



**Fighting Hijab Bans**  
**PAGE 2**



**Discussing Liberation**  
**PAGE 6**



**Articulating our needs**  
**PAGE 8**

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In the name of Al-lah,  
The-Source-Of-Mercy,  
The-Especially-Merciful.

## THE AIMS OF THE ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ARE:

- To champion the rights and duties revealed for human beings.
- To promote a new social and international order, based on truth, justice, righteousness and generosity, rather than self-interest.
- To demand virtue and oppose wrongdoing in the exercise of power (from whatever base that power derives - e.g. political, judicial, media, economic, military, personal, etc.).
- To gather information about, and to publicise, atrocities, oppression, discrimination, and other abuses of divinely-granted rights.
- To campaign for redress, and to support the victims of such crimes.
- To campaign to bring the perpetrators and their accomplices to justice.
- To cooperate with other groups and individuals where such cooperation is likely to further the achievement of these aims.

# HIS FAMILY WERE MURDERED BY FANATICS. WHEN WILL IT TRULY BE "NEVER AGAIN?"



**Bosnian boy reciting the Quran at the graves of victims of the Srebrenica massacres, July 2005.**

July this year witnessed a memorial for the worst atrocity committed in Europe since the Second World War: Srebrenica. Finally being laid to rest of up to 12,000 Bosnian men and boys were taken from the United Nations safe haven by Serb troops and paramilitaries and summarily executed over three days in July 1995. At a symbolic burial ceremony of 300 bodies finally being laid to rest, British foreign secretary Jack Straw said he was sorry for the inaction of the international community that led to this massacre.

The irony and insult of this comment are immense. Bosnian Serbs, as is well documented now, were assisted by Serbian regular forces, and the Dutch UN soldiers stationed in Srebrenica to protect the Bosnian refugees sheltering there. The UN high command in Bosnia, both political and military,

gave a green light for the attack and even prevented NATO airstrikes to stop the advancing Serb forces. An apology for the international system being complicit in genocide is, at best, offensive.

Coming, as it has, in a summer where the terrible events of 7/7 in London have been used to justify a McCarthy style witch-hunt against Muslims, Straw's apology to the Muslims of Srebrenica is as hollow as it is hypocritical. Muslims in the UK are being told that the fundamentals of their faith lead to hatred and even terrorism and as such, Islam needs a reformation in line with that which took place in European Christianity. Sadly this example does not look at the recent history of acts perpetrated in the name of Christianity - of which Srebrenica is one - in the same way as acts supposedly perpetrated in the name of Islam.

The boy pictured above sur-

vived the preachers of hatred. His family didn't. Who will act against those who murdered them? Who will reform the churches that advocated these murders? If Jack Straw or any of his European counterparts did not see fit to talk about this on the anniversary of the massacres, why is this mantra being applied to Muslims in the wake of the London bombings? The UK is not the only country to single out its Muslim community. In the Netherlands, some mosques have signed up to a 'code of conduct' in which they claim to stand against (undefined) extremism. In return local councils will try and assist Muslims to integrate and to tackle Islamophobia. Sadly it is clear that European governments do not wish to eliminate the xenophobic hatred levelled against Muslims because it is the moral and right thing to do. Instead it is used as a bargaining chip to elicit meaningless and humiliating

statements from Muslim leaders. Why are such statements humiliating? Because they are asked only of Muslims as if we are all culpable for the crimes of a few. At IHRC we believe that communities should not be penalised for the acts of some amongst them. We believe that this runs counter to all claims that the governments of the countries we live in make about equality between citizens and communities. It is this belief in equality and justice that drives us to be vociferous in our criticism of what we see as crimes against the rights of individuals, communities and society at large by increasingly powerful and disrespectful governments. This is why we have condemned the Metropolitan Police Service's shoot to kill policy in London, which left an innocent man dead, and why we broke off formal rela-

continued on page 11

# AFTER 7/7: The Backlash

Hours after the bombings of 7/7, the backlash against Muslims began. For IHRC the prospect of anti-Muslim reprisals was inevitable given that our research had already noted a steady increase of Islamophobia in Britain. However, the scale of increase in cases and their nature, since the bombings, was still startling.

Islamophobic incidents reported to IHRC rose dramatically from four or five cases a week to 100 a week. By far the highest numbers of incidents reported are of a serious nature. They have included criminal damage such as arson attacks on mosques, arson attempts on people's homes

and a garage being torched. There have also been a number of physical attacks such as an Iraqi man whose throat was slashed with a broken bottle, a young girl beaten up by youths and a boy whose jaw was smashed. Another unpleasant trend is Muslim women being spat at or people of Islamic appearance being refused to board buses. Most tragic of all, Kamal Butt was stabbed to death as his attackers taunted him, crying out 'Taliban'.

There has been no attempt on the part of the media to condemn these incidents or even to sympathise with the Muslim community. The murder of Kamal Butt received scant coverage and there was little attempt to highlight this

tragedy, to look at who he was or address why this had occurred. Following the various attacks on mosques no politicians took the opportunity to visit any of them as a sign of solidarity and support. The police are also refusing to take the problem of Islamophobia seriously. Despite recording a 600 per cent increase in the number of faith hate incidents since the bombings, the police have tried to ignore their own statistics claiming these incidents were minor and isolated.

At a time when the government and police are urging the Muslim community to come forward and give information on any terrorist activities, the message of this inaction to Muslims is stark:



Wirral Islamic Cultural Centre, Shahjalal Mosque, Birkenhead, after an arson attack

You scratch our back, we'll kick yours.

It is imperative that the Muslim community now adopt a policy of zero tolerance towards Islamophobia. Every incident has to be logged so the police can be held to account for their inertia. We have to realise that by

holding the establishment to account for not tackling Islamophobia, we are not asking for special treatment or indulgence. We are just demanding what every human being deserves: dignity.

Beena Faridi

## UK Based Advocacy

Confronting the rise of Islamophobia within society is still an ongoing struggle for IHRC. Discrimination, which if aimed at other minority groups would be regarded as indefensible, is ignored or even accepted when it is applied against Muslims. The lack of recognition of Islamophobia has meant that IHRC has seen an increase in the cases of anti-Muslim discrimination.

Islamophobia reported to us has had many guises such as being harassed at the workplace because

of one's political views to discrimination in areas such as housing, immigration, health care or bullying at school.

There has been a worrying amount of cases involving schools and universities restricting Muslim women from wearing the hijab. In such cases IHRC has offered advice to students and mediated successfully on their behalf.

We have also assisted in cases of anti-Muslim discrimination in the workplace. The most common area of conflict is praying at work and taking time off for

Friday prayers. IHRC has resolved these issues at an early stage by advising people of their rights and writing to employers on behalf of clients. Thus, the need to resort to a legal remedy has been avoided.

In cases where IHRC has not been able to help directly it has endeavored to refer people to other agencies or support organisations that have expertise on the matter.

Since the bombings of 7th July, the negative attention on the Muslim community has been severe. The whipping up of anti-

Muslim hysteria by the media and politicians has led to more Muslims encountering discrimination. In response IHRC has encouraged Muslims to come forward and report their experiences by ringing the office or recording them via the website. IHRC has set up an online reporting form and has advertised this in newspapers and on the Islam Channel.

If you have experienced any Islamophobia then contact IHRC on 020 8904 4222 or email at [info@ihrc.org](mailto:info@ihrc.org)

Beena Faridi

## The Struggle for Hijab Continues

### UNITED KINGDOM

Hijab has not been far from controversial headlines and press stories. This year has seen a decision by the Court of Appeal upholding a Muslim girl's right to wear jilbaab to school as well as calls for women to 'ditch the scarf' after the July's London bombings.

On the 2nd March 2005 the Appeal Court upheld school girl Shabina Begum's right to wear a jilbaab to school. This followed a lengthy two-year battle and much media hysteria. However, IHRC has been disappointed to note that despite this positive decision, prejudice is still rife in schools and universities. Indeed since the rulings the IHRC had an increase of hijab related cases with educational institutions attempting to stop their students wearing Islamic dress. IHRC is working towards intervention in the Shabina Begum case as we go to press.

Since the July bombings the focus on Muslims has been intense. Predictably the hijab has faced criti-



IHRC banner protesting hijab ban in France

cism as Muslims' loyalties have been questioned.

In December 2004 IHRC launched the 'British Muslims' Expectations of the Government' series. The reports included personal experiences of women who had experienced Islamophobia. There was a woman who lost her job once she decided to start wearing a hijab,

other women had been physically assaulted. Yet the 'blame the victim culture' continues and instead of recognising that women in Islamic dress face discrimination, the hijab is viewed as hindering integration and being counterproductive to the aims of multiculturalism. One of the volumes of the 'British Muslims' Expectations' which exclusively deals with the hijab and Islamic dress, will be published in late September.

Trust has tried to help a French sister involved in legal proceedings against the hijab ban and who has had to come to London to complete her studies.

As we go to press more restrictive measures have been imposed in parts of Germany and some Australian states are now also looking to copy the French model. IHRC is continuing to advise and campaign against such bans, and to raise awareness of issues through academic literature as well as popular debate. Some years ago IHRC identified the academic challenges that were being made to minority rights. A combination of community inaction and fear in a post-9/11 climate has meant that few voices have been raised in defence of what was considered in the human rights world to be a basic right i.e. the right of minorities to be different.

