

# ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

2015 - 2016 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

**APART from being an opportunity to relay to our supporters the progress we have made in the last year, the annual report is also a chance for us to reflect upon the situation in which the Ummah finds itself today.**

Unfortunately this year we've seen a continuation of the demonisation and legitimisation of the environment of hate against Muslims and Islam in Britain as well as the rest of the western world. At the same time we are seeing an ever-increasing indifference towards the loss of life of Muslims around the world, almost to the extent that it is as if they are not part of the human race. One feels that if these atrocities

and abuses were carried out against animals, there would be a much bigger outcry by humanity and the western public.

It is a reality that only terror

attacks in London, Paris and Brussels generate outcries and condemnation. But everyday victims of the same barbaric group in Beirut, Ankara, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Nigeria hardly receive a mention let alone mass condemnation and a minute's silence. This horrible face of exceptionalism has become so established and has become so normative that even Muslims and Muslim organisations only condemn and respond to loss of life in the West.

**At a time like this we must stop hiding our heads and rise up with confidence and focus on combating the injustices that we face not just for our sake but for all of humanity.**

The other disease which is spreading is internalisation of Islamophobia and the promotion of otherness within Islam as an excuse for creating conflict. In December 2015 we saw the massacre of 1000 innocent men, women and children by the Nigerian government and appeasement of the war criminals by the international community through its silence.

We also see the continuation of injustice in Palestine, Kashmir and Myanmar and Zionist-style war crimes targeting civilians in Yemen by Saudi Arabia and indeed the continuation of barbaric acts by Daesh in Iraq and Syria. It is all keeping our minds and hearts occupied with the pain and suffering of the victims.

The climate of hate which we reported in our report 'Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK', published in November 2015, shows us we can no longer look at perpetrators as the only ones responsible. It is those who create the environment that are equally to blame. The politicians, media and system thrive on creating division and



otherness as a means of distracting society from the real economic, social and environmental challenges that need to be addressed.

It is with some pride that we can claim that concepts that are now normatively used in mainstream debate about Islamophobia were introduced by IHRC. For many years we have identified Islamophobia as being institutionalised - today the term institutional Islamophobia, that is a pattern of social institutions such as governmental organisations, schools, banks, and courts of law giving negative treatment to Muslims based on their faith - has become an established concept in the field. Likewise our characterisation of the wider context in which Islamophobia is manifested and which gives rise to it - the environment of hate - has also become a mainstay of political discourse.

Naturally it gives us little satisfaction to claim credit for shaping how the Islamophobia debate is framed. Our hope is that the research, analysis and lobbying that give expression to these concepts succeeds in helping to eliminate prejudice and discrimination.

At a time like this we must stop hiding

our heads and rise up with confidence and focus on combating the injustices that we face not just for our sake but for all of humanity. We can do it. And we must do it, relying on Allah SWT and the teachings of the Prophet PBUH as the tools for creating a better and more just society for all. Our confidence in Allah and Islam is unshakeable and our responsibility to challenge these corrupt systems rather than individuals should be our mission.

We in the Islamic Human Rights Commission have been involved in this work for over 19 years and we need your support to continue this effort. We all spend huge amounts of our concern and resources in nurturing a better future for our children and if we are going to have a bright future for our children and their children we need to make sure we can rise to the challenge of confronting this environment of hate to help create a better and just society for all. Together we can do this. Please help us to make it a reality by supporting us.

**Massoud Shadjareh**

**Chair,  
Islamic Human Rights Commission**



# Introduction – About IHRC

**ESTABLISHING and upholding fundamental human rights in a hostile world is a challenging mission.**

Whether it's campaigning for the release of political prisoners or trying to roll back unwarranted extensions of executive power human rights groups all share the daunting task of facing down actors more powerful than themselves.

At the Islamic Human Rights Commission the magnitude of this challenge is actually our most powerful driver. The organisation was set up in 1997 by a group of activists whose vision was to translate their experience in human rights work into an effective organisation that would advocate and defend the rights of people worldwide.

Our raison d'être is informed and inspired by Qur'anic exhortation for believers to rise up in defence of the oppressed. IHRC volunteers and campaigners come from many different parts of the world and many different backgrounds, but share a common commitment to the struggle against injustice and oppression, wherever and in whatever forms they may be found.

In a world where the vast majority of human rights work is predicated on secular liberal values IHRC raised the standard of faith to present a faith-based discourse showing that Islam afforded every individual with fundamental rights, regardless of their background, and that in today's world it is Muslims who bear the brunt of human rights abuses.

IHRC's work 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.

It is a testament to how far we have come that today we are recognised as a leading and highly respected human rights organisation enjoying consultancy status at the United Nations. Punching well above our weight from our humble headquarters in London we produce information that is widely utilised by governmental and other organisations all over the world.

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 this field. We have a particular interest in encouraging the disenfranchised to participate within society as a whole.

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. The year 2015-2016 has again been busy but rewarding. With your continued help, we are determined to keep up our good work for many years to come, insha-Allah.

**Islamic  
Human Rights  
Commission**





# Islamophobia

## Islamophobia conference

**THE ISLAMIC** Human Rights Commission and Scotland Against Criminalising Communities joined up in December 2015 to co-organise the second annual Islamophobia conference. The conference, titled the Changing Face of Islamophobia, examined how Islamophobia represents a form of racism. A sister event took place in Edinburgh.

The events followed the successful 2014 London conference on racism which focused on analysing institutional and structural forms of prejudice and hatred.

This year's event which was again attended by a distinguished line-up of speakers looked at how Islamophobia has evolved from and replaced biological racism from the colonial period. Academics and civil society activists placed Islamophobia within the wider xenophobic narrative currently on the rise in Europe.

One of the main aims of the conference was to develop a discussion around ways to articulate why Islamophobia is racism and how this knowledge can be utilised to fight against the rise of racism in Britain and Europe.

The conferences formed part of an Islamophobia weekend which also saw events in Brussels and Paris, Madrid and five other Spanish cities. They took part against the backdrop of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris.

## Islamophobia report

The publication of IHRC's latest hate crime survey in the UK 'Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK' provided a shocking insight into the UK as an ever developing 'Stasi state' rife with hatred for the 'suspect' Muslim community. With analysis at every level – from grassroots to institutions – the authors examined the construction of an environment where Muslims are feared and loathed.

