



# ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

## 2016 - 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



*“And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men and the women and the children, (and of) those who say: ‘O Lord! Cause us to go forth from this town, whose people are oppressors, and give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper’.”*

***Holy Qur’an: Chapter 4, Verse 75***



**The Islamic Human Rights Commission is an NGO  
with Special Consultative Status at the Economic and  
Social Council of the United Nations.**

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# Chairman's Foreword

**The last year has been a challenging one for Muslims both domestically and internationally.**

The environment of hate that is nourished by an extreme undercurrent of xenophobic intolerance and which finds increasing expression in everyday political discourse marched relentlessly forward under a resurgent right energised by the Brexit campaign and the election of Donald Trump.

The Leave campaign's decision to engage publicly in Islamophobic dog-whistle politics coupled with Trump's shamelessly anti-Muslim, anti-foreigner platform is illustrative of the way in which hate has become normalised and infected western political systems.

Indeed it should be a matter of grave concern to everyone that hate speech vis a vis minorities has become so socially acceptable that politicians do not even see the need to dress up their xenophobic tropes before peddling them.

So powerful is the tide of Islamophobia that it is sweeping away everything before it. While too many liberals have found common cause with the right on issues such as women's rights (niqab and hijab bans) and freedom of speech (Prophet Muhammad cartoons), oblivious to the hatred underpinning its rhetoric, others have found it expedient to follow the prevailing wind, resulting in a dangerous lurch to the right that has alarming implications for the whole of society.

Across the west, the political mood continues to inspire crackdowns at home that demonise Muslims in order to rally support for morally bankrupt overseas policies centred on the continued domination and exploitation of Muslim-majority countries.

Fanned by an equally bigoted media, Muslims have been cast as the archetypal villains in the popular imagination, so far removed from any civilised norms that they have forfeited any right to fair and civilised treatment (justifying amongst other things immigration bans and extra-judicial assassinations).

Donald Trump's executive orders banning entry to the US of nationals of

majority-Muslim countries has its counterpart at home in the widening of the insidious Prevent strategy and government attempts to regulate - read control - shariah courts and madrasas, and on the continent in the recent European Court of Justice decision that companies can ban employees from wearing the Islamic headscarf and other religious symbols.

All of these decisions form part of a growing body of laws designed to institutionalise the inferior and legal status of Muslims in the west.

**History has shown us that once the genie of xenophobia is out of the bottle it is very difficult to contain. Yet contain it we must if we are to defeat the forces of hate and division and claim our rightful place as a moral touchstone for society.**

They are evidence, if any more was needed, that Muslims continue to be treated under a 'security lens' approach, a potential fifth column that must be feared and watched, rather than equal citizens meriting equal rights.

History has shown us that once the genie of xenophobia is out of the bottle it is very difficult to contain. Yet contain it we must if we are to defeat the forces of hate and division and claim our rightful place as a moral touchstone for society. It serves no one to slink into the shadows and accept the status quo. Indeed this is the very aim of the legislation and policies ranged against us - to delegitimise and stigmatise our religion and shake our collective confidence.

For the last two decades IHRC has spared no effort to push back against Islamophobia and indeed we have helped both define the

term and quantify its extent. That institutional Islamophobia has become an established concept in the field is in no small part down to the work we have done, particularly our hate crime studies and conferences.

In a welcome endorsement of our work, earlier this year IHRC was chosen by the EU to carry out a large-scale project that aims to compare the operation of counter-narratives to Muslim hatred in eight EU member states in order to examine their use and effectiveness in terms of providing alternatives to prevailing narratives of hate and hostility and reducing racism.

The work we do and the fact that we are thriving is only possible thanks to the support we receive from you. Inspired by your faith you continue to believe, like us, that together we can

make the world a better, fairer, more just place for ourselves and future generations. In our deen we have all the tools necessary to step up to this challenge notwithstanding the many obstacles that are put in our way. Whether it's divide and conquer (through sectarian or ethnic differences), demonisation, punitive legislation or even outright violence, these obstacles pale alongside the trials and tribulations suffered by the early generations of Muslims.

There is no better time to act than the present. Join us now.

**MASSOUD  
SHADJAREH**  
Chair  
Islamic Human  
Rights Commission



Massoud Shadjareh



# Introduction – About IHRC

**I**HRC's annual report aims to provide an overview of the work we have done in the past year.

In a world marked by growing intolerance towards racial and religious minorities, defending and upholding their fundamental rights is becoming an increasingly difficult task.

The last few years have witnessed a quantum leap in the normalisation of hate rhetoric and hate speech aimed at delegitimizing the Muslim presence in the west.

Neo-fascist movements once considered fringe parties such as France's National Front and the Freedom Party in the Netherlands have gained mass support and heavily influenced the direction of mainstream political discourse throughout Europe.

In the last year, Britons influenced by the environment of hate responded to the dog-whistle racism of Brexiteers and voted to leave the European Union. Across the pond, Donald Trump rose to power on an explicitly anti-Muslim and xenophobic platform.

Challenging these developments is a mainstay of our work. Whether it's alerting people to the dangers posed by far right politicians, campaigning against sectarianism, or defending the rights of the oppressed in Palestine or Myanmar, the worsening international climate has made the job of human rights groups ever more critical.

Rather than be cowed and discouraged by the powerful forces ranged against us, we in the Islamic Human Rights Commission relish the challenge it presents. We are inspired and driven by the Quranic exhortation for believers to rise up in defence of the oppressed. In fact our organisation was founded for this very purpose in 1997 by a group of activists who wanted to translate their faith into action by advocating and defending the rights of people worldwide.

IHRC is not just any other human rights organisation. In a world where the vast majority of human rights work is predicated on

secular liberal values we carry the standard of Islam to present a faith-based discourse showing that our religion has afforded every individual with fundamental rights, regardless of their background.

Our work is varied. It ranges from assisting individuals in need of support, to monitoring the media for incidents of bias, discrimination or incitement; highlighting abuses through briefings, press releases and publications; advising governments and international organisations; researching human rights issues; and highlighting issues and priorities to shape the future agendas of wider human rights discourse.

Today IHRC is recognised as an experienced and highly respected human rights organisation. For many years now we have enjoyed consultancy status at the United Nations, a platform that allows governmental and other organisations all over the world to utilise the research and analysis we produce.

Through intensive campaigning, innovative initiatives, and the dedicated hard work of our staff, interns, volunteers and supporters, IHRC has earned a global reputation as a trusted and reliable partner in all types of human rights projects. Our research, alerts and publications have made us a trusted source of expertise, guiding struggles for justice all over the world.

IHRC also plays an active role within communities by organising educational seminars, and providing advice and support to local groups wishing to establish their own projects in fields where we have expertise.

The IHRC website covers many aspects of our work and provides general information and materials for the media, students, policy makers, lawyers and activists, as well as serving as a portal for participation in our ongoing research projects. Our network of committed supporters and campaigners across the world continues to grow.





# Islamophobia

## Hate crime report - European launch

Following on from the successful launch in late 2015 of our latest research into hate crimes, "Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK", IHRC took its findings to different European forums.

It is IHRC's second UK-wide report, studying Muslim experiences of hostility and discrimination and issues of anti-Muslim hate crime within the context of an increasingly institutionally Islamophobic environment. It looks beyond racially motivated criminal acts against Muslims and analyses the environment in which discriminatory acts are encouraged and legitimised.

**Environment of Hate:**  
**The New Normal for Muslims in the UK and Europe**

As racism rises across Europe, this event seeks to present the findings of the Domination Hate Model research project that assess how Islamophobia has increased in the UK most recently and other European countries.

**Hosted by MEPs Jean Lambert, Afzal Khan and Sajjad Karim**

**SPEAKERS:**

<b>ARZU MERALI</b> Head of Research, Islamic Human Rights Commission	<b>ABED CHOUDHURY</b> Head of Advocacy, Islamic Human Rights Commission	<b>SANDEW HIRA</b> Decolonial International Network
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**27 September 2016 • 13:00-15:00**  
**P4B001, European Parliament**

For more information and registration please visit  
[www.ihrc.org.uk/events](http://www.ihrc.org.uk/events) or email to [caterina@ihrc.org](mailto:caterina@ihrc.org)

Logos: Islamic Human Rights Commission, ARD, S&D, ECR, European Conservatives and Reformists Group, The Greens | UKIP

Islamophobia European Day (21 September 2016) was an opportune backdrop for evaluating the alarming rise of multi-layered discrimination against Muslims on the continent.