Bizarrely some Muslim majority countries continued to pursue anti-hijab policies, including in the Middle East. IHRC is supporting two cases of Turkish sisters denied the right to wear hijab by taking their cases to the European Court of Human Rights.

If you have experienced discrimination because of hijab or Islamic dress at work or school and need help, please contact IHRC on 020 8904 4222.

Beena Faridi and Arzu Merali

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### INTERNATIONAL

IHRC has continued to fight the oppressive hijab ban in France denouncing it publicly through letter writing campaigns and supporting demonstrations. Recently the IHRC



# BRITAIN: OUTPOST OF TYRANNY

Britain's rapid demise into a brutal police state continued this year with newer draconian anti-terror legislation and policies which have destroyed the lives of countless individuals and families. The London bombings in July 2005 only served to accelerate this process. The increased harassment and Muslim profiling by the police and security services meant continued stop and search, raids, arrests and demonisation of the Muslim community. IHRC organized and participated in a number of workshops and discussions in order to raise awareness of the issues involved. These included Know Your Rights workshops in Cambridge, Luton and the FOSIS annual conference in Leicester as well as a public debate on stop and search organized by the Black Londoners Forum. IHRC also participated in conferences such as 'Islam and Human Rights in the Age of Democratization and Terrorism' organized by the Malaysian Society at the University of Essex and 'Muslim Youth in Europe: Addressing Alienation and Extremism' at Wilton Park and the 'Politics and Terrorism' conference held at the Royal United Services Institute.

On 16 December 2004, the House of Lords made their historic ruling that the detention without charge of over a dozen Muslims in Belmarsh prison for three years was unlawful due to the discriminatory nature of the detention. Under the legislation, only foreign nationals could be interned without charge. In January 2005, the Home Secretary announced new proposals which made a mockery of the House of Lords judgment. He called for the introduction of house arrest and control orders to be placed upon terror suspects, both foreign and British at the whim of the Home Secretary. The proposals were introduced into law under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in March 2005 and immediately applied to the Belmarsh detainees upon their release. IHRC produced a briefing on the new laws entitled 'Britain: An Outpost of Tyranny'. IHRC also held a panel discussion entitled 'Dissent and Detention: Before and After 9/11'.

In February, Home Office minister Hazel Blears infuriated Muslims by commenting that Muslims should be ready to be disproportionately targeted by anti-terror laws because the terrorist threat emanated from the Muslim community. Hazel Blears repeated these comments following the London bombings. Such comments do not reflect the actual reality of the situation in Britain. Statistics show that of the

17 people convicted under anti-terrorism legislation since 9-11, only 5 have been "people associated with Islam". The other 12 include 6 Irish men and 3 Sikhs. Furthermore, of the tens of thousands of stop and searches of Muslims under the Terrorism Act, there has not been a single resulting conviction for terrorism. Despite Blears' comments, a Home Affairs Select Committee report in April 2005 on 'Terrorism and Community Relations' found that the Asian community was not being "unreasonably targeted" by stop and search and that the targeting of the Muslim community by the terrorism laws was an incorrect Muslim perception. Such findings only serve to condone and endorse such targeting of a specific community. IHRC did however welcome many of the Committee's findings such as Islamophobia being a societal problem rather than a Muslim problem; that the Muslim community must be involved in the review and drafting of existing and new anti-terrorism legislation; that the media are behaving irresponsibly; and that more detailed statistics are needed on how anti-terrorism powers were being implemented. Such issues have been previously highlighted by IHRC in recent reports.

April also saw the acquittal and release of the eight Algerians accused of the so-called "ricin poison plot" following a six-month trial. In total, the men spent over two years in the notorious Belmarsh maximum security prison. The releases were yet another indication of the weakness of British intelligence. Over 100 arrests were made in the anti-terror sweep that netted the men with 9 charged and only a single conviction.

The UK was censured in June 2005 by the European Commissioner on Human Rights, Mr Alvaro Gill-Robles, for its anti-terror policies. Among other things, his report emphasised the absolute prohibition on evidence extracted through torture, condemned the imposition of control orders as contrary to the European Convention of Human Rights and called for the introduction of single equality legislation standardising protection in all areas.

Following the London bombings in July, the process of demonisation and victimization of the Muslim community was rapidly accelerated. IHRC and others stressed that the perpetrators should be judged as criminals, their faith being of no relevance. Nevertheless, the Muslim community came under severe pressure to root out "extremists" in its midst. The Government adamantly refused to draw any

link between its unjust foreign policy and the bombings and instead blamed the bombings on something inherently wrong with Islam itself. Tony Blair, in a series of speeches, outlined even more draconian anti-terror proposals. Labelling belief in the shariah, the uniting of Muslim lands under a Caliphate, the liberation of Palestine and the removal of Western troops from Muslim lands as "extremism" and an "ideology of evil", Mr Blair effectively criminalized all forms of political Islam. His new proposals also allow the deportation of foreign nationals suspected of "extremism" to countries where they are likely to be tortured or executed. To get around the illegality of this, the Government is completing "statements of understanding" with these countries that they will not ill-treat the suspects. Mr Blair's measures also include the creation of an offence of "justifying" or "glorifying" terrorism which under the proposed legislation could include legitimate acts of resistance against invasion and occupation and banning certain Imams from entering Britain. Most shocking of all perhaps was Blair's statement that the Government will proscribe the non-violent group Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

In such a climate of fear, armed officers shot dead at point blank range an innocent, unarmed Brazilian Catholic, Jean Charles de Menezes on the London Underground. It soon emerged that the police had secretly imported a lethal 'shoot to kill' policy from Israel back in 2002. Nevertheless, the police denied that such a policy was in force when confronted by IHRC on several occasions. As a result, IHRC has suspended all formal relations with the police until this policy is suspended.

On 30 April 2005, over 50 Muslim organizations from various strands of thought came together to organize a non-partisan and non-sectarian Muslim Anti-Terror Civil Rights March. The Muslim Unity March saw an estimated 3000 Muslims march together from Marble Arch to Paddington Green police station, notorious for its detention of terror suspects. On 16 August 2005, almost 40 Muslim organizations once again came together to issue a joint statement against the Prime Minister's proposals to criminalize Islamic political thought. The number of signatories continues to grow and currently stands at almost 100.

To read IHRC's reports on the anti-terror laws, the IPCC or the police, please go to our reports and briefings page at [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk).

Fahad Ansari

## HAVE YOU SEEN THESE PEOPLE?

### DO YOU WANT TO?



### COME TO THE ISLAMOPHOBIA AWARDS 2005, A NIGHT OF COMEDY AND ENTERTAINMENT!

This year's Islamophobia Awards will be held in December in London. If you would like to attend, please email [awards@ihrc.org](mailto:awards@ihrc.org) for more information on how to buy tickets.

If you would like to nominate an Islamophobe from whatever walk of life, please visit our website: [www.ihrc.org.uk/islamophobia](http://www.ihrc.org.uk/islamophobia)



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# Prisoners of faith

## IHRC: campaigning for prisoners of faith since 1997

There have been notable cases this year in this campaign. Our work in support of other campaigns and long running prisoner cases e.g. those of Imam Jamil Al-Amin and Shaikh Omar Abdul-Rahman continue. Other cases have been resolved successfully and sadly former prisoners have been targeted again and have found themselves incarcerated again.

### DR HASSAN AL-TURABI

President of the Sudanese Popular National Congress



Dr Hassan al-Turabi

Tireless campaigning and support for Dr Hassan al-Turabi helped ensure his release from prison by the Sudanese government on 30 June 2005. He and other members of the opposition Popular National Congress have faced government persecution and imprisonment for over five years. Dr al-Turabi, now in his early 70s, had been imprisoned without charge since March 2004 for speaking out against the government's scorched earth policy in Darfur. In July 2004, Dr Turabi and other prisoners began a hunger strike in protest at their continued detention and torture in rat-infested cells. When releasing him, President El-Bashir ordered the release of all political prisoners and removed all restrictions on political activities for all political parties. Dr Turabi stated that he believes his release was due to 'internal and international pressure.'

### TAYSIR ALOUNI

Al-Jazeera Journalist

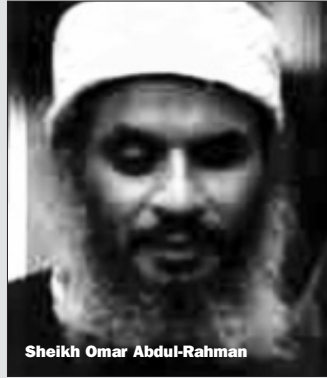


Imprisoned journalist Taysir Alouni

In February 2005, IHRC opened a campaign to free al-Jazeera journalist Taysir Alouni. Taysir Alouni, a Syrian-born Spaniard, is currently in prison in Spain on charges of membership of a "terrorist organisation". He was arrested in September 2003 in his home in Granada, but 5 weeks later was released on bail, after the court heard his health was suffering. He was rearrested in November 2004 and has been in custody without bail ever since. Taysir is being kept in horrific conditions such that his health has deteriorated significantly.

The allegations stem primarily from an interview conducted by Taysir with Osama bin Laden in October 2001, during which the latter called for jihad. Taysir is credited as being the only journalist based in Afghanistan in October 2001 to show the world what the US war machine was doing to one of the world's poorest countries. Taysir also covered the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and miraculously survived the US bombing of the Aljazeera Baghdad bureau which killed his colleague, Tariq Ayub. Due to his work in Iraq and Afghanistan, Taysir was awarded a peace prize in December 2003 by the Francisca Mateos foundation, a Spanish NGO dedicated to international cooperation and social work in Spain. Previous recipients of the prize include the Dalai Lama and Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. IHRC views Taysir's detention as part of the continued witch-hunt against Muslims where even journalists are being imprisoned on suspicion of terrorism.

### Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman



Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman

IHRC continues to support and campaign for the release of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, the elderly Egyptian sheikh imprisoned in the US in 1995 under sedition laws last used during the American civil war. Sheikh Omar is blind, suffers from diabetes and is repeatedly tortured and abused by prison guards. IHRC has also launched a campaign to free Sheikh Omar's attorney, Lynne Stewart (65), who was convicted in February 2005 of "aiding terrorism" due to her representation of the Sheikh. She now faces up to 40 years in prison. By targeting and convicting Lynne Stewart, the U.S. Justice Department hopes to make an example of an attorney with a long history of progressive political beliefs as well as a reputation for vigorously advocating on behalf of those whose lives have been entrusted to her.

Nureddin Sirin had been convicted in October 1997 by Turkish State Security Court, a semi-military court, and sentenced to 17 and a half years imprisonment for helping to organize a Quds Day (Jerusalem Day rally) in the Sincan province of the Turkish capital with Mayor Bekir Yildiz. He was charged with being a member of the Lebanese Hizbullah and supplying pictures to the rally in support of Palestine. The trial was conducted in a tragicomic manner due to the interference of the Turkish army. The Turkish Secret Service testified that Nureddin was not a member of Hizbullah and the pictures he supplied to the rally were available in any journalistic library.

He had been singled out by the oppressive regime for his outstanding personality among the Muslim media and the public and his anti-Israeli stance. It was part of a long, cruel and vicious plan that was directly targeting Islam and its values in Turkey. Nureddin Sirin went through great hardships and suffering during this seven and a half year period imprisonment. He was subjected to physical and psychological torture and deprived of many basic rights. However, despite all these hardships he has never compromised his struggle against injustice, his support for Palestinian rights, or his beliefs.

In this difficult period IHRC and its campaigners supported Nureddin Sirin and never left him alone. IHRC mobilized a legal team for Sirin's case. The team went to Turkey and tried to visit him in prison in order to discuss the case. Meanwhile the case was taken to the European Court of Human Rights. IHRC also put tremendous pressure on the Turkish government through the campaign to release Sirin. Sirin states that this pressure was a big comfort for him in the latter stages of his imprisonment. Finally, as a result of these efforts the government became obliged to release him. Subsequently Sirin's case succeeded in the ECHR. In April 2005 the court found that Turkey had violated his right to a fair trial under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Nureddin Sirin is now free and is running a website called "kudusyolu" (path of Quds) in order to support the struggle in Palestine.

In other developments in Turkey Mehmet Ali Tekin and Hasan Kilic, former journalists in Selam Newspaper, were released in July 2005. They had been jailed in May 2000 as a part of the government policy that aimed to suppress Islamic voices in Turkey. IHRC had launched an intensive campaign to secure their release.

### ALI BELHADJ

Former Deputy-Head of Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

Ali Belhadj was arrested and imprisoned by Algerian police in late July 2005 after voicing his support for resistance fighters in Iraq. Ali Belhadj was previously sentenced to 12 years in a military prison in 1992 for "threatening state security." He was released in July 2003 on condition that he would not engage in politics, preach, attend public meetings or make speeches. Belhadj now faces charges of "praising acts of terrorism, inciting murder and distributing subversive leaflets." Algeria is notorious for its use of torture and abuse of prisoners. IHRC has now reopened the campaign to free Ali Belhadj.

## IN MEMORY OF A MUJAHIDAH FOR HIJAB

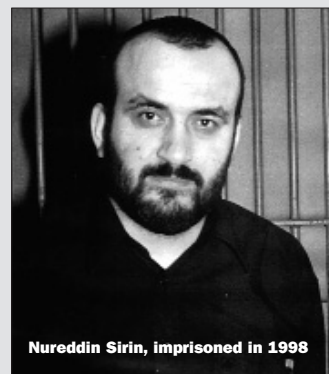
Nurulhak Saatcioglu, one of the well-known figures in the struggle against the hijab ban in Turkey, died after a regrettable accident in August 2005 at the age of 26. She had faced a possible death penalty along with other members of her family for attending a demonstration against the hijab ban in Malatya, in October 1998. Since then she had been arrested and released several times. In total she spent 16 months in prison for Hijab.



Nurulhak Saatcioglu pictured on the right.

Nurulhak and her family; mother Huda Kaya, sisters Intisar and Nurchan Saatcioglu are well-known to the British Muslim community due to the IHRC hijab campaigns. The family made great sacrifices for the sake of hijab and underwent many hardships. May Allah accept the sacrifices that have been made and help the family in their difficult time. Please remember Nurulhak in your prayers.

Seyfeddin Kara



Nureddin Sirin, imprisoned in 1998

NUREDDIN SIRIN

Having spent seven and a half traumatic and long years in prison Nureddin Sirin was finally released in November 2004.



Nureddin Sirin addressing press and supporters upon his release in November 2004



# CAMPAIGNS: Political prisoners, ethical consumerism and extradition

The following are some of the campaigns that IHRC initiated or supported in the last year.

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD (OCC)

A joint campaign by IHRC and Innovative Minds last November was against Operation Christmas Child. OCC was exposed by a series of articles in the Guardian last year as a project used by Samaritan's Purse to pursue the conversion of children and their families. Samaritan's Purse is headed by Rev Franklin Graham, advisor to US president George W. Bush, and well known for his bigoted views, that have targeted amongst others, Muslims, Hindus and Catholics. OCC involves the sending of shoe boxes full of presents for children in developing countries. Unknown to most donors, the shoe boxes are used by missionary organisations to promote Graham's idea of Christianity described by other Christian leaders as 'racist' and 'poisonous'.

Campaigners were requested to contact their local collection points to raise awareness of the true nature of the scheme. This resulted in numerous organisations who were used as collection points writing to IHRC and Inminds to distance themselves from this racist project - most simply were not aware of the bigotry behind Operation Christmas Child.

## OXFAM

Following months of campaigning and a series of discussions, Oxfam announced in February 2005 that it would not be renewing its 1 year contract with Starbucks. This campaign was launched by IHRC and Innovative Minds with the support of Friends of al-Aqsa, the Palestinian Return Centre, the Muslim Association of Britain, and the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign to protest Oxfam's decision to collaborate with pro-Zionist multinational coffee chain Starbucks in October 2004. Under the agreement, Starbucks agreed to contribute £100,000 to Oxfam's

rural development programme in the East Hararge coffee growing region of Ethiopia.

## BABAR AHMAD

If there has been one case which has symbolised the crumbling of the British legal and political process, it is that of Babar Ahmad. It has been over one year since Babar Ahmad was arrested and detained on a US arrest warrant in August 2004. Since that time, Babar has been imprisoned without charge in HMP Woodhill while he awaits extradition to the US on charges of terrorism. IHRC has fully supported the Free Babar Ahmad campaign launched by his supporters and was present at the noisy demonstrations held outside the Bow Street Magistrate's court during the various extradition hearings during the year. The fundamental flaw with the Extradition Treaty is that no evidence need be produced in order to extradite British citizens to the US. On 17 May 2005, Judge Timothy



Corin Redgrave from Peace & Progress, Massoud Shadjareh from IHRC and Mudassar Arani, solicitor with the family of Babar Ahmed outside Bow Street Magistrates, April 2005

Workman ruled that Babar could be extradited despite a great deal of evidence that he would face ill-treatment, torture and even execution if extradited. The Home Secretary is to rule in September whether he will extradite Babar to the US. In April 2005, HSBC closed down Babar's bank account which was being used to support his elderly parents. IHRC called on campaigners to express their disgust by closing their own HSBC accounts.

IHRC has also been at the forefront in demanding justice for Babar Ahmad against the anti-terrorist police officers who subjected him to a brutal life-threatening assault during his initial arrest in December 2003. IHRC has been outraged by both the Crown Prosecution Service and the Independent Police Complaints Commission which ultimately ruled that disciplinary action could only be taken against one police officer. Having boycotted the hearing as a show trial, Babar and his wife were summoned to attend the hearing which found 'no case to answer' against the police officer charged. To add insult to injury, the tribunal commended the officer involved for his "great bravery."

## NADIR REMLI

Nadir Remli is a British national facing extradition to Algeria from Italy. Nadir was arrested in February 2005 on arrival at Milan airport. IHRC launched the campaign to release Nadir and have him returned to Britain immediately following his arrest. Nadir has been living in Britain since 1982 and has been a British national for over a decade. He is married to a British woman and has five young children. Nadir is a law-abiding citizen who has never been in trouble with the police. Nadir's extradition has been sought by Algeria on terrorism-

related charges. Nadir is a member of the opposition Islamic Salvation Front which makes him especially at risk of persecution, torture and possibly death if he is extradited to Algeria. The Algerian government has a brutal reputation of persecuting members of the opposition. In July 2005, Nadir began a three week hunger strike in protest at the indefiniteness of his detention and the lengthy delays in his case. This left him extremely weak and ill due to his arthritis problems. IHRC urges campaigners to continue to pressure the Foreign Office to intercede on Nadir's behalf.