Using the Domination Hate Model of Intercultural Relations – a critical methodology that argues that hate crimes do not occur in a vacuum – the report maintained that the Perpetrators of hate crimes are themselves victim citizens who have been mobilised by structural forces, namely the government and the media. Both perpetrator and victim alike are at the mercy







of a broader context of hate policy, hate representation and hate environment.

Taking us back to pre-9/11, the report acknowledges that even then Muslims were seen as exotic, different and a threat to national security. The state is seen as neutral and embodying Britishness and citizens of the state are only defined by their adherence to this specific national identity. Through devoted analysis to the PREVENT strategy and the Channel programme, the authors detail the way surveillance focused

specifically on Muslims means they are assumed guilty of terrorism by association. With an overview of headlines in popular media, the report showcases embedded stereotypes and coded discriminatory language. The Muslim minority becomes victim to the social

attitudes of the majority – learned through government policy and the media they consume – and this is then expressed in acts of hatred, hostility and violence.

This was the second such study in the UK and it draws alarming comparisons with the findings in 2010.

The experience of those 'always' seeing negative stereotypes of Muslim people in the media rose from 10% in 2010 to 39.4% in 2014. 87.7% of those surveyed agreed that

'those who discriminate against us are highly driven by media content.' This is further proof that the media play a key role in perpetuating an environment of hate.

21.3% of those who described their religiosity as 'practising Muslim' felt they were 'always' witnessing politicians philosophise that Islam is problematic. This



indicates that the political discourse is set particularly around targeting the Islamic faith and otherising its tenets. In 2010, 34.2% agreed that they had seen political policies that negatively affected Muslim people. In 2014 this figure had risen to 59.2%. Another 51.1% of the same sample believed that politicians condone discriminatory acts against Muslims. The statistics painted a startling portrait of current Muslim sentiment towards the UK government.

58% of those surveyed felt they had experienced being treated with suspicion or being wrongly accused of something. 66% of those surveyed had experienced verbal abuse at some point – a marked increase from 39.8% in 2010. Experience of physical assault also increased from 13.9% in 2010 to 17.8% in 2014 with the intensity of attacks becoming extraordinarily violent.

## Islamophobia Awards

IHRC's Islamophobia Awards 2016 was bigger and better than ever. The satirical event that aims to raise awareness of Islamophobia while poking fun at those who have outrageously displayed their prejudice for all to see over the past year attracted a full house who were treated to a three-course meal, live stand-up comedy from Nabil Abdul Rashid and other entertainment.

The Islamophobia Awards are the

highlight of IHRC's social calendar and our main annual fundraising event. They provide an informal opportunity to our supporters to meet us and learn more about what goes on behind the scenes in Britain's busiest Muslim human rights organisation. At the same time they allow us to enjoy ourselves by taking a light-hearted swipe at public figures and organisations whose actions have generated or perpetuated hatred and/or violence against Muslims or their religion.

Rising levels of Islamophobia in the West have created a climate of fear for Muslims as politicians and media peddle a culture of hate that in some respects is analagous to the demonisation of the Jews in Nazi Germany.

No prizes for guessing this year's Islamophobe of the Year award went to US business tycoon and presidential hopeful Donald Trump.

## Challenging PREVENT

### Conference

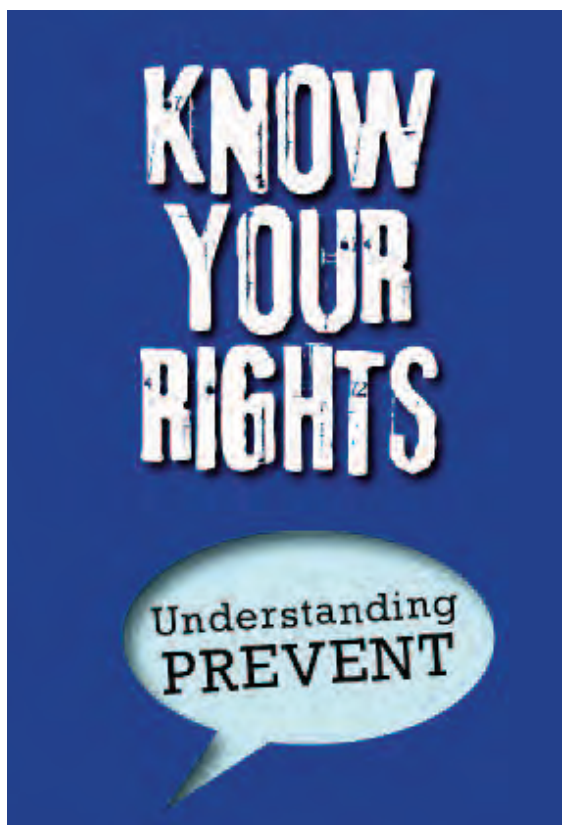
Throughout the year we continued our work challenging the Prevent initiative. First introduced by the Labour administration in 2005 to head off the threat of violent extremism it has mushroomed from an intrusive surveillance programme into an invasive social engineering exercise that directly attacks the Muslim community and strikes at the heart of long established civil liberties.

Although PREVENT is presented as a colourblind programme, its origins and implementation show that it is invariably targeted at the Muslim community, being used as a pretext for mass surveillance and social conditioning.

For these reasons IHRC is opposed in principle to the whole PREVENT programme. We see it as resting on racist and Islamophobic assumptions. We believe that by demonising Islam as







innately violent the programme has contributed to the legitimisation of institutional discrimination against Muslims.

Under 'Prevent' Muslims in Britain have been subjected to intrusive monitoring for evidence of 'extremist ideas'. Those who criticise UK foreign policy have been treated as 'extremists' by the Prevent programme. This has spread fear within communities, as well as among voluntary organisations and public employees who are expected to implement the programme. The Prevent programme is constantly being expanded to more and more areas of public life.

IHRC co-convened an international conference in London in June which for the first time directly addressed PREVENT and brought it under scrutiny from activists and academics.