On 27 September 2016 IHRC organised panel discussions in the European Parlia-

ment in Brussels, bringing together experts, academics, civil society organisations, EU institutions and European Muslim human rights activists. They explored how to have an intersectional approach to discrimination and hate crime and how to improve the implementation of non-discrimination legislation.

On 29 September 2016 a similar event was held in Geneva at the United Nations where Arzu Merali (IHRC Head of Research and study co-author) and Abed Choudhury (IHRC Head of Advocacy) addressed an audience of activists, academics and politicians.

## Brexit Islamophobia Spike

In the wake of the referendum decision for Britain to leave the EU last June IHRC issued an alert for Muslims to exercise caution following a spike in hate crimes.

IHRC called on Muslims in Britain to stay vigilant and take precautionary measures after an explosion in racist and Islamophobic attacks following the June 2016 referendum.

The 'leave' result legitimised the environment of hate that already exists for Muslims and which was documented in our recent report "Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK".

Our precautionary advice included staying vigilant, not opening suspect packages and reporting suspicious characters and vehicles to the police. IHRC also set up a helpline for those who had experienced harassment, verbal or physical abuse.

## Islamophobia Conferences

For the third consecutive year IHRC, in collaboration with Scotland Against Criminalising Communities, held national conferences focusing on tackling Islamophobia.

Set over two weekends (3 and 10 December 2016 in Edinburgh and London respectively) the conferences explored the ways

education, the legal system and the PREVENT/counter-terrorism regime coalesce to create an environment of hate that facilitates the operation of a de facto police state.

In the current climate where hate crime against Muslims is at unprecedented highs, the conferences represented a timely evaluation of the way these systems help to create and perpetuate such an environment.

Whilst the primary targets and victims of hateful discourse, discrimination and state and street violence are Muslims, many minority communities now feel a resurgence of hatred and everyone is impacted negatively.

Speakers included Yvonne Ridley (journalist), Arzu Merali (IHRC), Mohammad N Asif (Afghan Human Rights Foundation), Tasneem Ali (Muslim Womens Association of Edinburgh), Richard Haley (SACC), Faizah Shaheen (questioned by police after being reported reading a book about Syria on a plane), Pinar Aksu (campaigner for refugees), Ibrahim Mohamoud (Cage spokesperson), Kamran Sikander (teacher and representative of the EIS, Scotland's biggest teaching union).

## **IHRC selected to carry out EU Islamophobia project**

IHRC was among a number of organisations chosen by the EU to carry out a large-scale project that aims to compare the operation of counter-narratives to Muslim hatred in eight EU member states in order to examine their use and effectiveness in terms of providing alternatives to prevailing narratives of hate and hostility and reducing racism.

The year-long project will collate empirical information about the operation of counter-narratives in eight member states (the UK, Belgium, Portugal, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Greece, plus France and Germany) providing the first comprehensive comparative picture of the use of

counter-narratives and will for the first time compare these data to explore what works in the use of counter-narratives utilising a range of indicators. The project is funded with support from the European Commission.

IHRC was selected alongside a number of other prestigious partners: University of Leeds, UK (Prof. Ian Law), University of Liege, Belgium, University of Coimbra, Portugal and the American College of Greece Charles University, Czech Republic.

## **Participation in national Islamophobia conference**

In 2015 the Prevent duty became statutory through the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015: this imposed a duty on public bodies to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

As many warned, the duty has in practice charged teachers, doctors and other professionals with monitoring people's religious and political views. It is eroding civil liberties and deepening discrimination against Muslims who are treated as a suspect community.

Prevent and the CTS Act have also narrowed the space for political dissent in many forms.

The 'Prevent, Islamophobia and Civil Liberties National Conference' held on 14 May 2016 examined the act's implementation across different sectors. It aimed to build on the growing opposition to the duty which has seen lecturers, teachers, lawyers, students, and community organisations come together and call for the act to be repealed.

IHRC's head of research, Arzu Merali, was among the speakers at this event which was organised by a coalition of civil rights groups, activists and lawyers.

## 'Prevent' anti-Islamophobia workshops

IHRC held three workshops in Luton (15 April 2016, 28 December 2016, 4 February 2017) to inform people how they can protect children from the insidious Prevent strategy.

Since the implementation of PREVENT became compulsory for schools in July 2015, many disturbing cases have emerged of children being reported to PREVENT officers for expressing views that teachers consider 'extremist'. Typically students are targeted for expressing their opinions on current affairs (which in most cases seems to be the result of misinterpretation by teachers of normal behaviour by young children), they are interviewed by PREVENT (or police) officers without a parent or guardian present, and parents/guardians are not informed about the referral nor are they present during the interview.

The aim of the workshops was to empower individuals so that teachers feel it is

not an easy option to refer children to the Prevent programme. Teachers' primary objective is to educate children and not criminalise them. Through such workshops IHRC wishes to create an environment where Prevent becomes unworkable because parents and community leaders are equipped with the necessary knowledge and resources to challenge schools.

## US Hate Crime Survey

IHRC embarked on its second hate-crime survey in the USA, focussing on the metropolitan area of Chicago. An earlier survey in California was published in 2013

The study aims to assess levels of hostility and discrimination against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, including hate crimes.

IHRC asked Muslims in Chicago to complete an online questionnaire and the results will be analysed to produce a report into the experiences of Muslims in the area.



# Campaigns

## Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky

**T**hroughout the year IHRC continued with its campaign to try to secure the release of and justice for the imprisoned leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky and his wife Zeenah.

The pair have been in custody without charge since the middle of December 2015 when Nigerian armed forces massacred nearly 1000 civilians in an orgy of violence aimed at crippling the Islamic Movement of Nigeria.

The attack, in the northern city of Zaria, targeted supporters of the IMN, their property, religious places and symbols leaving behind a trail of death and destruction. The IMN leader Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky and his wife Zeenah were both shot in the attack and their family home burned down and demolished. Three of their sons died in the attack.

The attack on the IMN was the second in as many years targeting the movement. In July 2014, a peaceful demonstration in

Zaria organised by the IMN in support of Palestinians was brutally attacked by the Nigerian military. Thirty-four people were killed over the course of two days with some dying in custody after being savagely beaten. Nobody has been brought to account for the killings.

IHRC has almost single-handedly among human rights organisations been campaigning for those responsible for the massacres to be brought to justice and for those still detained to be freed and where necessary receive adequate medical treatment.

On 21 March 2016, IHRC wrote to the International Criminal Court urging it to investigate the massacre. It called on the international tribunal which has a mandate to prosecute people for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, to open a preliminary enquiry on the grounds that the crimes committed by the Nigerian army meet all the necessary legal requirements to warrant a preliminary investigation by the ICC prosecutor.

In February 2017 following several unsuccessful appeals for Sheikh Zakzaky to be allowed to receive urgent medical attention IHRC wrote to President Buhari urging him to intervene.



Placards in support of Sheikh Zakzaky being readied in time for a demonstration



Protestors demonstrate against the detention of Sheikh Zakzaky outside the Nigerian High Commission in London

Reports from family members now indicate that Sheikh Zakzaky, who lost one eye in the 2015 military attack, is in real danger of losing sight in his other eye. Our letter made reference to the fact that Buhari himself had been abroad to seek medical treatment twice in 2016 and that it would be wrong of him to prevent other Nigerian citizens from doing the same.

Throughout the year the Nigerian executive continued to frustrate the quest for justice and the persecution of the IMN increased. IHRC wrote letters to the government and highlighted in the media further crackdowns on the IMN including bans on marching and gathering for religious events.

In order to keep up the international pressure on Nigeria we presented the plight of Sheikh Zakzaky and the IMN to both the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Commonwealth Office urging them to remind the country of its obligations to uphold fundamental human rights.

In July 2016 we challenged the Kaduna state judicial commission of inquiry into the 2015 massacre. We highlighted that its report held neither the federal government nor the army leadership responsible for the massacre, instead blaming it on a 'rogue' general. This effectively let the government off the hook. The inquiry also found that the

military employed disproportionate force to quell what it called "civil unrest". This seemed like an attempt to find a scapegoat, a rogue operator, for what was essentially a pre-planned massacre.