## OTHER CAMPAIGNS

Nadir is one of many prisoners abroad whose cases IHRC has supported, not all of whom can be named. Some like Majid Al-Massari and Lynne Stewart languish in prison in the USA, with little attention. Others like Burmese activist Mohamed Shamsul Anwarul Haque do not even get that much. IHRC is conscious of the fact that so many thousands of cases go unnoticed and urges campaigners to contact their local IHRC co-ordinators or become one (See page 10) in order to campaign long-term for some of these cases and bring sustained help to individuals and causes that fall from the spotlight.

IHRC campaigned vigorously for the return of the British Guantanamo detainees, in conjunction with the Guantanamo Human Rights Commission ([www.guantanamohrc.org](http://www.guantanamohrc.org)). We have now produced campaign material to campaign for the release of those left - another group forgotten like the thousands of other detainees held globally in the so-called 'war on terror'.

For more information on our campaigns, please visit our website [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk).

Fahad Ansari

# Don't forget Guantanamo

This year saw the return of all British citizens detained at Guantanamo Bay's notorious prison camp. IHRC was at the forefront of protests against the decision to have them arrested on arrival and detained for questioning by the police (see picture of wreath laid outside New Scotland Yard, pictured page 7). However the plight of these men and also those left behind has become increasingly marginal to news coverage.

The Guantanamo prisoners are slowly being forgotten, despite the best efforts of many

campaigners and campaign groups. IHRC has put together a simple campaign pack to address the demands of those men currently on hunger strike at the camp. Exhausted by the continued brutality of the camp's regime, these men have decided that hunger striking is their only option to raise awareness of what is happening to them. Sexually humiliated, beaten and tortured, these men are denied the basic rights of human beings, let alone those of prisoners. The hunger strikers have also claimed that the abuse of the Qur'an still routinely takes

place by camp guards and interrogators.

Back in the UK and other countries where detainees have been returned, the ex-prisoners face discrimination, media harassment and even denial of travel papers. All this without actually being charged or proven guilty of any crime.

The message for campaigners is simple and clear: Don't forget Guantanamo. Please go to the Campaigns page at [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk) to download the packs.

Amirah Ali



Guantanamo prisoners continue to be routinely abused.

Message of the Islamic movement  
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## Conference:

# Towards a New Liberation Theology: Reflections on Palestine



Ghada Ramahi and Rima Fakhry discuss freedom and resistance

On 12 June 2005, IHRC and NEDA organised an international conference on Palestine entitled: 'Towards a New Liberation Theology: Reflections on Palestine' in the Brunei Gallery in the School of Oriental & African Studies. Religion, particularly in the Palestinian context, has been portrayed as a hindrance to peace and not as a methodology for liberation.

Muslim, Christian and Jewish clerics discussed the role of faith in liberation struggles. Over two hundred activists, academics and clerics from a variety of faith and non-faith backgrounds packed the venue to listen to a wide array of international speakers from as far away as South Africa and the US. Guest speakers included Imam Achmad Cassiem (S Africa), Imam Muhammad al-Asi (USA),

Dr Ilan Pappé (Palestine), Rima Fakhry (Lebanon), Fr Joe McVeigh (Ireland), Dr Saied Ameli (Iran), Reverend Steven Sizer (UK) and Rabbi Yisroel Weiss (USA). Leah Tsemel, the celebrated human rights lawyer from Tel Aviv also sent a message to be read out at the conference, and Archmandrite Atalla Hanna addressed the audience via the telephone.

The day was split into three panels, each with a question and answer session: The Right of Return; the Right to Resist and the Method of Resistance. The entire proceedings can be watched on-line at [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk) and a DVD should be available soon. A book based on the conference is planned for next publication next year.

Amirah Ali

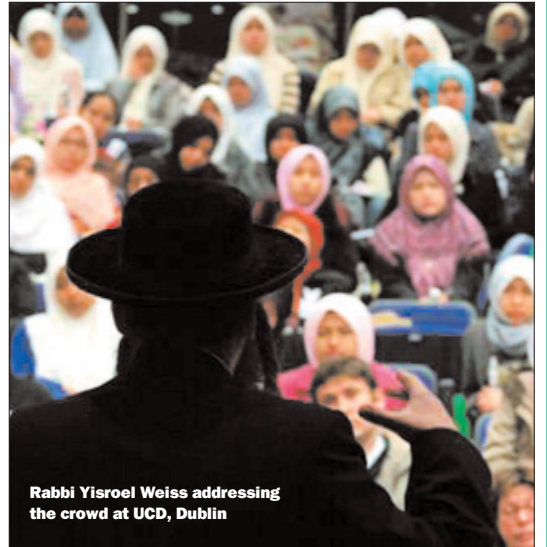
## Conference:

# End the Occupation

"When Injustice is Law, Resistance is Duty" was the powerful message which hundreds of students and activists in Ireland took home with them at the conclusion of the "End the Occupation" conference, held in Dublin on 21st and 22nd March 2005. The event was organized by FOSIS Ireland in conjunction with IHRC.

Through a series of lectures and films examining the occupation of lands such as Chechnya, Kashmir and Palestine, delegates were reminded of their clear Islamic duty to fight injustice and oppression wherever it might be and whoever it might be against. Discussions also revolved around the occupation of Northern Ireland, the struggle against apartheid, the new US-led Crusade against Muslim countries, the media portrayal of occupation, and the misrepresentation of the Islamic movement as a whole.

Prominent activists, academics and writers of all faiths and from places as diverse as South Africa, the USA, Palestine and the UK were gathered together under the banner of justice including IHRC's Massoud Shadjareh as well as Carlo Nero and Yvonne Ridley from the UK. Ireland was represented by anti-war activist Mary Kelly, Republican activist Danny Morrison and Professor Vincent Durac. Imam Achmad Cassiem (South Africa) and Imam Muhammad al-Asi (USA), Neturei Karta spokesperson Rabbi Yisroel Weiss (USA) and Dr Ilan Pappé (Palestine) also attended. The Deputy Prime Minister of Chechnya, Akhmad Zakaev, addressed delegates by way of a pre-recorded message.



Rabbi Yisroel Weiss addressing the crowd at UCD, Dublin

The talks were supplemented by a series of workshops where delegates were armed with the necessary skills to actively assist the resistance from this side of the world. These concentrated on media monitoring and response, political campaigning, economic struggle and assisting prisoners and their families. Delegates were also shown two heart-wrenching films during the conference: Carlo Nero's 'Dissent' focused on Chechnya while 'The Tak Bai Massacre' portrayed the brutal massacre of Muslims in Thailand last Ramadan. The moving footage evoked strong emotions in the audience with many delegates crying towards the end.

The idea of struggle was emphasised in the final talk of the conference by Imam

Cassiem, the physical embodiment of the word 'resistance'. Discussing the concept of Jihad in Islam, he called upon the world not only to recognize the right of the oppressed masses to resist oppression, but to also advance, arm and activate the oppressed masses in order for justice to prevail. The Imam's powerful lecture drew thunderous applause from all delegates, Muslim, Jew, Christian and Atheist alike. Imam Cassiem stressed the ultimate message of the conference: without justice, there could be no peace, as peace emanates from justice; and the only means of building this more peaceful and just society was, essentially, jihad.

Fahad Ansari

# Palestine in Our Hearts

The last year has seen. Despite some very significant developments in the last year including the death of Yassir Arafat, the intended withdrawal of the Zionist entity from the Gaza Strip and the waning and end of the al-Aqsa Intifada, the oppression of the Palestinian people continues. More land is being usurped, more families are being made homeless, more trees are being uprooted and more innocents are being brutally murdered by the Zionist killing machine. As a result, although the Intifada may have ended temporarily within Palestine, the manifold struggle to liberate it continues from abroad.

IHRC has continued its co-operation with other organisations in supporting the struggle. It also organised a number of events and campaigns including the annual protest against the celebration of Al-Nakba by British Zionists. On 12 May 2005, the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Northern Ireland held a celebration at the Wembley Conference

Centre. IHRC organised a protest outside the venue to demonstrate against the atrocities committed by Israeli forces over the last 57 years and to commemorate Al-Nakba (the catastrophe) that this 'celebration' also marks i.e. the dispossession of the Palestinian peoples, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and the continued violence and killings perpetrated against the Palestinian people. Protestors were joined by the Orthodox Jewish Rabbis of the Neturei Karta.

On 12 June 2005, IHRC and Neda organised an international conference on Palestine entitled: 'Towards a New Liberation Theology: Reflections on Palestine' in the Brunei Gallery in the School of Oriental & African Studies (see page 2 for full report). Religion, particularly in the Palestinian context, has been portrayed as a hindrance to peace and not as a methodology for liberation. Muslim, Christian and Jewish clerics discussed the role of faith in liberation struggles.

IHRC continued to support Innovative Minds' campaign of eco-

economic struggle against Zionism with the production of new larger boycott cards containing a list of pro-Zionist companies. The cards also contained information on how the boycott works, recent successes and other useful information. In February 2005, IHRC, in conjunction with the Palestinian Return Centre, Friends of al-Aqsa, the Muslim Association of Britain and the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Innovative Minds, persuaded Oxfam not to renew its soon-to-expire contract with pro-Zionist coffee shop chain Starbucks which also agreed to contribute £100,000 to Oxfam's rural development programme in the East Harare coffee growing region of Ethiopia. Activists campaigned to ensure that Oxfam continued to adhere to the humanitarian values and principles which have guided it throughout its history.