## Reporting initiative

The coming into force on 1 July 2015 of a new statutory duty for public bodies, such as schools, hospitals and councils, to report signs of extremism led to a surge of referrals under Prevent, many of them arbitrary and resting on Islamophobic prejudices. The secretive nature of the referral process means that there is rarely a paper trail by which officials can be

held accountable.

Many Muslims have been caught up in the PREVENT dragnet for nothing other than expressing conservative religious opinions or views that are critical of the government's policies in Muslim countries.

IHRC reached out to the Muslim community asking them to report cases that they think have involved abuses of the government's PREVENT programme, augmenting an important pillar of our work at IHRC which is to support and where possible actively assist victims of abuses based on religious and racial discrimination.

## Interventions in application of PREVENT

In May 2015 IHRC intervened in the case of primary schoolchildren in London after learning that they were being profiled for signs of so-called extremism.

Children at the predominantly Muslim Buxton School in Leytonstone, East London, were issued with questionnaires soliciting their views on a range of issues and hypothetical cases designed to tease out any "extremist" tendencies. They asked a series of highly loaded questions which seemed to be based on a perception of extremism and radicalisation held by right-wing neo-cons.

The questionnaires were issued as part of the government's anti-radicalisation Prevent programme which was expanded under the 2015 Counter Terrorism and Security Act to schools to try and identify children 'vulnerable' to extremism and refer them to the authorities.

## Opposing Islamophobic proposals, legislation and practices

IHRC continued its principled opposition to the government's relentless attempts to ramp up of anti-terror laws. Although dressed up as anti-extremism or anti-terrorism measures the laws invariably function to curb fundamental Muslims' and otherise them as a problem community.

We forcefully condemned the Conservative Party's use of anti-terror laws as a campaigning tool in the 2015 British general election, pointing out that since 1997 successive governments have enacted at least eight pieces of primary legislation that have principally targeted Muslims and approached them collectively from the standpoint that they are potential extremists and therefore a security threat.

The proposed laws included a requirement that staff at job centres identify vulnerable claimants who may become targets for radicalisation, reviewing Sharia councils which are used by Muslims to adjudicate on civil matters, and investigating the alleged 'infiltration' of Muslims into positions of authority such as governing boards and local councils.

IHRC wrote to Lib-Dem leader Nick Clegg urging him to oppose more discriminatory and authoritarian anti-terror laws being hurriedly prepared by his Tory coalition partners as part of a "new counter-extremism strategy" in advance of the election. One of the measures - banning so-called hate preachers - was subsequently vetoed by Lib-Dems on the grounds that it would infringe universities' right to promote free speech.

The Conservative victory in the general election prompted another raft of draconian and discriminatory legislation. Again IHRC was called into action writing to opposition parties in the new parliament calling on them to take a stand against the measures.

In the letter addressed to Labour, Lib-Dems, Green and SNP MPs, IHRC expressed its "deep alarm" over the proposals saying they will sanction people simply for expressing opinions that are contrary to government policy. It called on the MPs to oppose plans to ban groups or disrupt individuals if they participate in so-called 'harmful' activities in order to tackle behaviour that does not breach existing legislation.

In May 2015 IHRC also wrote to the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe to express its concern over an article written by a force commander proposing that the authorities "move into the private space" of Muslims in Britain in order to root out so-called extremism.

The comments made by the Met's head of

community engagement, Commander Mak Chisty, in an article published in the Guardian, recommend the intrusive policing of Muslims because "it is in these private spaces where this (extremism) first germinates".

Chisty described the types of views that would qualify as extremism as including Muslim children considering Christmas to be "haram", as well as individuals criticising and boycotting Marks and Spencer.

IHRC made clear that Commander Chisty's comments displayed a woeful ignorance of the views and opinions held by Muslims, a lack of understanding of how the Muslim community feels in the current political climate, and complete disregard for the civil liberties of the Muslim community.

## Manchester councillor

IHRC was called on to support a Muslim man who came under attack from a Manchester city councillor.

Councillor Mark Hackett abused and intimidated his victim, a Muslim man who along with his Christian wife had volunteered to help at an event organised by Manchester Stop the War Coalition (STWC) called, "Remember the Children of Gaza".

The victim, who did not want to be named for fear of reprisals, emailed councillors at the behest of STWC seeking their support for the event on 17th August 2014. Cllr Hackett responded by emailing the victim, and copying in all other Labour councillors, accusing the victim's supporters of supporting Hamas and the Islamic state and suggesting that the councillor's attendance would invite attacks against his person and family.

The councillor then sent another malicious email in which he suggested that the volunteer had played a "possible role in the abduction of the Salford Taxi Driver in Syria" and also a "possible role as Islamic State sleeper in Salford".

The victim, who is in his 40's, was so appalled by Cllr Hackett's reaction that he submitted a formal complaint to the council asking for an official probe into his conduct. That investigation lasted almost a year and was concluded in July 2015 with a damning report which found Cllr Hackett had violated the council's code of conduct for members with his bullying and abusive behaviour.



# Campaigns

**MUCH of IHRC's time since late last year has been consumed by the crisis enveloping the Islamic Movement of Nigeria following a bloody military crackdown on the movement. We have also continued to campaign against the ongoing International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Bangladesh, which is being used by the ruling Awami League as a tool with which to weaken its political opponents. The ICT sent yet more opposition activists to the gallows in 2015-2016. IHRC also campaigned tirelessly for the release of Sheikh Nimr in Saudi Arabia. Unfortunately neither our intervention, nor that of other influential politicians and human rights groups, could save him from being executed.**

At home some ground-breaking research by Arzu Merali uncovered evidence that a prominent Jewish charity was breaching the law by fund-raising for the Israeli military. IHRC continues to press the Charity Commission to deal effectively with the issues raised.

## Nigeria

A bloody rampage by soldiers in the northern Nigerian city targeting the movement last December left a trail of bloodshed and destruction with at least 1000 fatalities, all of them civilians including women and children.

The majority of deaths were caused by gunshots fired by soldiers. Some people were burnt alive while others were hacked to death with machetes. Signs of torture and electrocution have been evidenced on the bodies of victims including the IMN leader Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky. Eye-witnesses also reported sexual violence, including cases of rape against women affiliates of the IMN. A 14-year old female witness told IHRC that the military shot her in her private parts when she resisted attempts by soldiers to rape her. Some women reportedly had their breasts cut off and others were deliberately shot in the pelvic region damaging their uteri.