Throughout the year IHRC also organised numerous vigils and demonstrations outside the Nigerian High Commission in London demanding Sheikh Zakzaky's release. The last one was on 15 January 2017, the date by which a federal court had ordered on 2 December 2016 that Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife be freed.

## Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's continuing persecution of its Shia minority and political dissidents again compelled IHRC to highlight the abuses.

The British PM's visit to the Gulf in December 2016 was an opportunity for us to remind her that she should use her meeting with the King of Saudi Arabia to condemn the country's sentencing to death of 15 Shia Muslims for alleged espionage.

IHRC reminded Theresa May that this was an opportune moment for the PM to raise concerns about Saudi Arabia's liberal use of the death penalty against the

country's minority Shia under the pretexts of terrorism and spying.

Shias in the kingdom's Eastern Province say they face persistent discrimination affecting their ability to work, study and worship freely. IHRC's own research from 2011 (the beginning of the demonstrations in the Shi'a majority Eastern Province) indicates that there are an estimated 30,000 political prisoners in Saudi Arabia out of a population of approximately 18 million Saudi nationals. Whilst the 30,000 political prisoners are drawn from different sections of Saudi society, the government targets Shia Muslims to sectarianise legitimate opposition to the regime.

We also reminded the PM that should also raise with Saudi Arabia its ongoing war in Yemen which has seen countless atrocities against Yemeni civilians and the Middle East's poorest country bombed back to the dark ages.

Earlier in the year in September IHRC wrote to the British PM demanding she halt arms sales to Riyadh following a damning parliamentary report accusing the Middle Eastern regime of using the weapons to commit human rights abuses in Yemen.

The report by the cross party Committee on Arms Exports Control said it was likely British weapons had been used to violate international law. It added to a growing body of evidence that Riyadh is routinely violating international law in its military involvement with Yemen. The UN has accused Riyadh of perpetrating human rights violations in Yemen and both the European Parliament and the House of Commons International Development Committee have recommended an arms export ban. The charity Medecins Sans Frontiere says the Saudi-led coalition has bombed numerous hospitals it runs in Yemen. Schools and wedding parties have also not been spared.

## Letter to UN Secretary General regarding Saudi Arabia

In June 2016 we wrote to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to protest his decision to remove Saudi Arabia from a

blacklist that had cited Riyadh for killing and maiming children in its continuing involvement in the civil war in Yemen.

The about-turn came after threats from Riyadh and its allies that they would withdraw funding for UN programmes if the move was not reversed.

The original decision to include Saudi Arabia was based on evidence compiled by the UN itself that Riyadh was responsible for at least 60 percent of child deaths and injuries last year, killing 510 and wounding 667. We told Ban Ki Moon that it was deeply disturbing that the UN should cave in to what is essentially a campaign of blackmail led by Riyadh. It is an affront to justice and a hammer-blow to the credibility of the UN in holding to account those who violate international laws.

We reminded the secretary general that such behaviour only serves to encourage other human rights abusers, particularly those on which the UN is financially dependent, to view the UN as a paper tiger which can be manipulated at will. It also undermines the principle of universality by sending the unavoidable message that the UN operates a differential system of justice in which the wealthy donor nations are above the law while those who cannot afford to threaten or intimidate the organisation are subject to sanction.

## Opposition to anti-semitism definition

Together with other civil society groups, IHRC campaigned vigorously against attempts to introduce Zionist-inspired definitions of anti-semitism that stand to have a massive impact on freedom of expression.

In May we wrote to the Metropolitan Police and Rachel Tuffin, Director of Knowledge, Research and Education College of Policing, copying our letter to the Police Federation of England and Wales, as well as to UNISON, which jointly helped to establish the college, requesting that the college withdraws the Hate Crime Operational Guidance in its current form.

The definition conflates anti-semitism with criticism of Israel or Zionism, especially



Thousands gathered in London for the annual Al Quds Day march

boycott activity, which is thereby regarded as a potential crime of race hate.

“The College of Policing guidance wrongly characterises anti-Zionism as a ‘new antisemitism’. The latter includes any statements ‘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’, according to the guidance (p.37). In reality, a significant part of world Jewry has always seen the Zionist project as racist and as jeopardising Jews’ security in the countries where they live. As regards that threat, anti-semites have commonly regarded Jews as a separate nation who belong in Palestine (or later in Israel), thus complementing Zionist views,” said the letter.

We pointed out that some politicians have promoted the guidance document as an authoritative source. For example, on 30 March 2016 Eric Pickles quoted its definition of anti-semitism, especially this criterion: ‘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.’

Shortly afterwards Michael Gove MP denounced the campaign of Boycott, Divest-

ment and Sanctions (BDS) as follows: “But worse than that – worse than libelling the state of Israel – the BDS campaign, by calling for the deliberate boycott of goods manufactured by Jewish people, by calling for the shunning of the Jewish state, and the rejection of Jewish commerce and Jewish thought, actually commits a crime worse than apartheid (quoted in Middle East Monitor, 4 April 2016).”

IHRC wrote that the traditional definition of anti-semitism as hatred against Jews has been broadened for political motives, especially in the past decade with anti-semitism being redefined so as to protect Israel from criticism and boycott. As a result it defines anti-semitism in a partisan way, potentially criminalising the political beliefs and activities of pro-Palestine activists, thus infringing their political rights. Such an unduly broad definition should not be promulgated or adopted in an open, free, democratic society. People should be free to participate in legitimate political activities, all the more so when they aimed to achieve compliance with international law.

We asked for the Hate Crime Operational Guidance to be revised taking into account these considerations.

## Pakistan Anti-Terrorism Act

On 25 October 2016 IHRC wrote to the Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to voice our concerns about the use of powers under the Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) 1997.

A number of different local governments in Pakistan have used the powers under the Fourth Schedule of ATA to put individuals from various organisations on a list, which has serious implications on their human rights. While the stated aim of putting these people on a list is national security, it has led to many abuses of power.

The list of names currently comes to over 2000 people according to some reports and includes people who have died, people who are old and frail as well as people who have no connection to terrorism or extremism.

The powers under the Fourth Schedule are extensive and draconian. Individuals who are put on the list under this power have had their bank accounts closed, their computerised national identity cards (CNICs) blocked, travel restrictions imposed, and cannot visit many public places including schools, colleges, universities, railway stations, bus stands, telephone exchanges, television stations, radio stations and other similar public places. They cannot be present at any public meeting or procession, or even in an enclosed location in connection with any public event, festival or other celebration.

These restrictions are a severe limitation on a person's freedoms and such unfettered

powers erode the human rights and civil liberties of all Pakistanis. IHRC urged the PM to consider repealing the powers under the Fourth Schedule to protect the human rights of those affected.

## Turkey TV station closure

On 10 November 2016 IHRC wrote to the prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan to ask him to review the recent closure of the Kudus television channel by state authorities.

Kudus TV was officially shut down on 28 October by the Radio and Television Supreme Council on the grounds that it posed a threat to national security. The Council's decision appeared to be based on emergency powers adopted by the government in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt earlier in the year.

Kudus TV is a longstanding independent TV channel which has sought to promote freedom, liberty and independence for the people of the region and the wider world. It has supported the Arab Spring uprisings and sought to expose the continuing injustice of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Kudus TV also vehemently opposed the attempted coup.

IHRC wrote that in the case of Kudus TV the emergency laws appeared to be being used too liberally and in a way that stifled legitimate free expression and freedom of the press. While it is true that Kudus TV has been critical of some government policies this is not a sufficient reason to take it off air.

**IHRC wrote that in the case of Kudus TV, the emergency laws appeared to be being used too liberally and in a way that stifled legitimate free expression and freedom of the press.**



# IHRC at the United Nations

## Statement on Netherlands to the UN Human Rights Committee

In December 2016 IHRC made a submission to the UN Human Rights Committee urging it to apply pressure on the Netherlands to implement a CERD recommendation that it remove a racist character from a national celebration.

In 2015 a report by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination called on The Netherlands to get rid of Black Pete because it has racist elements. “Black Pete is sometimes portrayed in a manner that reflects negative stereotypes of people of African descent and is experienced by many people of African descent as a vestige of slavery,” their report stated.