The racist nature of Zionism is so abhorrent to the human conscience that the growing pro-Palestinian camp consists of activists and campaigners from a variety of backgrounds. In addition to the groups



A devastated home and life in Gaza

listed above, IHRC has been joined and assisted in its activities by Neda, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Justice for Palestine Committee, the Federation of Student Islamic Societies, Stop Political Terror, Hizbut Tahrir and the Orthodox Jewish group Neturei Karta.

As usual IHRC helped organise the Al-Quds Day march at the end of Ramadan 2004. This year we were honoured to have read out from the platform, a message from former prisoner of faith, Nureddin Sirin. Sirin, a Turkish journalist, spent 7 years in prison in Turkey as a result of his pro-Palestinian activism (see page 4 for full report).

As Sirin's account retold, the

land of Palestine and Masjid al-Aqsa is so central to the collective heart of the Muslim world that any attempt to desecrate it will lead to another Intifada both inside and outside Palestine on an academic, political and military level. From the cradle to the grave, people of justice will struggle to liberate Palestine in whatever way they can. Without justice, there can be no peace as it is from justice that peace emanates. In the meantime, it is the duty of every single Muslim and person of conscience to do all within their reach to protect al-Aqsa, Palestine and its oppressed people.

Fahad Ansari



# Struggling for Justice, Fighting the Double Standard

It has been another painful year for all those who love justice. It has been almost three years since the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq and the tales of oppression, torture, rape and deaths of innocent Iraqis continue to reach us. Despite the US announcing in May 2003 that major combat operations were over in Iraq, there is no sign yet of an end to the violence. Although there is no official count of the number of civilians who have been killed since the invasion, unofficial figures vary from 20,000 to well in excess of 100,000.

On Laylat-ul Qadr last Ramadan, the true horror of 'shock and awe' emerged from Iraq when US occupation forces launched a brutal offensive on Fallujah. For three weeks, war crimes and massacres were committed against its citizens, as US forces imposed a complete media and humanitarian blackout on the city. The US onslaught resulted in the deaths of thousands

of civilians and the destruction of thousands of homes, schools and mosques. Refugee accounts speak of civilians carrying white flags being gunned down by American soldiers and corpses being tied to US tanks and being paraded like trophies. The Guardian's Jonathan Steele later described Fallujah as this decade's unforgettable monument to brutality similar to the Spanish city of Guernica in the 1930s. IHRC urged campaigners to write to the Foreign Secretary demanding an

end to such an atrocity and participated in demonstrations against it.

As more and more cases of US and British soldiers accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity emerge from the debris, the hypocrisy of the West is again exposed as the few found guilty face only reduction in military rank, monetary fines or very lenient custodial sentences. IHRC participated in numerous events and conferences such as the Oxford Human Rights Symposium in May in which the issues of War Crimes and Accountability were examined. The discussions concluded that history has shown us that where there is occupation for self-interest, atrocities are inevitably committed by occupation forces and that those higher up the chain of command almost always escape unpunished. This climate of impunity actively encourages even more abuses to take place.

IHRC's Massoud Shadjareh contributed to the publication, "Do Human Rights Travel?" with Helena Kennedy QC, Christine Loh and Heiner Bielefeldt (available to buy from The British Council [www.britishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.britishcouncil.org.uk)) in which he argued that this Western double standard in the implementation of human rights norms only serves to alienate those who suffer the worst human rights abuses – amongst them Muslims from many ethnicities and schools of thought.

In March 2005, IHRC supported the Indian Muslim



Federation (UK)'s campaign against the visit of the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, to Britain. Modi, the main architect of the Gujarat genocide, was forced to cancel his visit after activists exerted enormous opposition. Campaigners showed Modi that mass murderers would not be allowed to come and go as they pleased.

The last year also saw numerous massacres of Muslims participating in peaceful protests in various parts of the world. In Ramadan, the systematic persecu-

tion of Muslims in southern Thailand came to a head with the brutal slaughter of 84 unarmed Muslim protesters. IHRC urged campaigners to express their outrage with a boycott of the Thai tourism industry. IHRC also produced the first part in a report on the situation of Muslims in southern Thailand. In May 2005, the plight of the oppressed Muslims of Uzbekistan was brought to the world's attention after troops opened fire on a peaceful protest in Andijan massacring up to a thousand unarmed peaceful

demonstrators calling for an end to poverty, corruption and human rights abuses. In addition to calling for an end to British support for the Uzbek dictator Karimov, IHRC is trying to send an independent team of observers on a fact-finding mission to the region. In September 2005, IHRC produced a new report exposing the tragic situation of the forgotten Muslims of Burma.

In the wake of the Asian tsunami, IHRC was able to quickly highlight abuses committed by oppressive regimes exploiting the disaster for their own nefarious ends. Indonesia and Sri Lanka both used aid as a weapon, denying assistance to some of the most oppressed. The international spotlight brought to bear on this, particularly in Sri Lanka helped ease the situation.

IHRC was also active in its support of the Chechen people. In a follow up to a briefing produced in June 2003, IHRC wrote a briefing on the plight of Chechen refugees in neighbouring countries. IHRC has also actively supported the newly formed Save Chechnya Campaign and its launch event, the Save Chechnya Exhibition in September 2005. For more information on this visit [www.savechechnya.org](http://www.savechechnya.org).

IHRC's support for international causes continued in the form of campaigns, briefings, reports and campaigns highlighted throughout this newsletter and on our website [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk).

Fahad Ansari

## Beyond the call of duty - police shoot-to-kill

The leaders of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) have consistently used dialogue with the Muslim community for the last four years to veil their Islamophobia, blaming police prejudice on the lack of cultural education of their front-line police officers. This veil was shed with the horrific assassination of a Brazilian Catholic, Jean Charles de Menezes, in Stockwell. In meetings with the MPS, IHRC has consistently challenged the police as to whether such a policy had been in place since 2002. The MPS denied this - which the killing of De Menezes exposed as a lie.

With the advent of extra judicial killings in the MPS as a matter of policy and the consultation process proven to be a farce, IHRC felt duty bound to sever all formal relations with the police. This was after four years of so-called dialogue, during which time IHRC helped to found and initially chaired the Muslim

Safety Forum. Sadly, the MSF disintegrated into another 'talk shop' monopolised by a few individuals, undermining the MSF as a platform for the diverse Muslim community to articulate its concerns. IHRC felt that sitting in these meetings was no longer of much benefit to the Muslim community.

The Muslim community needs to learn that the eagerness of some of its self-appointed representatives to comply with the prejudicial requests of those in power undermine the prospects of having an equal and just relationship between communities and institutions. The disintegration of the MSF into a police-friendly rubber-stamping organisation is a case in point.

We will continue being treated like third class citizens, unless we stop acting like the grateful lackeys of an oppressive master. The recent experience of MSF highlights the importance of not having Muslim representatives with conflicts of interests e.g. we can

no longer accept that a civil servant or an employee of the MPS can be part of an organisation like MSF in order to monitor and hold the police accountable. It is no wonder that this is what the MPS wants to promote. Our experience of the Muslim community's interaction with the police this last year shows, that Muslim organisations have a long way to go. As founder members of MSF we still support the cause but have felt in the current circumstances that we should express our lack of confidence in its current executive.

It is also critical for the Muslims and other communities to note that the MPS has also become a tool of politicians. Instead of looking after the security of the people, it has helped the White House and Downing Street secure their public image. When the Guantanamo Bay prisoners came back IHRC led MSF arguments that the returnees should not be arrested and taken to Paddington Green police sta-

tion. Still they were arrested, despite the fact that the majority of MSF members had agreed on this position - with interesting exceptions. The MSF walked out in protest at the decision of the MPS. Sadly a few individuals decided to go back immediately to meet the police, without securing an apology from the police or negotiating any benefits for the

Muslim community. This sent a clear signal to the police that they can do and say what they like but the Muslim community will always talk to them. Is it any wonder that the MPS felt they could go beyond the call of duty to start carrying out their programme of shoot-to-kill?

Raza Kazim

**Palestine<sup>®</sup>  
Internationalist**

The Palestine Internationalist is an on-line journal for activists looking for accessible and detailed information on key issues relating to the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

Each issue has contributions from scholars and activists of different faiths and none, discussing the often overlooked issues of importance. Volume 1, Issue 1 looks at The Right of Return.

Please visit [www.palint.org](http://www.palint.org)

# Muslims' Expectations in Britain: An Update on the BMEG Project

The question of British Muslim identity is one which has preoccupied the minds of hundreds of thousands of Muslims throughout Britain. For decades, Muslims of all types of backgrounds, nationalities and ideologies have been struggling to come to terms with their Islamic identity within British society. What does it mean to be a British Muslim? What are our obligations as British Muslim citizens? Most importantly, as British Muslim citizens, what are our expectations of the British government and British society?

The purpose of the British Muslims' Expectations of the Government (BMEG) research project, which was launched in July 2004, is to determine what exactly we, as British Muslims, expect from this country. This is greatly needed because, unfortunately, the current debate as directed by the government and mass media is focused almost entirely on the expectations that the society and state has of British Muslims. It is about time that the expectations of the British Muslims be heard and acknowledged. This research aims to voice the concerns and views of Muslims from the ground, rather than responding to government and other agendas or imposing our own ideas and thoughts. As such the BMEG explores the meaning of British citizenship for Muslims.