Photographic evidence has been obtained along with testimonies of mass graves where the army is reported to have buried fatalities

from the killing spree. Some corpses were allegedly incinerated, apparently in order to conceal any evidence. The Kaduna state government has recently admitted that it presided over the burials of 374 victims in a mass grave shortly after the attack.

Unsurprisingly the international media paid little attention to the massacre in Zaria, presumably because its victims were all Muslims and members of what critics denounce as a radical movement. However IHRC took up the baton just as it had done with the July 2014 killings in the same city, raising the profile of the massacre and starting a political and legal campaign to seek justice for the victims and their families.

In addition to organising demonstrations outside the Nigerian embassy in London, IHRC wrote to the European Union, the United Nations and the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group seeking action over the treatment of Sheikh Zakzaky and raising with them the abuses that have been perpetrated by the Nigerian military.

We also submitted a formal complaint to the International Criminal Court urging it to investigate the most recent massacre. The complaint was based on our own report into the massacre based on eye-witness accounts, 'Investigating the attack against the Islamic Movement of Nigeria on 12-13 December in Zaria'. IHRC 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 into the events in Zaria last year in which soldiers attacked the Islamic Movement of Nigeria's (IMN) supporters, symbols and property.

In the submission IHRC wrote: "The crimes committed between the 12th and 14th December 2015 in Zaria, Kaduna State, by the Nigerian army amount to crimes against humanity. The crimes committed by the Nigerian army meet all the necessary legal requirements to warrant a preliminary investigation by the ICC prosecutor."

Although the state government in Kaduna has set up a Judicial Commission of Inquiry IHRC believes it is insufficiently independent and impartial to be able to hold those responsible to account, nor is there any



Sheikh Al-Nimr's execution in January was widely seen as an assault on the forces of reform and political empowerment in the Muslim world and signalled a renewed determination in Riyadh to undermine opposition and reform movements at home and abroad highlighted by Saudi Arabia's bloody intervention in Yemen, its support of the Egyptian military dictatorship as well as its promotion of sectarianism in places like Nigeria, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Until his arrest Sheikh Al-Nimr had been an outspoken critic of the Saudi monarchy with his calls for equality and reform. He supported the right of people to choose their own government and had called for the downfall of the Saudi ruling family.

According to a 2011 report by IHRC, there are an estimated 30,000 political prisoners in Saudi Arabia out of a population of approximately 18 million Saudi nationals.

## Bangladesh

IHRC continued to campaign for opposition activists ensnared by the country's International Crimes Tribunal ICT, especially those facing execution. The ICT was set up in 2010 by the ruling Awami League to investigate atrocities carried out during the 1971 war. However the Awami League has used the ICT as a tool with which to weaken its political opponents. Almost the entire leadership of the Jamaat-e-Islami currently stands accused of war crimes.

In November 2015 Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid was hanged along with Bangladesh National Party leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury for war crimes.

The ICT has been beset with allegations of irregularities. Critics have accused judges and the prosecution of conspiring with each other to secure a conviction through secret liaisons, and failing to allow the defence enough time to prepare its case. They have also accused the Awami League of systematically undermining the independence of the country's judiciary since it came to power in 2008, packing the upper courts with judges who are its supporters.

In January 2016 Bangladesh's Supreme Court upheld the conviction of the leader of

the Jamaat-e-Islami, Motiur Rahman Nizami, for crimes against humanity during the 1971 war.

In the same month IHRC, in conjunction with Citizens International, produced a report for the UN outlining how the human rights situation in Bangladesh has deteriorated dramatically since the 2008 general election when the currently ruling Awami League came to power.

The alternative report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights said that the Awami League's tenure has been characterised by a witchhunt against the opposition, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Bangladesh National Party. The report highlighted how the International Crimes Tribunal has targeted the leadership of these groups while others have been subjected to harassment, abduction, detentions, and the imposition of curbs on their freedom of expression and movement.

At the same time the state has continued to oppress the Rohingya refugees of Burma who have sought sanctuary in Bangladesh from violence in their homeland, subjecting them to appalling living conditions, failing to protect them from violence, sexual and labour exploitation, refusing to recognise them as refugees, preventing new refugees from arriving and also seeking to forcibly repatriate them.

## Egypt

IHRC criticised the British government's decision to host Egyptian autocrat Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in November 2015 as an affront to human rights and the tens of thousands of people who continue to languish in the country's prisons.

His visit came despite an ongoing military crackdown that has seen critics of the regime in Cairo imprisoned, tortured and in many cases put on death row for nothing more than speaking out against the military-led government. Over 40,000 political prisoners are being held by the regime.

Citizens International wrote to the British PM preceding the visit urging him to cancel the invitation.

Earlier in the year IHRC wrote to the UN





Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon asking for his organisation's help in pressuring the Egyptian government to overturn death sentences against jailed former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi and other detainees.

Mohamed Morsi and more than 100 others were convicted by an Egyptian court on Saturday 16 May 2015. The death sentences were for their supposed role in a mass jailbreak during the 2011 uprising against Hosni Mubarak. The trials have been widely criticised for contravening international human rights standards and the rule of law; Mr Morsi was held incommunicado without judicial oversight, he was not allowed a lawyer to represent him, and many of the co-accused were tried and found guilty in absentia. Amnesty International, the EU and others have pointed out that in the hands of el-Sisi the legal process has become a political instrument to silence the democratic aspirations of the people of Egypt.

## Palestine

On 10 July 2015 the annual Al-Quds day demo jointly organised by IHRC drew hundreds of protestors to the streets of

London in an expression of solidarity with the oppressed Palestinian people. The demonstrators gathered near the BBC headquarters, to censure the state-funded broadcasters coverage of brutal Israeli wars against the blockaded Gaza Strip. They also marched on the American Embassy in London, holding up paper Palestinian flags saying "Boycott Israel" and shouting slogans against the regime in Tel Aviv.

## Yemen

The Saudi-led military attacks on Yemen prompted IHRC to write to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in May 2015 in conjunction with other organisations to express concern about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in the country. The letter came after the Saudi-led coalition failed to heed a call by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen on 4 May 2015 to cease bombing of Sana'a airport so that aid could enter the country.