‘Black Pete’ is part of the annual Sinterklaas Festival which has become a testing ground for the status of ethnic minorities and their attempts to influence what it means to be Dutch. The festival is based on

a legend that every December 5th, St. Nicholas travels to the Netherlands from Spain to reward or punish children. Accompanying him is an army of helpers or “Black Petes”, clownish and acrobatic figures dressed in Moorish page suits.

While the legend of Sinterklaas is rooted in Middle Age European history the character of Black Pete is a colonial construct dating from the 19th century at the height of the Dutch Empire. At the time the figure of Black Pete was produced the Netherlands was a global colonial power involved in slavery and the slave trade for more than 200 years. From the late sixteenth century to the abolition of slavery in 1863, the Dutch had traded over half a million African men, women and children across the Atlantic and enslaved millions more.

Black Pete symbolised the colonial subjugation of black Africans which was underpinned by a dominant biological discourse of racism that translated into stereotypical images and representations of black people as stupid, ugly, childlike, ruled by base desires and impulses who were closer to apes



than humans. Those stereotypes became engrained in Dutch popular culture.

The racist aspects of the commemoration of Sinterklaas are offensive and an affront to the memory of those who suffered from European colonialism.

However the Netherlands has refused to ban the racist aspects of the Sinterklass festival. The festival continues and positions seem to have become more entrenched and polarised.

## Human Rights in Myanmar

On 8 March 2017, IHRC held a side panel meeting during the 34th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, at the United Nations, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, focusing on the persecution of the minority Rohingya Muslim community and the recent aid expedition to Myanmar.

The aid flotilla carrying much needed supplies for the Rohingya arrived in Yangon on 9 February, comprising three ships carrying around 1500 tonnes of food, medicine, tents and other aid donated by people in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.

Speakers included Sheikh Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid President of the Malaysian

Consultative Council of Islamic Organization, Dr Wakar Uddin (President of the Arakan Rohingya Union), Massoud Shadjareh (Chair of the Islamic Human Rights Commission) and Abed Choudhury (Head of Advocacy, Islamic Human Rights Commission).

## Nigeria: Zaria massacre and the detention of Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky

On 9 March IHRC convened a side panel meeting during the 34th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, at the United Nations, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland to highlight recent human rights abuses in Nigeria.

The meeting focused on the 12 December 2015 Zaria massacre in which over 1000 IMN supporters were killed by armed forces, and also the continued detention of Sheikh Zakzaky. The leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria has been detained without charge for well over a year.

Among the speakers were Dr Shuaibu Musa from the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) and Nigerian barrister, Festus Omwuma Okoye.



# Events

## Documentary Screening and Q&A - Zone of Non-Being: Guantanamo

Following Donald Trump's inauguration, IHRC held a screening of its upcoming film 'Zone of Non-Being: Guantanamo' on 2 February 2017, to review the Obama administration's handling of the notorious detention camp and to discuss what the future holds.

The film is written and directed by Turab Shah and produced by Islamic Human Rights Commission. It looks at how the process of Guantanamoisation has taken place over the last decade in the USA, and through US and allied foreign policy from the introduction of the NDAA to the use of drones. It argues that rather than being the exceptional event of the so-called War on Terror, Guantanamo is a continuation of a colonial policy that runs from 1492 and the conquest of the Americas and the destruction of Granada.

Guantanamo symbolises in a public and brutal fashion the creation of Fanon's Zone of Non-being – 'an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity' where violence reigns and those deemed non-beings are trapped by the ongoing colonial process.

Contributors to the film include: Ramon

Grosfoguel, Victoria Brittain, Amrit Wilson, Arun Kundnani, Clive Stafford Smith, Mas-soud Shadjareh, Omar Deghayes, Saifollah Mubanga, Andy Worthington, Michael Rat-ner

## Evenings with Sheikh Azmi

17 January and 10 March 2017

IHRC was honoured to be graced by the presence of the distinguished Malaysian scholar Sheikh Azmi twice during the year to explain and discuss the situation facing the Rohingya population in Myanmar.

Sheikh Mohammad Azmi bin Abdul Hamid is the President Malaysian Consultative Council of Islamic Organization (since 2006), the President of Malay Community Empowerment Association (TERAS) (since 1998), Secretary General of Ulama Assembly of Asia (SHURA) (since 2001), Secretary General of Ittihad Ulama Muslimin Al Alami Malaysia (since 2014), and Chairman of Nadwah Ulama and Islamic Organization Kedah, Malaysia (2013). He has also been the Director of Center for International Muslim Minority Affairs Project, and Director for Campaigns on Save and Rebuild Gaza, Save Syria, Advocacy for Rohingya Campaigns. He was appointed as Islamic Human Rights Consultative Council Member in the Malaysian Foreign Ministry.

**Screening and Q&A**  
**Zone of Non-being: GUANTANAMO**  
 A documentary film directed by Turab Shah and produced by Islamic Human Rights Commission  
**FREE Screening - Thursday 2 February, 6.45pm**  
 100, Old Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8PA

**ABOUT THE FILM**  
 Following Donald Trump's inauguration, IHRC held a screening of its upcoming film 'Zone of Non-Being: Guantanamo' on 2 February 2017, to review the Obama administration's handling of the notorious detention camp and to discuss what the future holds.

**Contributors to the film include:** Ramon Grosfoguel, Victoria Brittain, Amrit Wilson, Arun Kundnani, Clive Stafford Smith, Mas-soud Shadjareh, Omar Deghayes, Saifollah Mubanga, Andy Worthington, Michael Ratner

**Islamic Human Rights Commission**  
 www.ihrc.org.uk

**MUSLIM HERITAGE STORIES**  
 CHILDREN'S STORYTELLING PERFORMANCE EVENT  
 WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2016  
 100, Old Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8PA

**Tale of the Sands**  
 A young boy's journey of discovery as he searches for his father's hidden treasure in the desert.

**The Slave Ship**  
 A young boy's journey of discovery as he searches for his father's hidden treasure in the desert.

**Spaces are limited**  
 To please book in advance, please email to [events@ihrc.org.uk](mailto:events@ihrc.org.uk) or by phone with Rachel on 020 8964 4222

**Islamic Human Rights Commission**  
 www.ihrc.org.uk

**Join us for an evening with Sheikh Azmi**  
 all the way from Malaysia - as he explains the dire situation facing the Rohingya population in Myanmar and discusses his life's work and accomplishments. The evening will offer a chance for you to ask questions, partake in the discussion and listen.

**Tuesday, 17 January at 8.45pm**

**IHRC Bookshop & Gallery**  
 202 Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8PA  
 (Nearest tube: Preston Road / Metrolink Line)

**Islamic Human Rights Commission**  
 www.ihrc.org.uk

## Muslim Heritage Stories

IHRC teamed up with Khayaal Theatre on 26 October 2016 for an exciting, new kind of storytelling performance event called Muslim Heritage Stories. This was a theatrical celebration of the magnificence and splendour of Muslim cultures. Performers captivated the audience with fun and educational tales of the Muslim world. Stories included:

Tale of the Sands - A mesmerising metaphor of the courage required to embrace the inevitable change that life brings.

The Seasick Slave - A funny reflection on discovering happiness and contentment amidst the turbulence of life conveyed involving playful audience participation. A tale by Shaykh Muslihu 'd-Din Sa'di (Iran)

## Documentary screening: Sell-Off - The abolition of your NHS

This one-hour documentary film focused on the ongoing privatisation and dismantling of the NHS.

The NHS has been quietly transformed into a business ready for corporate takeover and conversion to the American private insurance model. The junior doctors' dispute and the numerous hospitals now under

threat of closure are simply the latest episodes in this ongoing agenda. 'Sell-Off' exposes the decades-long covert privatisation which has occurred without public mandate and against the public interest. It challenges the lies put out by politicians and mainstream media.


The screening on 3 November 2016 was followed by a Q&A with Dr Bob Gill (who is featured in the film) and concluded with a discussion about how people can challenge all of this.

## Vigil in support of Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky

On 12 May 2016, IHRC held a vigil for the detained leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, to coincide with the visit of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari to London to take part in an international Anti-Corruption summit.