The two first reports were launched on the 16th December

2004 in the House of Lords. Among the distinguished panel were Baroness Helena Kennedy QC, Baroness Pola Uddin, Professor Paul Kennedy and Professor Scott Lucas, who sat



Baroness Pola Uddin, Dr. Saied Reza Ameli and Baroness Helena Kennedy QC at the reports' launch.

alongside report authors Saied Reza Ameli, Arzu Merali and Manzur Elahi.

At the time of writing a third report - on education - was published and two more - on law and hijab - are ready to go to press.

Recent debates surrounding citizenship have directly impacted on Muslim communities. Muslims are decried as disloyal by virtue of some of their perceived religious beliefs. Their marginalisation is often blamed on their own lack of affiliation to the UK. Worse still

Muslims are often charged with ingratitude to their government and wider society. Volume 1 has served as a reply to these charges. Significantly, the majority of respondents saw little or no contra-

experienced by Muslims in their day to day life. The issue of discrimination had become even more pressing following the events of 9/11. The report is an attempt to identify the causes and the extent of general discrimination. In sum: the report suggests that negative views about Islam and Muslims have a role for negative behaviour experienced by many Muslims. As many as 80 percent of respondents reported that they have somehow experienced discrimination because they are Muslim. The extent of discrimination is enormous in comparison to earlier surveys. The IHRC survey in 1999 showed that discrimination was already high with 35 percent of respondents reporting discrimination; in 2000 this had risen to 45 percent. Now after the 7/7 London bombings the situation is indeed dire. We have already seen a rise in discriminatory action, so it is very important that the government takes on board the report's findings and recommendations.

diction between being a good British citizen and a practising Muslim. Many cited their faith as the reason for their loyalty. Over 50% disagreed with the statement that the British government respected British Muslims, with just over 10% agreeing with the statement.

**How does this report fit into the broader debate on citizenship?**

Volume 2 looks at the nature and extent of general discrimination

The findings of volume 3 on education and schools negates the view that Islamic faith schools are counterproductive in fostering a sense of citizenship and create segregation. It shows that underachievement can be combated by faith schools, because they foster a culture of inclusion. Furthermore, the report highlights several problems with mainstream schools and the national curriculum, which, among other reasons, cause underachievement and a sense of isolation and segregation.

The fourth report addresses the

debate surrounding the hijab. The fifth investigates British Muslims' expectations of the law, and addresses the debate on minority rights, in particular the rights of Muslims to a separate system of family law based on sharia.

Three more reports will be compiled, inshaAllah, before the completion of the BMEG project. The sixth examines the role of the media, TV, radio, press, and literature in demonising Islam and Muslims. The seventh investigates the experiences of British Muslims at university, exposing the discrimination many face while studying. The eighth, and last, report is essentially an acknowledgement of the contribution of Muslims and Islam to Britain and British society.

So what has the outcome been so far? The importance of the findings of the BMEG reports have already been acknowledged by figures in government and Parliament, other policy makers and academics. For example the second report has been referred to in parliamentary debates on religious hatred, mental health proposals and anti-terrorism measures. In Europe several organisations and even governments are looking at ways of fostering such a conversation with Muslims in their countries, as well as commissioning similar research. We hope and pray that the effects of this work will be long-term and that this type of engagement between citizens and those supposedly representing them, becomes a model for all communities.

Karin Lindahl

## NOMINATE MUSLIM CONTRIBUTORS TO SOCIETY

The Islamic Human Rights Commission wishes to acknowledge Muslim professionals of all fields who have contributed to British Society.

We are publishing a report that profiles the contribution of Muslims to the UK.

If you know would like to nominate someone for publication in the 8th volume of our British Muslims Expectations of the Government Project, please send the person's name, field of occupation, and any contact details available to: [contributors@ihrc.org](mailto:contributors@ihrc.org)

**Nominations to be received by 31st October 2005**



## Talks and Events: Spreading the Word

IHRC has continued to hold seminars, talks and events (see conference reports on page 2). Other events included Dissent and Detention: Before and after 9/11 with Imam Achmad Cassiem and Mu'allim Ibraheem Al-Zakzaky who discussed their own experiences as prisoners of the apartheid regime in South Africa (Cassiem) and Sani Abacha's dictatorship in Nigeria (Zakzaky), as well as their concerns about the increasingly brutal nature of political crackdowns worldwide.

IHRC held a number of Know Your Rights training days (pictured) relating to the rights of people who may be questioned by police or approached by security services. These training days help to empower Muslim communities in the UK.

IHRC speakers also participated in various overseas conferences, including 'Muslims in a Secular Democracy: A European Comparison' in Berlin, a 'Peace in Palestine Conference' in Malaysia, and a conference on the relevance of Karbala in the contemporary world held in Toronto.

Other important events in

which IHRC participated include Politics and religion in a Post 9/11 World, Islam and Human Rights in the Age of Democratisation and Terrorism at the University of Essex, All Our Tomorrows: The Future for Human Rights, Have your say on stops and searches under anti-terrorist powers, Imam Mahdi Justice & Globalisation, Human Rights and Islam at Cambridge University and A Memorial for the Fallen Heroes of

Chechnya held at the House of Lords.

IHRC has also been a key participant in community unity events post 7/7, including the Greater London Authority community leaders' meetings, as well as other events that promote just and peaceful measures to address the divisions between communities..

**Raivi Shams Rahman and Amirah Ali**



Participants at a 'Know Your Rights Workshop' in Cambridge



# IHRC makes its voice heard in consultations



Articulating Islamic human rights to the media

Alhamdulillah, IHRC has had a busy year. We pray that the work we have undertaken is accepted by Allah s.w.t. in His way. The following are just some examples of how we have spread the message of our work – work which we hope reflects the aspirations of the thousands of committed supporters that we have world-wide.

IHRC has a regular presence in national and international print, on radio and TV as well as online. IHRC has also been asked for advice by various media outlets on how to tackle Islamophobic reporting and unconscious stereotyping.

Other media related projects include our continued campaigns against biased and misrepresentative broadcasting e.g. the 'Panorama' programme featuring the MCB and Islamic Foundation, as well as 'The Myth of Islamophobia' on Channel 4.

IHRC is also represented on the oversight panel of the Radio 4 Today programme / University of Newcastle Citizens' Jury project. More details can be found at: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/reports/politics/citizenjury\\_reading\\_20050908.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/reports/politics/citizenjury_reading_20050908.shtml)

IHRC members have been asked to advise, give expert evidence and sit on a variety of panels and committees. These include the POWER enquiry looking into how political participation and involvement may be increased and deepened in Britain. Massoud Shadjareh is currently a member of the Stop and Search Community Panel. IHRC has also made various submissions on consultations with regard to anti-terror measures, immigration issues, forced marriage and various other issues. IHRC was asked by the British Council to present the British perspective of community relations to visiting delegates from the Muhammadiyah movement from Indonesia.

IHRC's research continues to be cited in academic and policy related literature and researchers and officers have given advice and interviews on many topics, including women's rights, anti-backlash measures, structural discrimination, and anti-terrorism laws to a variety of institutions and researchers including the University of Essex, University of California – Berkeley and New York Law School.

Additionally IHRC has been consulted and quoted extensively by various EU reports on Islamophobia, the work of the Open Society as well as the International Helsinki Federation and was represented in Baroness Pola Uddin's Muslim Women Talk programme.

IHRC has also continued to work at an international level on Palestine, and was the host of the conference of the International Union of NGOs Defending Palestinian Rights, in London in March 2005, as well as a meeting of UK-based international campaigners on the issue of boycotting Israeli goods and pro-Israeli companies as a means of securing a just and lasting peace in Palestine.

# Charter 3:103

**And hold fast, all of you, to the Rope of Allah, and be not divided among yourselves ...”**

In His Book, Allah calls on Muslims to be united - nowhere more compellingly than in Surat Aal'Imraan (3), ayah 103. Hence, the Islamic Human Rights Commission launched its initiative "Charter 3:103" to promote unity amongst Muslim groups. Charter 3:103 was established in 1997 as a platform for Muslims to speak out against sectarianism, nationalism, racism and other divisive ideologies and movements.

Disunity is a scourge, which benefits none except the enemies of Islam.

Our failure, as Muslims, to establish unity is directly linked to our failure to establish justice. The latter cannot follow without the former.

Allah willing, groups throughout the United Kingdom, indeed throughout the world, will sign up to the Charter. But more importantly, may Allah grant that Muslim groups everywhere will begin to shape their statements and actions according to this fundamental imperative of Islam. Then, finally, Allah willing, we can begin to turn the tide, and bring justice to a world that is crying out for it.

For more information on the Charter and how to sign up to it, please contact the office on (44) 20 8904 4222 or email [info@ihrc.org](mailto:info@ihrc.org).

Karin Lindahl

## VICTIMS OF SECTARIAN VIOLENCE



Multan, Pakistan, October 2004



Karbala, Iraq, March 2004



Zaria, Nigeria, February 2005

# Are you a UK Taxpayer?

## If so please help Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust

The Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust is a charity registered in the UK (number 1106120) that raises money to fund purely charitable work. This includes e.g. work to raise awareness about human rights or to ensure that existing human rights laws are being properly enforced. It could also provide relief to victims of human rights abuses and their families.

If you wish to donate money that will be used for purely charitable purposes as defined by the Charities Commission you can send donations to the Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust. Please make cheques payable to the Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust or pay by credit or debit card by filling in your details below and send it with the completed form below. UK taxpayers are able to utilise Gift Aid when donating to Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust, by ticking the relevant box(es) below. This means for every £1 you donate IHRCT will be able to reclaim a further 28p.

