relies on information and documents supplied by the NGO in question. This reveals a considerable oversight with regard to the way in which extremist groups operate: they can often appear to be credible, liberal and charitable organisations – particularly when assessment is reliant on information they themselves have supplied.

ECOSOC must introduce an additional stage to the screening process whereby a committee is established to carry out due diligence assessments on each applicant. This must include, as a minimum, consideration of the organisation’s online presence (see below), promoted literature and campaigns. The committee must then be tasked with carrying out regular assessments on existing NGOs, preferably once every two years after admittance and subsequently once every five years after the NGO has served a ten-year term. This will ensure that organisations are unable to fall foul of the necessary standards required during their application, particularly with regard to engagement with extremist groups or the promotion of extremism.

• **Issue:** The European Commission awarded IHRC £140,000 to conduct research on Islamophobia through the Counter-Islamophobia Kit (CIK) project, led by the University of Leeds.

**Recommendation:** The European Commission grant awarded to IHRC exposes the serious institutional due diligence failings on behalf of UK higher education institutions and the European Commission with regard to extremism. The University of Leeds must review its risk assessment procedures with regard to external partnerships to incorporate oversight and independent authorisation from dedicated personnel. The European Commission must review its due diligence procedures to prevent the exploitation of grant funds for extremist purposes.

\(^{415}\) ibid.
\(^{416}\) ibid.
Public bodies, particularly educational institutions, must have robust risk-assessment procedures as part of their statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Previous Henry Jackson Society research has exposed failings within the higher education sector to impose risk mitigation at university events featuring representatives from organisations linked to extremism. Should an academic department wish to partner with a non-academic group, including an NGO or a charity, its chosen affiliate must undergo a standard due diligence assessment carried out by dedicated personnel within the department’s parent school. It must include a review of its online presence, which would highlight any concerns published in the press, third-party research or government department regarding the work of the organisation. Partners deemed to be high risk would necessitate further investigation and an escalated approval process.

Similarly, the European Commission Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, which awarded funding to the CIK Project, should review its due diligence procedure to prevent the exploitation of grant funds for extremist purposes. Evidence provided in sections 1 to 3 of this report demonstrates that the work of IHRC directly contravenes the specific objectives of the programme: to prevent violence, promote non-discrimination, and combat racism, xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of intolerance. The announcement that the European Commission would revoke funding awarded to IHRC, particularly so close to the termination date of the two-year grant period, acknowledges a considerable oversight with regard to funding extremism. The Commission must ensure it has due diligence mechanisms in place to prevent directly, or indirectly, partnering with an organisation that stands antithetical to its statement of principles.

• Issue: IHRC senior figures, trustees and public campaigns endorse violent “resistance” in their Khomeinist anti-Zionist worldview. IHRC directors have expressed support for Hezbollah and violent jihad and have criticised the Palestinian Authority for entering peace negotiations with Israel. IHRC advisors have been linked to US-designated terror groups, have expressed sympathy for martyrdom, have supported the “liquidation” of Israelis and have been designated a “key influence on young jihadists”. IHRC campaigns have lamented government sanctions placed on individuals linked to the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah. Material sold on IHRC’s website includes literature banned in UK prisons for its endorsement of violence, and “resistance” art that pictures convicted terrorists brandishing weapons.

Recommendation: Owing to the evidence detailed in sections 1 to 3 of this report, IHRC should be characterised as an institutionally pro-terrorism and anti-Semitic organisation that meets the threshold of extremism as outlined in the government’s Counter-Extremism Strategy. More specifically, IHRC ought to be considered a ‘pseudo human rights organisation’ – one that utilises the language of human rights and liberal values while supporting those who have no interest in such concepts, and promoting views antithetical to this purpose.

The Prime Minister’s Extremism Taskforce, Extremism Analysis Unit and Home Office should issue a statement outlining concerns surrounding IHRC in order to alert charitable foundations and public bodies, particularly overseas NGOs and universities, to the extremist nature of the organisation.