## Al-Quds Day demonstration

On Sunday 3 July, 2016, just a few days before the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, families, students, activists, Muslims and non-Muslims, from toddlers to respected elders, all united on a cool summer's day to peacefully march through the busy streets of London in commemoration of Al Quds Day.



**DOCUMENTARY SCREENING:**

### SELL-OFF

The abolition of your NHS

This one-hour documentary film focuses on the ongoing privatisation and dismantling of your NHS. Our NHS has been quietly transformed into a business ready for corporate takeover and conversion to the American private insurance model. The junior doctors' dispute and the numerous hospitals now under threat of closure are simply the latest episodes in this ongoing agenda. 'Sell-Off' exposes the decades-long covert privatisation which has occurred without public mandate and against the public interest. It challenges the lies put out by politicians and mainstream media.

**Ridiculous Reforms** Thursday 3 November 2016, 6.30pm to 9pm,  
 IHRC Gallery, 202 Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8PA - Tel: 020 8904 4222  
 (Nearest tube station: Herton Road Metropolitan Line)

**DAVID CAMERON, POST-ELECTION**

What I want to know is how to drive the NHS to be a fantastic business

Join us at 8PM for a screening of 'Sell-Off' which will be followed by a Q&A with Bob Gill and Dr Gill. The film will be shown in the West End at the Royal Opera House. For more information visit [www.sell-off.org.uk](http://www.sell-off.org.uk)



In support of the Palestinian struggle and other worldwide oppressions, 4000 people gathered for Al Quds Day – an annual day of action and mobilization inaugurated by Imam Khomeini, of which he said: “The Quds Day is a universal day. It is not an exclusive day for Quds itself. It is a day for the oppressed to rise and stand up against the arrogant.”

Coaches brought people from all over the UK, including Luton, Watford, Newport, East London, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Woking, Crawley, Nottingham and Leicester.

The march took off from Duchess Street, behind the BBC Broadcasting House, and continued through some of the busiest roads in London - Regent Street and Oxford Street - to the US Embassy outside Grosvenor Square Garden. A few stops were made on the way to name and shame the unethical companies complicit in supporting Israel’s illegal occupations.

Upon arrival at Grosvenor Square, less than a hundred pro-Israeli supporters waved their Israeli flags behind fences and a row of the Metropolitan Police force. This year, the Zionists’ campaign was carefully structured. Organised by the Israel Advocacy Movement, the Zionist Federation for Israel and Sussex Friends of Israel, the small group of Zionists ironically chanted ‘no to war, yes to peace’ in front of the thousands of demonstrators, including orthodox rabbis holding Palestine flags.

## Focal Point: Is politics an optional part of the Islamic faith?

Focal Point is a regular discussion session focusing on the latest issues and news stories affecting the Muslim community in Britain. On 18 September 2016 IHRC head of research joined Shaykh Bahmanpour of the Islamic Centre of England to explore the following questions:

IS POLITICS AN OPTIONAL PART OF THE ISLAMIC FAITH?  
DID BREXIT BRING RACISM OR DID RACISM BRING BREXIT?

## Book Launch – ‘Palestine...It is something colonial’

IHRC successfully launched Hatem Bazian’s new book, ‘Palestine...It is something colonial’, on the on 7 December 2016 at the P21 Gallery in London.

Dr Hatem Bazian spoke at length about his book. He started off by saying that often when we think of Palestine we think of it in the context of the Nakba or the ‘Six Day War’ or the protests and rallies that take place today. But the truth of the situation is



Protesters at the Al Quds Day march

**BOOK LAUNCH**  
with Dr Hatem Bazian

Join us for an evening with **Hatem Bazian** to talk about his new book **Palestine... it is something colonial**

This exciting new work offers a theoretical base for approaching this subject without losing sight of all international support, coverage (most of it on the one hand website) and the political context, providing a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the subject.

There will be a Q&A session. Bookings will be held upon arrival, 6-8:30pm.

Use on **IHRC TV** [www.ihrc.tv](http://www.ihrc.tv)

Book questions and comments to [ihrc@ihrc.org](mailto:ihrc@ihrc.org)

Please call 020 8904 4222 or email [ashiya@ihrc.org](mailto:ashiya@ihrc.org) to reserve your place

**P21 Gallery,**  
21 Chillon Street, London W6J 1DQ  
Wednesday 7th December 2016  
6-8:30pm

Dr Hatem Bazian is a senior lecturer at the University of Warwick and a senior advisor to the British Foreign Office. He is also a senior advisor to the British Foreign Office.

**SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS:**  
• Muslim Association of Britain • Palestine Alliance (Scotland)  
• Friends of Al Quds • Palestine International • Al Wakeel • Muslim Kana  
• The Arab Society Scotland • Fatah Movement UK • The Palestine Chronicle



Rabbis in attendance at Genocide Memorial Day 2017

that the colonial legacy of Palestine begins on 9 December, 1917. From that point, Palestine entered the colonial project because of the British and the issuing of the Balfour Declaration. This all took place at the end of World War II, when colonialism was ‘ending’ and was generally thought of as ‘unacceptable.’ ‘Palestine... It Is Something Colonial’ focuses on the need to reframe the Palestine situation through the lens of settler colonialism.

Dr Bazian places Palestine within the context of the dismantling of Ottoman structures by colonial powers. It came to be that religion was deployed as something imperial that gave authority for dispossession. Today, the settlements in Palestine are rationalised with a biblical narrative. In the same way, Zionism uses nationalism and colonialism to justify the existence of Israel. It is an ideology that replicates Eurocentricity and surrenders to anti-Semitism instead of seeking to defeat it.

The conversation was then brought back to the topic of settler colonialism in which settlers take over the land and have no use for the indigenous population. In the USA this resulted in the mass genocide of the Native Americans. On the other hand, it could also result in a kind of transfer project which sees the indigenous peoples moved away from the good, resourceful land and placed in ghetto-like areas instead. This is what happened in both South Africa and Palestine.

It was a successful evening that was attended by an illustrious crowd of academics, activists and community members who were enlightened and enthralled.

## Genocide Memorial Day

IHRC’s successful annual commemoration was held on 15 January 2017

Islamic Human Rights Commission held its annual Genocide Memorial Day conference for the 7th year running since its inception in 2010. This year’s theme was “Lessons from the Cultural Genocide of Muslims and Jews in Europe”. A parallel event also took place in Brussels on the same day.

Held at the P21 Gallery in London, the event was attended by a number of activists and academics as well as those who were simply curious to learn more about the topic of genocide.

Reza Kazim, Head of Campaigns at IHRC, provided an opening statement in which he emphasised the importance of challenging the narrative that some victims matter more than others dependant on their background. He also reminded the audience that genocide doesn’t happen in a vacuum.

Chaired by Nazim Ali, the first panel featured Dr Rebecca Masterton and Sheikh Azmi Hamid of Malaysia. Rebecca Masterton, is a British Islamic scholar. She discussed the history of the expulsion of



**Ramon Grosfoguel speaks on a panel chaired by Nazim Ali at Genocide Memorial Day 2017**

Jews and Muslims from Spain including how the education system teaches this period of history, and how this mis-education impacts the European culture we live in today. She also made it clear that Europe is blind to its history and that this history needs to be decolonialised.

Following Dr Masterton, Sheikh Mohammad Azmi bin Abdul Hamid of Malaysia spoke of what is currently happening to the minority Rohingya population in Myanmar, suggesting that there is strong evidence of genocide. Massacres in Myanmar are being deliberately orchestrated and hidden from the international community. However, people are not just being killed – everything relating to the community is being erased as well.

Narjis Khan then performed a rendition of her moving poem ‘Red blood spills’ which speaks of the various interventionist wars taking place across the globe on behalf of the likes of the USA and the UK.

The final speaker of the day was Ramon Grosfoguel, a professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley. He spoke about the links between the rise of Islamophobia and genocide. He explicitly addressed how genocide is not just killing humans but also involves the destruction and appropriation of knowledge i.e an epistemicide.

A minute’s silence was held as the names and numbers of a various genocidal acts

over the last two centuries were read aloud. This part of the event has become a regular feature but hearing it every year does not lessen the impact. The extent of cruelty humanity can achieve is laid bare for all to see.