You can also call the office and donate with your credit or debit card on 020 8904 4222. Please make sure you state that you want it to be a GIFT AID donation.

May Allah s.w.t. reward all your efforts. Ameen.

### Islamic Human Rights Commission Trust

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Please notify the charity if you change your name or address.

Please note the charity cannot fund any political work or lobbying for a change in existing law (please see page 12 if you are interested in donating to all of IHRC's work including its non-charitable work).

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You can also donate online by visiting [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk)

# Volunteer Now!

## The experience of an IHRC Volunteer

In the modern world it is becoming increasingly harder for Muslims living in Britain to contribute in any fashion to the Ummah. Most of us spend our early years studying in a system that does not represent our values, specifically, so that upon finishing our education we can spend the rest of our lives working for faceless money-grabbers intent on exploiting anyone and everyone as much as they can without too much hassle.

This structure has created a society in which real job satisfaction is rare, and contribution to society even rarer. However those complaining about the lack of the former rarely discuss the latter. In a modern society each individual is trained to contribute to the economy, but contributing to the economy is just not enough. People wish to contribute to the human experience, and not just work to make a day to day living. They want to make an impact in a positive manner and not just die as unremembered, downtrodden and under-achieving souls.

Some become scientists to make advancements in their specific fields, with the aim of raising the standard of living. Others become doctors to alleviate physi-

cal suffering. There are however less tangible methods of making a positive impact. There are many organizations that operate behind the scenes, out of the limelight, doing work that's importance and relevant but which is not at first apparent - organisations like the Islamic Human Rights Commission. Why is its relevance not immediately apparent? Because there is no dazzle, no glory. However the work they do is unarguably as important as the

actual individuals who build hospitals and roads in the developing world, who travel to places suffering from famine and disease and hand out food and vaccines.

This work is often forgotten but its effects ensure that those whose suffering does not qualify for the 6 O'Clock News are not forgotten.

There is a proverb that about sums up the problem of the modern world. The jist of it (without the actual wording) is that for evil

to prosper you don't need an abundance of organised evil people. No. You only need for good people to remain apathetic and idle. To have knowledge and not act on it is to not really have that knowledge at all. To have the knowledge required to act in an informed manner and remain passive is not just stupid, but a failing. It's a failing of character, it's a failing to yourself, it's a failing to society and worsely, it's a failing of your duty to please Allah

- to love all that the Almighty loves and to hate all the Almighty hates. And verily the Almighty hates all oppressors.

We Muslims are quick to groan about how we are consistently robbed of our rights, our possessions and our dignity. But we seldom truly understand why. Is it solely because we are Muslims? Is it because we are easy targets? Is it because we have been asking for it? If it is because we are Muslims, then why do we find so many people who are non-Muslims throughout the world in the same boat as us? And if it is because Muslims are easy targets then why have we been singled out by the powers that be as the greatest threat to the New World Order?

We have been singled out because we are a people of strong conviction; because Muslims more easily recognise the nature of western rule as there are Muslims suffering in not just one of the wars being imposed by the great powers on others in the world, but nearly all; because we truly have the capacity to be a threat to the unilateral takeover of the world's resources by the NATO club, at every level, and because it is our duty to do so; because it is the duty of Muslims to be the champions of the oppressed.

You might ask, 'What does this have to do with the issue at hand?' Volunteering at a place such as the Islamic Human Rights Commission in any capacity is an experience, and maybe if Allah wills it, a career that Muslims should consider

Humza Qureshi



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## GET INVOLVED

Join our international campaigners email list by sending an email to:

**list@ihrc.org.**

**YOU'LL GET EMAILS**

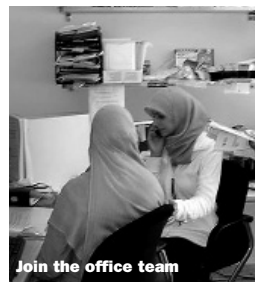
**ON OUR LATEST CAMPAIGNS AND ALERTS.**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR

Being part of the Islamic Human Rights Commission has always been a very important part of my life. It was a means through which I felt I was constructively helping or making myself aware of the state of the Muslim Ummah. It had always been a necessity for me as consideration for humanity is something that is demanded by Islam.

There has always been a battle of the conscience between supporting aid work or human rights work. They are both as important as each other and both deserve our time and money. However I feel that in the Muslim community human rights work is sadly neglected. I find this shocking as over 80% of human rights abuses in the world are against Muslims. Are we that naïve that we cannot even see what is happening around us, recognise the injustice and at least attempt to protect ourselves if not others from an increasingly hostile world?

The influence we have is not even skimming its potential as we are either choosing to be oblivious to the deteriorating



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Volunteering is helpful to us but also helps you in developing your own personal skills and broadening your mind. It is an excellent way to become familiar with what practical action you can take to pursue justice and preserve human rights. You also become aware and keep up to date with the current issues/challenges and persecution facing the Muslim Ummah.

IHRC is a voluntary based organisation. Your financial help goes a long way. IHRC produces various items such as Eid cards and T-shirts which you could help us sell. We would also greatly appreciate a one-off donation or a more long-term standing order.

- For further information on any of the above please call us on 020 8904 4222. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the IHRC please send in your C.V. and covering letter to PO Box 598, Wembley, London, UK, HA9 7XH. Alternatively you can email abidah@ihrc.org.
- Become a volunteer coordinator in your local area
  - Help in admin
  - Join our research team
  - Be a Campaigner
  - Help in Media Monitoring

Abidah Merchant



continued from page 1

tions with them in its wake. This is why we are set to challenge the government's support of the school that has denied a schoolgirl her right to education because she wears a jilbab. It dictates that we campaign for the rights of those held in Guantanamo Bay and other prison camps worldwide, it demands that we stand up for all those oppressed in Burma by that regime as well as those oppressed by the oppressed, be it Muslims in Myanmar or Roma in Eastern Europe. This is why we have stated that the British government's proposed anti-terrorism measures are not only impractical and counterproductive, they are morally wrong – they target the weakest communities and demonise them further in the psyche of wider society. That scale of demonisation precedes genocide. We saw it before the Holocaust in 1930s Germany. We saw it in the 1980s before the Bosnian war; we saw it before Srebrenica.

If the international community is truly sorry about its inaction in Srebrenica, then levelling the playing field in terms of the action it will take to prevent further disaster is essential.

As we go to press the UN has supported a call by the British Prime minister for all countries to outlaw incitement to terrorism. Who will define what terrorism is and how it is incited? We have already seen the labelling of some liberation struggles as terrorism be it in Palestine, Chechnya, Sudan, India or China. At the same time we see the most grotesque state-sponsored terrorism labelled as defence of the realm or action against terrorism.

In these anti-terror measures world-wide, Muslims are singled out as especially dangerous because of our religious beliefs which are somehow meant to define us as more prone to committing acts of egregious violence. Whilst this is a fallacy, the legacy is that Muslims now face policies that dictate how they dress, what they can say and even by way of interference in mosques and madrasah curricula, what you can pray for. Our devotion to prayer, our belief in an eternal paradise that we should all aspire to, mark us out as dangerous fanatics, and worse still, potential terrorists. In a post 9/11 world it is often argued, sometimes by weary Muslims that the label of terrorist should be expected given the events in New York and Washington four years ago. Yet no such tag accrued to

the Christian community after Srebrenica or any of the other bloody events in the Bosnian war. Why should Muslims consider themselves to be different?

It is worth noting that whilst the Serb forces were advancing on Srebrenica back in 1995, the UN Special Representative called Belgrade and suggested that as a UN soldier had allegedly been killed some days earlier by Bosnian troops, the advance on Srebrenica – a safe haven for refugees – might in fact be seen as a response to Bosnian Muslim terrorism. It is now an all too familiar excuse for murder. Perhaps in ten years time, Jack Straw or his successor will also say he is sorry. At IHRC we believe we should not wait in the hope of hearing a few paltry words of apology some day. This newsletter is filled with some examples of the work we have initiated and undertaken, often in conjunction with other organisations to promote a just and peaceful world through civil society action: protests, campaigns, letter-writing, research etc.

We ask you to join us in this struggle against the injustices that – whoever they target – ultimately undermine the humanity of all. Join the struggle for justice – join and support IHRC.

## HAVE YOU BEEN THE VICTIM OF ISLAMOPHOBIA? HAVE YOU BEEN ABUSED, DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, VILIFIED OR EVEN ATTACKED BECAUSE YOU ARE MUSLIM?

Report it in confidence through IHRC's on-line reporting form at: [www.ihrc.org.uk/incidents](http://www.ihrc.org.uk/incidents)

It is important to report these incidents, even if you do not want your identity to be known and you don't want any further action taken. So long as a record is made, we can build up a true picture of the type of hostility that Muslims face today.

**THIS SERVICE IS ENTIRELY CONFIDENTIAL.**

# IHRC Reports, Campaign Packs & Miscellaneous Items Order Form

Please tick the box next to the items you want and fill in your name, address and contact details on the form overleaf and send your payment to: **IHRC, PO Box 588, Wembley, HA9 7XH, United Kingdom.** If you are based outside the UK, please contact IHRC before purchasing items, as there may be additional postage costs involved. Please make cheques payable to **'Islamic Human Rights Commission'**. Please allow 28 days for delivery for items other than Eid cards. If you require any of the following before Eid 2005 please specify when you send us the order.