The coalition ignored those calls, intensifying its military campaign and declaring the whole of Saada a military target, forcing tens of thousands of civilians to flee the city. Many more people remained trapped, unable to escape. This amounted to



a war crime, said the letter, as it was disproportionate in scale and failed to distinguish between military targets and the sanctity of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

## Guantanamo

In October 2015 IHRC welcomed the release of Guantanamo detainee Shaker Aamer after 14 years in the notorious detention facility. His release was a testament to the tireless campaigning of supporters of justice everywhere for him to be freed.

Like most of the other remaining detainees in Guantanamo, set up after the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001, Aamer had never been charged with any offences.

IHRC has consistently campaigned for the closure of Guantanamo, a prison that has come to symbolise the worst excesses of the so-called war on terror. Over 100 detainees remain at the facility some almost seven years after President Obama pledged to close it.

## UK Charity Commission

IHRC produced a 26-page report asking questions regarding the activities of UK Torem Ltd, a registered charity in the UK number 1140972 (<http://uktorem.org.uk/>). The questions were directed to the Charity Commission on the basis of the report's findings that the British charity is being allowed to help funnel donations to the Israeli military in apparent breach of UK charity laws and guidelines.

The watchdog was asked whether it knew about the activities of UK Torem Ltd, a UK-registered charity which serves as a portal for people to donate cash to recipient agencies in the UK, USA and Israel.

The IHRC investigation has found that some of these agencies are directly supporting the Israeli Defence Force in contravention of the Commission's rules which require donees to be fulfilling a charitable purpose.

The organisation also qualifies for Gift-aid, facility available to registered charities whereby the recipient charity receives the

donor's tax relief on a donation amounting to 25% of the donation. This effectively means that UK taxpayer funds could be being used to support a military force which has been accused of countless atrocities and war crimes.

The Charity Commission's rules require donees to fulfil a charitable purpose. These fall within 13 broad categories such as advancing education, preventing poverty and promoting human rights. They include promoting the efficiency of UK armed forces but do not permit providing material support to foreign armies.

## Supreme Court Challenge to anti-terror powers

IHRC was part of an alliance of Muslim organisations which brought a legal challenge against the Schedule 7 powers allowing police to question people for up to nine hours on whether they have been involved in acts of terrorism.

The challenge was jointly brought to the Supreme Court by the Islamic Human Rights Commission, the Muslim Council of Britain, and CAGE, which campaigns on behalf of the victims of the so-called "war on terror".

Under the power, police need have no reasonable suspicion to stop, interrogate or detain anybody under the power making it prone to abuse. Statistics show that it has been disproportionately used against Muslims and ethnic minorities.

The challenge was brought before the Supreme Court in support of Sylvie Beghal, a French national of Algerian descent, who was stopped after arriving with her children at East Midlands Airport on a flight from Paris in January 2011. She refused to answer the questions put to her - which included requests for information about the French-Algerian community in the UK - without the presence of a lawyer and was subsequently convicted for wilfully failing to comply with her duty under Schedule 7 to answer questions.

The question before the Supreme Court was essentially whether it is lawful in the interests of public safety for parliament to make it possible to question who is passing in or out of the country in a preliminary or

exploratory intelligence gathering way in order to find out if he or she may be connected with terrorist acts.

Four of the five judges hearing the challenge answered in the affirmative but there was a dissenting judgment from Lord Kerr who insisted that Schedule 7 was too wide and arbitrary in scope. IHRC noted that the dismissal of this appeal demonstrated a very definite shift in the political discourse within the UK, with senior judges buckling to the politics of fear and failing to uphold the rule of law.

## Hajj tragedy

IHRC launched an independent investigation into the 2015 Hajj tragedy on 24 September 2015 in which more than 2000 people lost their lives and thousands more were injured. The victims were all pilgrims performing the rites of the annual pilgrimage. Tragedy struck when two massive lines of pilgrims converged on each other at right angles at an intersection close to the five-storey Jamarat Bridge in Mina, a large valley about 5km (3 miles) from Mecca.

IHRC called on anyone who witnessed the disaster in Mina on 24 September to submit evidence so the organisation can construct a true picture of what happened in

the lead up to the disaster and its aftermath. An independent investigation is necessitated by the frequency of such disasters to strike the Hajj in recent times.

## Guantanamo - Shaker Aamer release

In October 2015 IHRC welcomed the release of Guantanamo detainee Shaker Aamer after spending 14 years incarcerated in the notorious detention facility. His release is a testament to the tireless campaigning of supporters of justice everywhere including IHRC. Like most of the other remaining detainees in Guantanamo, set up after the 9/11 attacks on the US, Aamer was never charged with any offences. IHRC called on the UK government to come clean about Aamer's claim that British police were aware that he was tortured under questioning at Bagram prison in Afghanistan. While Aamer's release is undoubtedly fantastic news it should not divert us from the task of continuing our efforts to press for the closure of Guantanamo, a prison that has come to symbolise the worst excesses of the so-called war on terror. Over 100 detainees remain at the facility some seven years after President Obama pledged to close it.

# United Nations

**AS AN NGO with Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, IHRC continued to lobby, present, submit reports and research to the international body.**

On 10th March 2016 we participated in a side panel meeting at the 31st session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva to discuss the UK's counter-terrorism policies and racism.

In January 2016 we submitted a report on the implementation of the international covenant on civil and political rights in Bangladesh ahead of that country's review by the UN. The report focussed on the witchhunt against the opposition, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Bangladesh National Party by the International Crimes Tribunal and state oppression of the Rohingya refugees of Burma who have sought sanctuary in Bangladesh from violence in their homeland.

Through the course of the year we also drafted reports for submission to the UN Human Rights Council.

## Belgium

This submission was concerned with the status and treatment of Muslims by the government of Belgium since the last Universal Periodic Review in May 2011. As the name suggests this is a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. It provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights.

It also allows NGOs to submit information which can be considered during the review. Among the things highlighted in that UPR was a resurgence of Islamophobia and the prevalence of racist attitudes against Muslims, Roma and migrant workers. The UPR recommended that the Belgian authorities increase the effectiveness of measures to prevent racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia and lift the ban on wearing headscarves in schools.