## Muslim World Priority Meeting – Granada 2017

As part of the Universal Justice Network’s (UJN) Muslim World Priority project, UJN held an invitation-only meeting in Granada, Spain in February 2017 to discuss ways of resolving sectarian conflict in the Muslim community and to bring about a praxis of unity. The escalation of sectarianism in recent years has been a highly negative and destructive development in the Muslim ummah. Looking at local situations, it is clear that this negative force works at different levels. A series of meetings and workshops were facilitated by experts from the UJN Network, including Imam Muhammad al-Asi, Mohideen AbdelKader and Professor Ramon Grosfoguel. The participants successfully had honest discussions about the state of affairs, the causes and ways to (re)create a functioning rather than nominal Muslim unity at the local level.

The Granada backdrop was an apt location for the meeting as the historical fall of the Muslim-led kingdom in Andalusia in

1492 came about due to infighting among Muslims, which had significantly weakened the Caliphate. The Muslims Spaniards were unable to agree on a single leadership, at which point, Christian kingdoms made treaties with Muslim kingdoms, exacerbating strife between the Muslims. The Christians eventually broke all their treaties with the Muslims after their conquest of the whole peninsula. Similarly, in the modern context, the agenda of the state is to divide and rule and to weaken the Muslim Ummah. Thus the necessity of the meeting and the significance of the location was incredibly inspiring and motivating to all the participants. Professor Ramon Grosfoguel, a professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, spoke about this in great detail.

Mohammad Al-Asi, author and speaker from Washington D.C., set the dialogue in the first meeting by discussing vital Quranic terms, namely *Kufr*. He discussed the dangers of terminology like *takfir* as it prevents unity between Muslim communities and makes difficult the opportunities for Muslims to work towards a common goal.

Opening and closing remarks were delivered by Mohideen Abdel Kader, a barrister and Director of Citizens International Malaysia, focused on the variety of Muslim constituencies within the UK and the need to respond and mobilise to collectively tackle the relevant social problems.

Participants were also fortunate to receive a private, decolonial tour of Alhambra, the palace and fortress complex of the Moors

## Decolonising the Mind

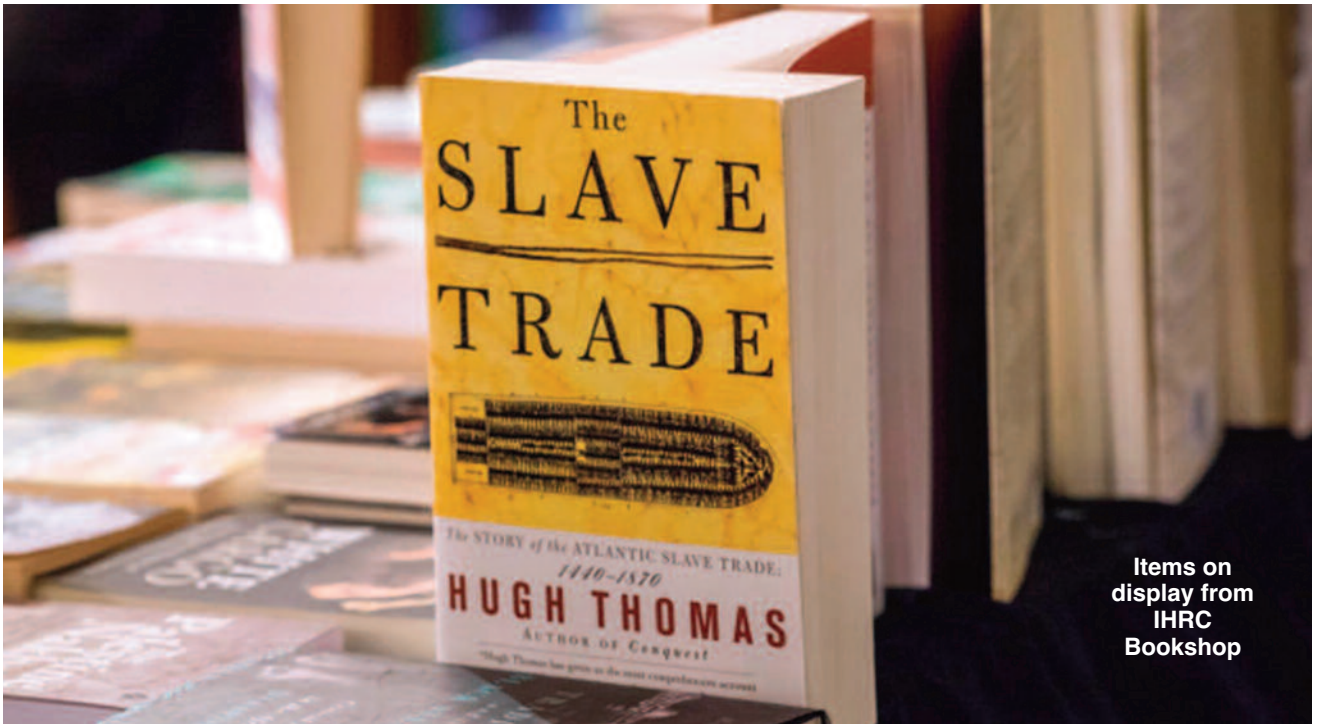
The legacy of colonialism is an open wound in present-day western society that has different names: racism, Islamophobia, white supremacy, extreme right etc. Despite the gains won by decolonisation in the sphere of politics, economics and international relations there is still one dimension of colonialism that has survived the process of decolonization in the fifties and sixties of the last century, that is the dimension of mental colonialism. Mental colonialism created a narrative of race relations that still dominates the discourse in western media: the supposed superiority of western culture and the supposed inferiority of non-western cultures. This narrative has changed in the course of four centuries of colonialism, but its basic assumptions are widespread in the educational system and the discourse in the media. It is there in the mind of both the former coloniser and the colonised. Decolonising the mind means changing the mindset of both groups. On 25 March 2017, two leading thinkers in this area, Dr Ramon Grosfoguel and Sandew Hira led a discussion at IHRC about how to decolonise the mind as a necessary prelude to decolonising societies.



The legacy of colonialism is an open wound in present-day western society that has different names: racism, Islamophobia, white supremacy, extreme right etc.







Items on display from IHRC Bookshop

## World Book Day with Elizabeth Lymer and Hajera Memon

IHRC marked World Book Day (2 March 2017) with special guests, children's authors Elizabeth Lymer and Hajera Memon holding two sessions to tell their amazing stories and rhymes.

## Children's Storytelling Session: The House of Ibn Kathir

Nazia Jalali joined us on 22 December 2016 for a reading of her book "The House of Ibn Kathir - The Competition Begins...". It tells the story of Yusuf, who is attending a new boarding school and it's his first time away from home. The Dar Al Ilm Academy seemed to be the ideal place for him to pursue his studies and achieve one of his life-long ambitions — to memorise the Qur'an, or so his parents thought...

## Children's Storytelling, arts and crafts with Hajera Memon

On 27 July 2016 author Hajera Memon graced the bookshop for a session of story-

telling, arts and crafts.

The story was from Hajera's Pop-up Activity Book of the well-known and loved Story of The Elephant, Surah Al-Fil, from Chapter 105 of the Holy Qur'an. Hand-drawn creative illustrations, interactive flaps, a children's colouring mat, press-out activity and quiz were included.

There was a 'How to do Wudu activity' based on the author's 'My First Wudu Book'. The book makes teaching children about body parts a fun, educational and interactive experience for all parents, particularly Muslim parents teaching their children how to do wudu.

## Sadaqah and Salaam: Kids' Storytelling and Rhymes

Aisha Mohammed, Sajida Mohammed and Elizabeth Lymer presided over another fun-filled day of stories, rhymes, and interactive fun about giving charity and spreading peace on 2 June 2016.

The Storytelling was about giving sadaqah from the picture book Jaariya Jar, co-authored by Aisha Mohammed. Drama was employed as a playful way to teach the best manners for giving money as sadaqah while rhymes encouraged the children to remember to give charity. There was also an interactive session about spreading salaam (peace) using 'Peace and Thanks on the Farm Colouring Book' by Elizabeth Lymer.



# Publications

**T**hroughout the course of the year IHRC published several reports and briefings aimed at informing policy-makers and the general public alike.

## The Hollowing of Human Rights in the Post 9/11 World

In this briefing Narjis Khan reflects on the United Nations' response to international 'terrorism' following 9/11.