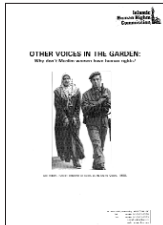
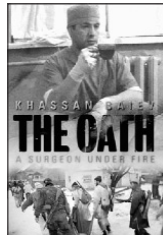
### REPORTS

Most IHRC reports are available to download from our web-site without charge, or can be e-mailed to you. If you require a hard copy please send £4 (unless otherwise stated) for each report you require. Our list of reports from 1997 – is available on-line now [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk)

- Who Will Guard the Guardians?** A survey of IPCC failings in the case of Babar Ahmed.
- Burma's Muslims - the Oppressed of the Oppressed** (October 2005) A review of societal and government oppression of Muslims in one of the world's most closed nations.
- Anti-Muslim Hostility & Hatred Assessment** (November 2005) Looking at the period Feb 2004 to April 2005 This report aims to shed light on the degree and extent of anti-Muslim hostility. Findings take into account over three hundred articles over a 10 month period.
- Terror in the name of anti-terrorism: The UK in 2004** (Sept 2005) A comprehensive look at what is wrong with current anti-terror laws and proposals in the UK. Based on IHRC's submissions to the Home Office, this guide has been designed for activists and campaigners.
- Dual Citizenship: British, Islamic or Both – Obligation, Recognition, Respect and Belonging** (Nov 2004) The first in the British Muslim's Expectation of the Government Series, looking at the crunch issues of citizenship and belonging for Muslims in the UK. Cost £7
- Social Discrimination: Across the Muslim Divide** (Dec 2004) The second instalment in the BMEG series dealing with abut-muslim prejudice in the current political climate.
- Secular or Islamic? What Schools do British Muslims want for their Children?** (July 2005) Volume 3 of the BMEG deals with an important question dealt with by every parent. It analyses the problem facing under achieving Muslim children.
- An International Oddity: Iraq's Journey** (Nov 2004) Based on IHRC's briefings on Iraq over the last two years, this report looks at different aspects of the conflict – from various arguments used to define the allies invasion of Iraq, to the allies use of cluster bombs and its dubious legality
- Hijab & Democracy: The ways of and against Secular Fundamentalism** (Nov 2004) Based on IHRC briefing, this report looks at the movement for change against women in hijab in Europe at the current moment. Chapters look at the international law, human rights as well as good and bad practice.
- Dissent, Difference and Terror: A Review of Global Anti-Terrorist Laws** (Nov 2004) Based on IHRC briefing, this report is a compilation of work by various authors looking at governmental moves in various countries that effectively silence dissent and criminalise minorities and refugees in the name of anti-terror.

### IHRC CAMPAIGN PACKS

IHRC campaign packs are also available to download from the website: [www.ihrc.org](http://www.ihrc.org). If you require use to send you hard copies, please send us £1 per item as below to help with postage and packing. The best way to keep



abreast of IHRC campaigns is to join our e-mail list. Please e-mail [subscribe@ihrc.org](mailto:subscribe@ihrc.org) to join.

- Boycott Zionism Pocket sized card** This latest card gives details of pro-Israeli companies on the boycott list in a handy pocket size for you to take wherever you go. Per batch of 50. (If you require only a few copies please call the office: 020 8904 4222)
- Boycott Marks & Spencer / Boycott Zionism Leaflet** (Sept 2005) Per batch of 50 (If you require only a few copies please call the office: 020 8904 4222)
- Protest Flyer for French hijab ban.** A previous version of this leaflet was handed out at the IHRC /IWOO vigil outside the French embassy on the 11th Jan 2004 but can be used to raise awareness amongst Muslims and non Muslims communities regarding the hijab ban in France. Per batch of 20.
- French Hijab ban: Letter to British foreign secretary Jack Straw MP.** (Sept 2005) Updated campaign letter to British Foreign secretary. This can also be used as a model for (with relevant adjustments) for Foreign ministers in various countries. Per batch of 20
- Oppressed in the name of freedom' postcards** (Oct 2003) Per batch of 25. Specially printed cards regarding the plight of women discriminated against for wearing hijab. Currently being used to campaign for hijab rights in Turkey. Please specify which cards you require.
  - Recep Tayyep Erdogan**, Turkish prime minister
  - Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, EU Commissioner for external relations
- Chart 3:103** (Sept 2005) Per batch of 10 (If you require only a few copies please call the office: 020 8904 4222) Chart 3: 103 is a document which outlines simply the Qur'anic verse which calls for unity amongst Muslims.
- Prisoner of faith: Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, USA** More details on how to campaign for the blind Sheikh imprisoned under laws not used since the American Civil war. With Muslims being arrested daily, there is danger of Sheikh Omar being forgotten – do not let this happen.
- Prisoner of Faith: All Belhadj, Algeria.** IHRC have reopened the campaign in support of ex-FIS leader, All Belhadj who had recently completed a politically-motivated 12 year jail sentence. Now he has been detained without charge since July 2005 for publicly supporting the right of self defence in Iraq.
- Prisoner of Faith: Taysir Alouni, Spain.** The Al Jazeera reporter renowned for his coverage of the brutal Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Having narrowly escaped death in Iraq from a US targeted bombing on al-Jazeera offices, he returned to Spain for a holiday. The authorities have since arrested him accusing him of belonging to an Al-Qaeda terrorist cell in Spain. He is now under house arrest awaiting trial with a serious heart condition.
- Babar Ahmed, UK.** Babar Ahmed has been held in Belmarsh prison without charge since Aug 2004 and is facing extradition to the USA for alleged and unsubstantiated terrorist activities. If extradited he could face torture and even the death penalty.
- Nadir Remli, Italy.** British citizen arrested in Italy, imprisoned since Feb 2005 with no evidence against him. He faces extradition to Algeria, a known human rights violator. Due to a lack of progress in his case Nadir has resorted to hunger strikes
- Guantanamo Bay Detainees, Cuba.** IHRC continues its struggle to ensure that all detainees in Guantanamo Bay are given access to due process and other fundamental human rights or released immediately. The abuses that are taking place have forced the detainees, some of whom were children when imprisoned, into hunger strikes and suicide attempts – so please act now



### LEAFLETS

- Know Your Rights** (May 2000) Leaflet written by acclaimed human rights solicitor Mudassar Arani and published by IHRC is an invaluable guide for anyone concerned by the activities of the British Secret Services, and police. It explains how to deal with approached from the security services and police.
- Know Your Rights part II** (Nov 2003) Leaflet outlining what to do if you are stopped by security services whilst travelling and your rights under new immigration and nationality laws in the UK.

### VIDEOS & DVD's

- All Videos are £7 inc. postage and packing from the UK
- Towards a New Liberation Theology: Reflections on Palestine** (DVD). A seminar from June 2005. Available late October 2005. Please call the office for more details.
- The Hidden Victims of September 11:** Conference Video Featuring Yvonne Ridley, the late Sulayman Abedin and Mudassar Arani, with papers from Sultana Tafadar and Natalie Garcia
- Human Rights, Justice & Muslims in the wake of 9/11** Seminar from Oct 2001

### BOOKS

- The Oath by Khassan Balev** (2003). Hardback, pages 354. Hodder & Stoughton; ISBN: 0-7432-2011-0 A Chechen surgeon recounts his story of immense courage under fire. First 15 ordered signed by the author. £24 including UK postage & packaging
- Among the Divine Evidences of the 3rd Millennium** by Cehl Fakaemeeah. 109 pages ASZ Design Consultancy, 2003. Cehl Fakaemeeah was a prisoner of faith. This book looks at some of the issues surrounding Fakaemeeah's imprisonment as well as discourses on the nature of Allah. This book costs £5.50 inc postage and packing
- Globalisation, Americanization and British Muslim Identity** by Dr. Saied Reza Ameli. 340 pages (1 Aug 2002) Islamic College for Advanced Studies (ICAS); ISBN: 1904063020. This book is by one of IHRC's founders, looks at the development of British Muslim identity and the challenges to it from the globalisation of Hollywood culture. This book costs £14 inc postage and packing.

### BANNERS

- These banners can be displayed as posters or used at demonstrations and vigils. Printed in colour on canvass. They cost £7 each including postage and packaging.
- Whose side are you on?** Boy and tank design. 32" x 47"
- The world Stopped Nazism.** The World Stopped Apartheid, The World Must Stop Zionism. With a small Zionist flag crossed through. 32" x 47"

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### EID CARDS

Please see overleaf for details.

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Reviewed: Tom Baker

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# Support Justice, Help IHRC

IHRC has grown and developed through the generous donations of its supporters without whom, we could not have survived. Please remember us this year with your du'a and your financial assistance. Please help us in whatever way you can - a small monthly contribution (see supporters' form below) is as valuable as a generous one-off donation. If you wish to donate solely to IHRC's charitable work, please complete the form on page 9. Otherwise please fill in the appropriate form on this page. There are many worthy causes, and we request that you remember IHRC's work when donating, in the best way that you can.

**May Allah s.w.t. reward all your efforts in this world and the next. Ameen.**

**EID CARDS QUR'AN SET 1**

**EID CARDS QUR'AN SET 2**

**EID CARDS ARCHITECTURE**

## Become an IHRC supporter

Supporters of IHRC get free copies of IHRC reports (those paying concessionary rates get a selection) and reduced rates on other items. Concessionary supporters are encouraged to donate £5 a month. Without this type of regular support - however small, IHRC would not be able to operate.

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Amount of packs required

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