• **Issue:** This report highlights a number of examples of conduct, attributed to individuals associated with IHRC, pertaining to terrorism. This includes:

1) IHRC chairman Massoud Shadjareh addressed an IHRC-organised event at which he stated the following: “You know people are rushing in large numbers from Britain, from Europe, from all around the world, from Arab countries to go and do jihad in Syria. What about jihad in Palestine?" 418

2) IHRC chairman Massoud Shadjareh addressed an IHRC-organised event in 2010 - the purpose of which was to extol the virtues of the Palestinian violent uprisings of 1987-1993 and 2000-2003 – at which he: called for “expanded support for the Palestinian struggle”; claimed that Palestinians can use “whatever means they had” against Israel and that “those who stood up” should be considered heroes; and, stated that the violent uprisings “taught us that we must all stand up against our oppressors”. 419

3) IHRC chairman Massoud Shadjareh addressed an IHRC-organised event at which he stated the following: “Let’s get rid of the greatest oppressors in the region, the Zionists, then all our other problems will be resolved, one by one.” 420

4) IHRC chairman Massoud Shadjareh endorsed violent resistance against Israel in two interviews on RT, both in 2018. 421

5) Guest speakers/advisors at IHRC-organised events have justified and glorified terrorism against Israel. Speakers have been recorded saying the following: “Victory to the Hizbullah”; “Victory to Hamas”; 422 “Hamas and Fatah are [our] brothers”; 423 “brave people willing to fight, looking for martyrdom, to liberate this land [Israel] from the Zionist entity...this Ummah has to unite”; 424 “[for Palestine] we live for it and we die for it”; 425 Zionists’ “days are numbered”; 426 “Hamas and Fatah were both necessary components of the resistance struggle”; 427 “the resistance” will wipe Israel off the map; 428 and, violent Palestinian uprisings demonstrate that “death is more honourable than life”. 429

---

6) An IHRC event in 2010 hosted a senior member of a US and EU-proscribed terrorist organisation (via video recording), who was previously detained in the UK on terrorism charges after an airline hijacking attempt. The speaker used the platform to glorify violent resistance, and stated that political negotiations are futile “there is no use except to revolt”.430

7) An IHRC briefing published in July 2006 stated that Lebanon has the right to self-defence against Israeli aggression, and thus “support for Hizbullah defending Lebanon is lawful under international law”. The same document claimed that proportional force against Israel can include “the destruction of installations on the territory held by Israel” and “financial, logistical and informational support of Hizbullah”.431

8) IHRC have hosted, regularly partnered with, and sold material from an arts campaign/exhibition that lionises global militant figures. Several pictures depict terrorist iconography – such as individuals who have committed acts of terrorism overseas brandishing weapons.432

The following with particular regard to the IHRC Trust:

9) The IHRC bookshop sells literature that has inspired Salafi-Jihadist movements worldwide (see Section 4.6). This includes texts promoting violent jihad,433 and one book that is banned in UK prisons for extremism purposes.434

10) The IHRC bookshop sells a framed print of a convicted terrorist with a gun, at the time of writing being sold by the organisation for £90.00.435

**Recommendation:** The evidence provided in sections 1-3 in this report, with particular regard to the actions listed above, necessitate criminal investigation into whether IHRC - its directors, trustees, employees or individuals associated with the organisation - have committed any of the following offences that exist in British law*:

**Proscription Offences (S.11-13 Terrorism Act 2000).**436

Proscription makes it a criminal offence to:

1) belong, or profess to belong, to a proscribed organisation in the UK or overseas;

---


2) invite support for a proscribed organisation (the support invited need not be material support, such as the provision of money or other property; it can also include moral support or approval);

3) express an opinion or a belief that is supportive of a proscribed organisation, regardless as to whether the person to whom the expression is directed will be encouraged to support a proscribed organisation;

4) arrange, manage or assist in arranging or managing a meeting in the knowledge that the meeting is to support or further the activities of a proscribed organisation, or is to be addressed by a person who belongs or professes to belong to a proscribed organisation; or to address a meeting if the purpose of the address is to encourage support for, or to further the activities of, a proscribed organisation;

5) wear clothing or carry or display articles in public in such a way or in such circumstances as to arouse reasonable suspicion that the individual is a member or supporter of a proscribed organisation;

6) publish an image of an item or clothing or other article, such as a flag or logo, in the same circumstances.