The response of the United Nations ('UN') to international 'terrorism' following September 11 2001 has been seriously detrimental to the protection of human rights. This briefing examines four areas which demonstrate the inadequacy of the international response, led by the UN Security Council.

## The Hollowing of Human Rights in the Post 9/11 World

by **Narjis Khan**  
December 2016

## Whose Hajj is it anyway?



## Whose Hajj is it anyway?

The pilgrimage to Makkah is obligatory for all Muslims who can make the journey. The physical act of going to Makkah to be in the company of Muslims from all over the world, of all backgrounds, worshipping the same God, based on the same message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and following the same guidance in the same holy book makes Hajj a unique feature of Islam. Unity is thus a key value within Islam. Unfortunately, under Saudi supervision, this unity has not been preserved, nor has the management of Hajj been anywhere near adequate.

Following two more deadly tragedies at last year's Hajj, this briefing by the Islamic Human Rights Commission recommends that governments from all Muslim countries should unite to establish a framework whereby Muslim countries can each participate collectively in Hajj management. Utilising the Islamic concept of 'waqf', each country should be considered a trustee in re-

# *Jewels of the Ahlul Bayt*

*The Life and Marriage of*

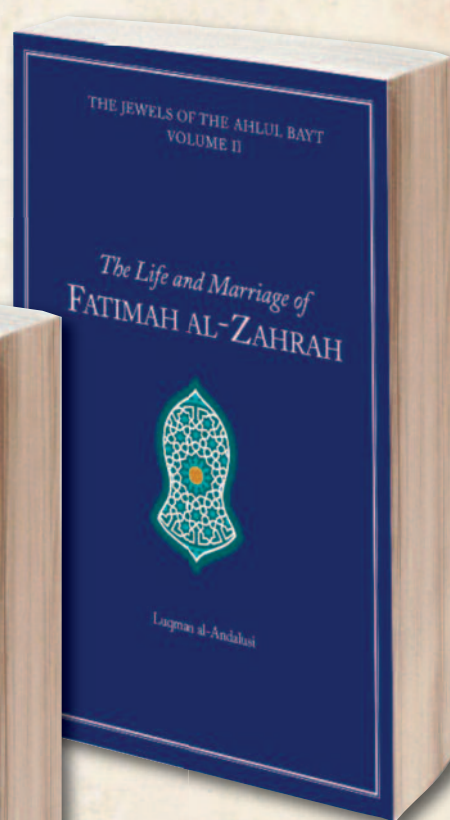
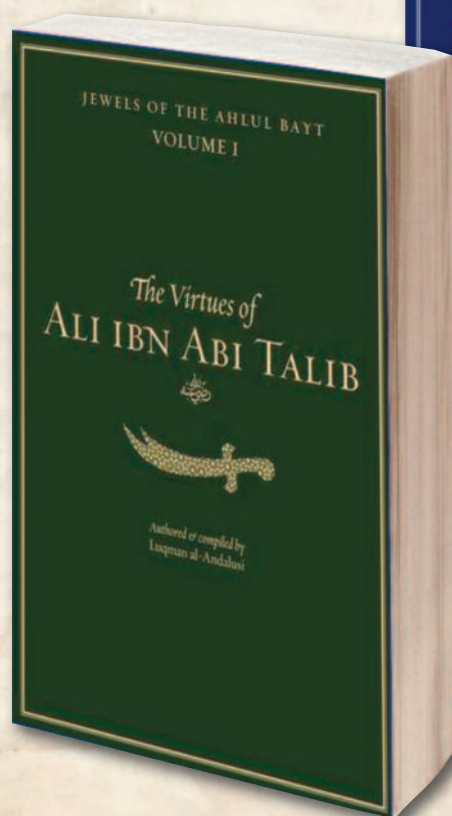
## FATIMAH AL-ZAHRAH

# &

*The Virtues of*

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[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) and  
[www.meccabooks.com](http://www.meccabooks.com)



lation to the administration of Hajj, owing a legal duty to administer the Hajj for the benefit of all pilgrims.

In addition, the briefing recommends that an international investigation is conducted by a committee comprising representatives across Islamic countries and technical experts, identifying the causes of the crush in Mina in 2015 specifically, as well as identifying structural reasons for repeated crushes historically during Hajj.

## The Life and Marriage of Fatimah al-Zahrah

'The Life and Marriage of Fatimah al-Zahrah' by Luqman al-Andalusi sets out the virtues and qualities of a woman described as one of the most esteemed in Islam.

The daughter of the blessed Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Sayyidah Fatimah lived a virtuous and exemplary life. Her role encompassed every facet of Islam and her devotion to Allah was absolute. She was a pillar of strength for her father and her fam-

ily in the face of oppression and tribulation. She sacrificed her own worldly comforts to serve the poor and needy. In a materialistic and celebrity-obsessed world, her example is a stark and impressive contrast.

Detailing her relationships with her family, there is focus on the impressive bond she shared with her father and her enduring marriage to Sayyiduna Ali ibn Abi Talib. Beautifully told, the narrative fits that of an explorer on a new journey.

Sayyidah Fatimah's marriage to Sayyiduna Ali ibn Abi Talib formed a major part of her life. Their relationship is described heart-warmingly and the work impresses on Sayyiduna Ali's many qualities - his bravery, good nature and kindness. The values that came to characterise their home are also highlighted with anecdotal tales. The beauty of this work is that it is a handbook for how best to live a life but the lessons bequeathed are within the narrative of the story of one of Islam's most esteemed characters. Sayyidah Fatimah's life is rich with knowledge and joy and her decisions are choices that we in the 21st century can continue to make for our own betterment.

**the briefing recommends that  
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Islamic countries and technical  
experts, identifying the causes of the  
crush in Mina in 2015**

# Legal

**I**HRC's dedicated legal department has seen an unprecedented surge in demand for its services since its inception in 2015, providing high quality UK Immigration law (OISC Level 3) and Employment and Discrimination Law.

In relation to its Immigration law work, IHRC Legal has had numerous successful cases helping minors, families, vulnerable and destitute people and those with complex health problems apply for 'leave' or permission to remain in the UK.

In particular, IHRC Legal has seen an increase in demand from EEA nationals and their families seeking advice as to their rights in light of Brexit and its inevitable repercussions for freedom of movement. IHRC Legal was able to advise a number of EEA nationals and their family members on how best to protect their legal status in the UK in this time of uncertainty.

IHRC Legal continues to advise on the full range of immigration applications to the Home Office, including but not limited to:

- Entry Clearance Applications
- Leave to Remain Applications
- Indefinite Leave to Remain / EEA permanent residency
- EEA Registration Certificates / EEA Residence cards
- Human Rights applications
- Citizenship Applications – Naturalisation & Registration
- Applications for Immigration Bail
- Applications for replacement status documents or biometric residence permits / removal of conditions on leave to remain
- Preparation of and representation at Appeal hearings

In addition, IHRC Legal provides advice regarding discrimination, unfair dismissal, breach of contract and wrongful dismissal claims, unlawful deduction of wages, grievances, support during disciplinary and investigatory proceedings and representation at the Employment Tribunal.

**If you or someone you know would like to discuss any employment or immigration matter please contact us on 020 8904 4222 or [legal@ihrc.org](mailto:legal@ihrc.org).**



**IHRC Legal received a special commendation at the MCF Humanitarian Awards 2017**

# IHRC in the Media

**A**s ever our work continued to draw lots of media attention both domestically and internationally. Below is a selection of some of the places we were mentioned:

## **Sydney Morning Herald**

**28 June 2016**

**Brexit: Britain gripped by wave of racism in aftermath of vote**

And the Islamic Human Rights Commission said since the referendum incidents of racism and Islamophobia had been on the rise.

“The ‘leave’ result has further legitimised the environment of hate we already exist in – we have already received many hate crime reports,” they said.

## **Evening Standard**

**3 July 2016**

**London pro-Palestine demo sees thousands take to the streets**

The Islamic Human Rights Commission, which organised the march, said the end point was selected as a rallying point against the USA’s “unyielding support” of Israel.

Quds Day, also known as Al-Quds day, is an annual international event held towards the end of Ramadan.