Muslims comprise approximately 6-7% of

Belgium's total population of around 11 million making them the country's biggest religious group after Christians. Their presence in significant numbers largely harks back to the 1960's when immigrants arrived as guest workers, mainly from Morocco and Turkey, later inviting their families to come and join them. Their geographic distribution is uneven with the highest proportion concentrated in the metropolitan area of the capital Brussels where they form around 25% of the city's residents.

The report made eight recommendations including that Belgium should overhaul its commitment to anti-discrimination so as to remove the anomaly that leaves Muslim women discriminated against and excluded. IHRC also recommended urgent training of equal opportunities officers in official bodies in how the various 'religious symbols' bans in place in the country violate the Convention on the Elimination on all forms of Discrimination Against Women and other rights based conventions and covenants, and in the impact such discrimination has had on Muslim women.

## France

In April we presented a report for the UN Human Rights Council to consider before it drafted the UN State Report on the implementation of the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights for France.

In this process the IHRC report supplemented the periodic report of the State of France, which the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the Committee) was due to review in March 2015 during the 55th Pre-Sessional Working Group. We intended that the information would contribute to the UN's work in monitoring compliance with the rights protected in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).

The report focussed on the institutionalised discrimination affecting Muslims in France. France must as a matter of priority ratify Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of





the Child, Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. It must also promptly sign Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The report also stated that Islamophobic political and media discourse has become normalised and entrenched in France to the point where it is a major cause of anti-Muslim discrimination and hatred. In the prevailing climate of hostility towards them and their religion which often translates into verbal and physical attacks and/or discrimination, Muslims are not free to express their faith. France must recognise its obligations under Article 9 of the ECHR to ensure Muslims are free to observe and practise their religion.

## Canada

Another IHRC submission supplemented the periodic report of the State of Canada, focussing on the institutionalised discrimination affecting Muslims in the country.

The report, based on our hate crime survey in the country in 2014, asked if Canada intended to apply the lessons it has learned from tackling the systemic discrimination and disadvantage faced by First Nations peoples to other minorities, including Muslims. The historic subjugation of First Nations peoples is a legacy that continues to affect their lives in Canada today, whether it is in their over-representation in

crime statistics, low employment rates or poor health indices. The First Nations' treatment as an out-group has informed the way in which the dominant white majority has treated other minorities. In particular, the structural exclusion and profiling by law enforcement agencies have been replicated and are experienced by other minority groups.

Studies have shown that the self-perception of Canada as a successful model of multiculturalism is a fallacy and that even this idealised vision of a multicultural society is under threat. Increasingly the Canadian state has moved from being an instrument of law to the instrument of nation, i.e. where a citizen is only defined by her / his adherence to national identity, itself enshrined in legal codes, precedent, policy and normalised in social, public, political and media discourses. In this particular survey, Muslims confirmed that there is immense pressure on them to change their behaviour in order to 'get on' or simply just to survive without harassment.

Many of the negative experiences historically suffered by First Nations Peoples find a contemporary echo among Canada's Muslims. In the IHRC hate crime survey nearly three-quarters of respondents said they had seen political policies either at a local or national level that negatively affected Muslim people. A similar number had seen policies or practices at work, school or business that excluded or negatively affected Muslim people. Approximately a third of respondents claimed to have suffered discrimination in employment or education.



# Events

**IHRC held many events throughout 2015 including seminars, workshops, demonstrations and conferences. Here is a selection:**

## Comedy evening with Aamer Rahman - 13 March 2015

IHRC was privileged to attract the big name comedian to London to perform at the Islamic Centre in Maida vale. Named as one of The Guardian's Top 10 Comedy Shows of 2014, the Australian – who is also one half of the duo 'Fear of a Brown Planet' – has performed at the Sydney Opera House and was one of the recipients of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival Best Newcomer Award. Aamer's acerbic wit wowed the large audience on a night that will long linger in the memory.

## Bosnia: The forgotten genocide

Released on 13 July 2015 this documentary which uses archival footage of the war that engulfed the nascent nation-state

between 1992-1995 to illustrate the horrors, was screened nationwide in cities ranging from Southampton to Edinburgh.

## NHS film screening

IHRC screened Peter Bach's powerful film "Sell Off" which exposes how the National Health Service has been quietly transformed into a business ready for corporate takeover and conversion to the American private insurance model. The film uncovers the two decade covert privatisation which has occurred without public mandate and against the public interest. It challenges the lies put out by politicians and mainstream media.

## Dignity Day

Together with Campaign Against Criminalising Communities, IHRC organised a demonstration outside 10 Downing Street on 1 November 2015 to mark Dignity Day. The event was aimed at bringing various communities together at a time of deep social crisis to demand that our dignity, so long crushed by social and political structures, is respected. Demonstrators protested against increasing racism, militarisation, austerity and the constant political onslaught on our sense of shared humanity.





## Genocide Memorial Day

Weapons of mass destruction was the theme of 2015 Genocide Memorial Day. Simultaneous events were held on the third weekend in January in London, Birmingham, Lisbon, Madrid, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris and Jerusalem to highlight the threat that WMDs, particularly nuclear weapons, pose to mankind.

Once again this year GMD expanded to more cities around the world. This is evidence that global awareness of genocide as a phenomenon that concerns humanity as a whole is increasing. Established in 2010, Genocide Memorial Day is intended to give people an opportunity to recall man's inhumanity to man. It is unique in that remembrance is not limited by the background of either the victims of the genocides or the perpetrators of any of the genocides. GMD rejects the notion that there

is a hierarchy of victim depending on their background.

This year IHRC was honoured to host the former mayor of the Japanese city of Hiroshima, Dr Tadatosh Akiba as a keynote speaker in London. Along with Nagasaki, Hiroshima carries the unwanted distinction of being the only cities to have ever been attacked with a nuclear weapon.

## Nigeria massacre

Demonstrations calling for justice and the release of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky became an almost weekly feature after the December 2015 massacre of supporters and affiliates of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria, particularly in London outside the Nigerian High Commission and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.