Encouragement of terrorism (S.1-4 Terrorism Act 2006) (see main report Section 4).437

Encouragement of terrorism makes it a criminal offence to-

1) Publish a statement, or cause another to publish a statement, that is likely to be understood by some or all of the members of the public to whom it is published as a direct or indirect encouragement to them to commit, prepare or instigate acts of terrorism or Convention offences. This can be committed intentionally or recklessly.

   a. statements that glorify terrorism constitute an indirect encouragement to terrorism or Convention offences but only if

   b. the statements are of a type that the audience may reasonably infer that the conduct is being glorified as a conduct that should be emulated in existing circumstances.

Note

As stated in Section 1 of this report-

This paper adheres to the UK list of proscribed terrorist organisations in its contemporary format. It is noted that Hezbollah was fully proscribed in March 2019, before which the designation covered only the military wing (External Security Organisation in 2001; extended to the group’s entire military apparatus in 2008).438 Hamas’ military wing, Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigades, has been proscribed since March 2001.

---


7. CONCLUSION

The Islamic Human Rights Commission, from the views espoused by its senior figures to the campaigns and literature it promotes, is an institutionally extremist and pro-terrorist organisation. Moreover, it ought to be considered a ‘pseudo human rights group’ whose actions are antithetical to the values it professes to promote. IHRC is driven by a Khomeinist worldview, complete with the Ayatollah’s animosity towards the West, anti-Zionist foreign policy and Shia Islamist political order.

This ideology is underpinned throughout IHRC’s activities, from its foundation as part of the legacy of Kalim Siddiqui, the UK activist who spurred the fatwa against Salman Rushdie, to its 2015 Islamophobia award to Charlie Hebdo, considered by Islamic militants to have “blasphemed” against the prophet Muhammed. IHRC’s close relationship with the Iranian government – with one director sitting on Iran’s Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution having been directly appointed by Rouhani, and another having received an award for international activity in Tehran – places IHRC’s organisation of the London’s Al-Quds Day parade and the chairman’s denial of Iranian state human rights abuses in a far clearer light. This is an organisation in the heart of London, afforded the benefits of charitable status, that repeatedly adopts political positions that accord with those of a hostile government – the Islamic Republic of Iran.

IHRC’s Khomeinist outlook has seen the group partner with a considerable number of activists who dominate the UK’s Sunni-Islamist scene: those who share IHRC’s hostility to the West and Israel, its desire for political Islam in a growing secularist climate, and its suspicion of government policies that are perceived as imposing liberalism and attacking the practice of orthodox Islam. Akin to the Iranian state funding of both Shiite Hezbollah and Sunni Hamas Islamist militias, IHRC events have hosted speakers from across the theological spectrum, including individuals linked to Arab nationalist and Sunni-militant Hamas, Sunni pan-Islamist Muslim Brotherhood and the Arab nationalist Marxist-Leninist PFLP.

IHRC’s sympathy with those who have committed and/or inspired acts of nationalist or jihadist terrorism has, at times, permeated into glorification of militant activity. IHRC’s chairman has called for violent jihad in Palestine, branded intifada resistance fighters as “heroes” and encouraged audience members to eradicate Zionists. The organisation has hosted representatives from Hezbollah, Hamas and PFLP; speakers have used their platform to seek those “looking for martyrdom” at IHRC events; and the organisation promotes colourful graphics of convicted terrorists brandishing weapons on its website, which are currently available to purchase.

Despite this, IHRC holds UK charitable status through its subsidiary IHRC Trust, is a civil society partner of the Anna Lindh Foundation, and has been awarded Special Consultative Status at the UN. The organisation has also acquired European Commission funding through the Centre for Ethnicity Studies at the University of Leeds, which employs academics with whom IHRC has previously engaged. More recently, the All Party

---


Parliamentary Group on British Muslims proposed a definition of Islamophobia coined by two professors who have worked closely with IHRC in the past, and the Commission for Countering Extremism selected academics for their study who have used the group to promote their research. In this light, it is concerning that the small number of academics who have associated with IHRC appear to be achieving significant legitimacy and credibility within government structures. This may present an opportunity through which the organisation can attain further mainstream impact and policy influence.