## **Alternet**

**12 July 2016**

**Britain’s New Prime Minister Has a Huge Islamophobia Problem**

This bill (Counter-Terrorism and Security Act) earned May the dubious distinction of “the year’s worst Islamophobe” in the

Islamic Human Rights Commission’s 2015 Islamophobia awards. “Theresa May, who beat her ex-cabinet Tory Party colleague Michael Gove to the prize, has been a driving force behind the introduction of yet more repressive legislation targeting the Muslim community,” said the organization.

## **Middle East Eye**

**2 Sept 2016**

**The creeping petty pace of anti-Muslim hatred and the tomorrow of burka bans in the UK**

Of course there were the other online newspaper polls that dispensed with the need of academic rigour; eg. the Daily Star’s, in which the figures in support of banning were much much higher. While France pushed ahead in enacting hatred, the British have just hated or been made, day by day, to hate.

And all the while the files of advocacy organisations, whether Muslim-led like Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) or community-based like the Citizens Advice Bureau, fill up with cases which IHRC’s survey research show are just the tip of the iceberg.

Does this mean that the great British public have from time immemorial hated the burka and desired for its expulsion by force of law? Why so much concern for an item of clothing in a country where the majority of the majority do not know a Muslim let alone know one of the estimated 10,000 women who might wear a niqab, ie. face veil?

## **RT.com**

**8 Sept 2016**

**‘UK acting as weapons pimp, reaping rewards of Saudi Arabia’s dirty work’**

Raza Kazim, Islamic Human Rights Commission, told RT “the UK government is probably in violation of its international human rights obligations due to the way that the weapons that have been supplied by the



UK have been used. It is said that the assurances supplied by the Saudi government are also not sufficient, not acceptable and so on. Yet, the UK government continues. We need to understand that basically the UK government is acting like a pimp, and is reaping the benefits of the dirty work that Saudi Arabia is actually doing. This needs to stop.”

## **Independent**

**12 Oct 2016**

### **Nine dead as Nigeria police open fire on Shia Muslim procession marking Ashura**

The UK-based Islamic Human Rights Commission said it had received reports suggesting soldiers had used live ammunition and tear gas as clashes broke out.

Katsina, like some other northern Nigerian states, had tried to ban public Ashura commemorations.

The IHRC said it had also received reports of police setting fire to the Kaduna

Markaz mosque in Kaduna city, the main mosque used by the proscribed Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN).

“Today’s violence confirmed fears that the Nigerian authorities would seek to sabotage the annual commemoration of Ashura in the country,” it said in a statement.

## **Socialist Worker**

**13 Dec 2016**

### **Tory ‘counter-terrorism’ and Prevent has driven up Islamophobic racism**

Activists slammed the Tories’ “Prevent” strategy at an Islamic Human Rights Commission’s (IHRC) event last Saturday. Up to 100 people attended its conference on the Environment of Hate and the Police State in London.

The Tories are spearheading their assault on Muslims with Prevent, first brought in by Tony Blair’s New Labour. Their Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 now legally forces public sector workers to spy for signs of “radicalisation”.



**Rebecca Masterton, a speaker at Genocide Memorial Day 2017, being interviewed by the media**

**Express.co.uk**

**14 Dec 2016**

## Shocking billboard of policeman brandishing baton advertises Islamophobia conference

The conference, organised by the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), took place on December 10 at the P21 Gallery in Camden under the heading of "Environment of Hate and the Police State". In a press release promoting the event, organisers appeared to blame a "de facto Police State" for the cause of Islamophobia.

**Red Pepper**

**1 Feb 2017**

## Angry about the #MuslimBan? Here are 5 things to do

As well as protesting against Trump we have a lot of work to get on with here in the UK. Here's a list started by Platform

Prevent is a racist, islamophobic UK government programme of surveillance billed as "tackling extremism" – in fact obliging teachers, lecturers, social workers to spy on their students and service users, and call the police on Muslim schoolkids for drawings, toys, and spelling mistakes.

If you work in higher education – join 'Educators Not Informants' and put up a poster. If you're in a union, pass a motion against Prevent, (More guidance from UCU here). If you're at school or in university, write to your teachers, professors, and management using the resources above, and get them to resist Prevent. Check out these other actions you can take, courtesy of NetPol. And here are many more resources, courtesy of Together Against Prevent & Islamic Human Rights Commission.

**Press TV**

**9 Feb 2017**

## Press Tv

Massoud Shadjareh, head of the Islamic Human Rights Commission..... slammed the international community for failing to take any concrete action to address the plight of Rohingya Muslims despite being well aware of the "extremely high-level" ethnic cleansing in the Southeast Asian state.

He said the news coming out of Myanmar on the dire situation of the persecuted Muslim minority is "just the tip of the iceberg," emphasizing, "Even that tip is so distressing.

The analyst highlighted reports of "systematic rape, systematic abuses, murder of even children, women, destruction of the villages, ethnic cleansing in open daylight and in front of the eyes of the whole international community," saying, "We are getting nothing in real, positive response."

He said Myanmar's crimes should be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC), stressing those behind the crimes should stand trial for genocide charges.

**Dailymail.co.uk**

**1 Mar 2017**

## Jeremy Corbyn sings Communist anthem with activists who shared shocking anti-Semitic posts about the 'ugly Israeli species'

Mr Corbyn has lavished praise on the IHRC. In an interview recorded in 2010, he said it 'represents all that is best in Islam concerning the right of individuals to free expression, to peaceful assembly, and the rights of individuals in society.'

In 2016 he attended a book launch organised by the IHRC in honour of a new title called Palestine: Is It Something Colonial by American academic Hatem Bazian, who describes himself as a 'de-colonial Islamic thinker' and was pictured with Mr Corbyn.

# IHRC Social Media

**I**HRC's presence on an array of social media platforms – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Soundcloud and Vimeo - has only continued to grow over the past year. We've interacted with our wider community in a number of ways and increased our capacity to livestream events too.

Previously, events would be streamed live across the world via the IHRC website ([www.IHRC.TV](http://www.IHRC.TV)), but with the advent of new technology IHRC now streams via Facebook and Youtube too! This has helped to diversify our audience who can now tune in live, wherever they are, in a number of different ways. Youtube and Facebook users can also leave comments as the event is taking place and this has certainly made for interesting author evenings and panel discussions.

We have seen an increase in video content on the IHRC Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Islamic-Human-Rights-Commission-109724959498/>) and IHRC Twitter (<https://twitter.com/ihrc>) where users have been happily sharing a series of short videos produced from larger events. Videos featuring Ramon Grosfoguel discussing epistemi-

cide and Narjis Khan reciting poetry have received plaudits and been shared widely on both websites. While these platforms allow us to share soundbites that are longer, full-length presentations and discussions can also be found on Youtube ([www.youtube.com/user/IHRCtv/](http://www.youtube.com/user/IHRCtv/)) and Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/user2933030>).

IHRC's Instagram has also grown over the past year and has proven to be especially popular with attendees of our storytelling sessions. Parents get clear glimpses of the fun activities their children are experiencing alongside the educational lessons that are being taught.

IHRC also offers its supporters a number of different mailing lists to subscribe to receive weekly information. The Alerts list has general updates, event information, invitations and more (<http://eepurl.com/OnJE9>); the IHRC Bookshop list for new titles and discount codes (<http://eepurl.com/WDZE1>) and the Islamophobia list for a curated monthly newsletter (<http://eepurl.com/bWDnML>). Other general updates can also be found on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter which users can like/follow for regular and immediate content.



Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour party, in conversation with Hatem Bazian



- **IHRC TV:** <http://ihrc.org.uk/multimedia> or [ihrc.tv](http://ihrc.tv)
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/ihrc> - <https://twitter.com/ihrcbookshop>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Islamic-Human-Rights-Commission/109724959498>
- **Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/IHRCtv>
- **Flickr:** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ihrc>
- **Instagram:** <https://instagram.com/ihrcgallery/>

**“ The work we do and the fact that we are thriving is only possible thanks to the support we receive from you. Inspired by your faith you continue to believe, like us, that together we can make the world a better, fairer, more just place for ourselves and future generations. ”**

**Massoud Shadjareh**

Chair, Islamic Human Rights Commission



**Islamic  
Human Rights  
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The Islamic Human Rights Commission is an NGO in Special Consultative Status  
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