## Lecture: Is Islamophobia a form of racism?

On 18 January 2015 Ramon Grosfoguel, Professor of Chicano/Latino Studies at UC Berkeley, and a leading authority on colonial studies came to Cambridge University to speak on this vexing subject. The event was a collaboration between IHRC and FLY, (Cambridge University's Women of Colour Network).

## Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr

IHRC held a demonstration to protest the execution of Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr by the Saudi authorities. It took place in front of the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland on Saturday 16 January.

# Legal

**IHRC Legal was established in 2014 in response to the high volume of requests we receive for legal advice and representation on a variety of issues. IHRC Legal specialises in employment and UK immigration law. This includes 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. We also advise on the full range of applications to the Home Office.**

The department introduced a Legal Defence Fund in 2015 to support those wishing to pursue their legal rights. The fund is the first of its kind to be set up by a Muslim charity in the UK and will be used to support IHRC Legal clients in paying for some of the costs incurred when pursuing employment and discrimination cases.

## Discrimination case victory

In July 2015 IHRC successfully represented a Muslim waitress in a case of religious discrimination against her employer.

The young waitress began working in the restaurant in October 2013. A few months into her employment the owners of the restaurant began subjecting her to regular and repeated verbal abuse – the outbursts were apparently sparked by negative media coverage of Muslims.

She was called a member of ISIS, subjected to insulting comments about Allah (God) and the Prophet Muhammad. The waitress was also told that she could not eat or bring halal meat to the accommodation arranged by the employer, and that she must eat the meat which the employers provided; in particular she was told to eat pork. To aggravate her grievances the abuse was perpetrated in front of other staff.

She protested on a number of occasions, but was told that if she objected, she would be dismissed. As the only Muslim worker, the employee felt unsafe. However, because she lived in accommodation provided by her employers and fearing homelessness, she endured the abuse for far longer than she would ordinarily have done.

In October 2014, she contacted IHRC Legal who agreed to take up her case. She issued a claim of religious discrimination with financial support from the IHRC Legal Fund.

IHRC Legal was able to challenge the unlawful behaviour of the employer and secure a substantial five figure settlement for injury to feelings and unlawful deduction of wages.

## Immigration decision overturned

Later in the year IHRC Legal successfully helped a woman who was denied access to public funds and left destitute while having to raise her children.

Following representations by IHRC Legal the client's immigration status was regularised as she was granted 'leave to remain' by the Home Office. However the status was granted with the condition she would have no access to public funds for herself or her children. This meant that the single mother could not access welfare benefits.

IHRC Legal was then forced to prove the necessity of accessing public funds for this single mother and her family. The application was made for the condition to be removed on the grounds of destitution and the poor health of one of the children.

Despite two of the children being born in the UK, it was an immense struggle to ensure they had access to public funds so that they could survive. After providing extensive proof of the family's destitute state as well as the ill health of one of the children, IHRC Legal managed to secure the removal of the Home Office's condition.

**IHRC**  
Legal



[www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk)



# Publications

THROUGHOUT the course of 2015 IHRC published many reports and briefings aimed at informing policymakers and the general public alike.

## 1. Proposed Counter Terrorism and Security Bill: An Orwellian Possibility,

Published in January 2015 this briefing argued that the new bill will further erode civil liberties and turn the UK into a police state.

It contained a recent history of anti-terror legislation and analysis of how the PREVENT strategy has turned Britain into a police state. The bill forms part of a long history of using legislation to target and criminalise the Muslim community.

## 2. The War in Yemen: Sacrificing Human Rights in the Name of an Illegitimate War

This briefing argued that Saudi-led coalition in Yemen is an illegal war that flagrantly violates the prohibition against the use of armed force enshrined in article 2(4) of the UN Convention.

It also shows how the Saudi-led coalition has committed war crimes in Yemen. The coalition forces have done very little to distinguish between military and civilian targets, with the Yemeni civilian population the main victim of this conflict.

Because of this war, the Yemeni people's political aspirations have been silenced, as well as their legitimate right to put an end to a dictatorship.

## 3. Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK

IHRC's published its latest hate crime survey in the UK 'Environment of Hate: The New Normal for Muslims in the UK'. It provided a shocking insight into how much Islamophobia has mushroomed in recent years turning the UK into a hostile

environment for Muslims where they are subjected to rampant discrimination, hatred and feared.

## 4. Questions to the Charity Commission regarding charities granting aid to organisations and charities in Israel including but not exclusively the Israeli Defence Forces.

This report expressed IHRC's concern over the due diligence and other issues related to the UK registered Charity 'UK Toremnet' and its facilitation of donations towards IDF related causes.

It asked questions regarding the activity of UK Toremnet Ltd, a registered charity in the UK number 1140972 (<http://uktoremnet.org.uk/>) with regard to its activities. The questions are directed to the Charity Commission with regard to whether or not these issues have been raised with them and whether or not they were aware of the activities of the organisation, and if such donations are acceptable.

## 5. Investigating the attack against the Islamic Movement of Nigeria on 12-13 December 2015 in Zaria

This report formed the basis of IHRC's submission to the the International Criminal Court asking it to open a preliminary investigation into the Nigerian army's attacks between 12th and 13th December 2015 targeting the Islamic Movement of Nigeria in Zaria.

The operation resulted in the deaths of at least 1000 unarmed civilians, mostly IMN members. Hundreds more were injured. There were reports that the military blocked access to medical care for the injured and shot at and killed wounded persons. Witnesses and victims reported signs of widespread force and cruelty with allegations of looting, arson, mutilation, mass graves, torture, rape and other inhumane acts levelled at the Nigerian army.

# Bookshop and Gallery

IHRC's bookshop is based at the organisation's headquarters in NW London. The bookshop hosts an array of titles from political exposes to fictional works for children. We pride ourselves on carrying books that are not easy to find and source. Our own publications can be found online and in-store and we've produced a spectrum of work exploring human rights issues in many countries. There are also titles by other authors on critical thinking, decoloniality, issues of race and civil rights as well as an array of Islamic books. The shop, which has an online presence, also stocks exclusive gift items, limited edition prints, original artwork and more. The profits from the shop support the work that IHRC does championing human rights around the world.

Along with the Gallery, the bookshop also doubles up as a venue for our events. Last year was another busy one with both spaces hosting events ranging from art exhibitions and poetry readings to film screenings and political discussions. Here are some of the events that we hosted:

## Author evening with Muhammad Mojlum Khan - 13 May 2015

Muhammad Mojlum Khan is an award-winning British writer, literary critic and research scholar. He has published more than 150 essays and articles worldwide, and his writings have been translated into many languages including Indonesian and German. He is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and author of the bestselling 'The Muslim 100'.

Khan came to IHRC to discuss his latest book 'Muslim Heritage of Bengal' - a popular history book that covers 800 years of the history of Islam in Bengal through the example of 42 inspirational figures up to the 20th century.

## Children's story-telling session with Sarah from Safeer TV - 18 June 2015

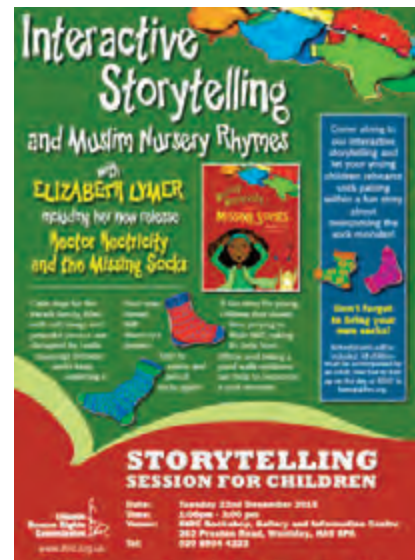
IHRC was joined by Sarah from Safeer TV to read 'The Little Raindrop' and 'Time for Dinner' as well as some poetry from the great Robert Louis Stevenson.











### Children's story-telling session: Hajj and Mecca - 28 August 2015

This children's story-telling afternoon again allowed children to meet other children. We read titles such as 'We're off to make Umrah', 'The Spider & The Doves', 'Going to Mecca' and 'The Story of the Elephant.'

### Author Evening with Saida Sherif - 3 September 2015

Saida Sherif has witnessed much turmoil and has braved many personal tragedies, which would have devastated any weak person. Born in Old Delhi in 1932, Saida became a legendary aid worker, most notably in Bosnia during the 1990s and gave us a glimpse of what she has endured in life – personally and professionally. The Balkan crisis compelled Saida to rise above domesticity, and her heart went out to do whatever possible to help the Bosnian Muslims facing ethnic cleansing. Her personal encounters and portraits of the people she met are recounted in her book 'Sparks of Fire'. They are moving and paint a dark picture of a horrendous tragedy.

### 'Ready for Eid' children's story-telling session - 5 Sept 2015

Hosted by Nazeeya Hussain this was a fun packed session in which children were treated to readings of stories including as 'An Eid for Everyone', 'Husna and the Eid Party' and 'The Miracle of Zam Zam.' The idea was to familiarise children with the meaning of Eid in a fun way.

### Author Evening with Habeeb Akande - 8 October 2015

Habeeb Akande presented his new book 'Illuminating the Blackness' which explores the history of Brazil's race relations and African Muslim heritage. The book is separated into two parts. Part I explores the issue of race, white supremacy, colourism, beauty and affirmative action in contemporary Brazil. Part II examines the reported African Muslims' travels to Brazil before the Portuguese, the slave military revolts in Bahia and the West African Muslim communities in nineteenth century Brazil. The book explores the black consciousness movement in Brazil and examines the reasons behind the growing conversion to Islam amongst Brazilians, particularly those of African descent. The work also provides insights into the complexities of race in Brazil and draws comparisons with the racial histories of the pre-modern Muslim world including a comparative analysis of the East African Zanj slave rebellions in ninth century Baghdad with the West African Hausa and Yoruba slave rebellions in nineteenth century Bahia.

### Invisible Lines Exhibition

In November 2015 IHRM launched this new exhibition featuring the work of a number of artists from the collective Variant Space – ever growing in popularity. Fresh from their appearance at the Shubbak Festival, this was a chance to see the artists' work in an unusual and intimate space. Featuring a multitude of mixed media

including 3D-works, illustrations, photography and video – the exhibition also displayed art 'in-progress'. The idea is that the artist and the artist's work is never in stasis as both are constantly developing and changing.

#### Story-telling Session for Children with Elizabeth Lymer - 26 November 2015

Elizabeth Lymer hosted her fun story for young children that shows how praying to Allah SWT, asking for help from others, and taking a good walk outdoors can help to overcome a sock monster.

#### Story-telling Session for Children with Aisha Mohammad - 25 January 2016

Aisha Mohammad joined us for a reading of her book 'Safiyyah's Jariya Jar', plus poetry and word games!

The concept of charity in Islam is given great importance. Voluntary charity is known as Sadaqah, it is a simple and active way to give to charity for many Muslims which

becomes part of their daily routine. This story aims to introduce these concepts and teach the values of sadaqah jariya to young children, so they can understand why this is important and how it can also be a great deal of fun!

#### Rhyming towards Ramadan 31 March 2016

An interactive children's event of Muslim songs, poems, and spoken word presented by children's authors Elizabeth Lymer and Aisha Mohammed.

This rhymes event provided young Muslim children with a fun opportunity to participate in listening to rhymes and singing songs about Allah SWT and Islam. The activities utilised pre-recitation skills, like recognition of rhyme, repetition, and rhythm to aid memorisation. The rhymes provide enjoyable and engaging ways to learn Islam and are excellent foundational tools for reciting the Qur'an insha'Allah.

The event also featured performance poems which introduce children to the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings be upon him).



# IHRC in the Media

**IHRC's work has continued to receive widespread public attention. Here is a small selection of snippets from the media.**

Al-Arabiya 6 May, 2015

Massoud Shadjareh, chair of the Islamic Human Rights Commission, said it is far from the case that Muslims will be the “kingmakers” in the election. Shadjareh said we shouldn't assume that all Muslims vote the same way – not least because some even support the right-wing UK Independence Party (UKIP). “If you put 1,000 Muslims in a room and asked them ‘what do you want to achieve’, you'd probably get 1,010 responses,” he said. “Muslims will go and vote proportionately with the society.”

Telegraph May 28, 2015

A local council has been accused of racism after asking primary school children to fill in a so-called “counter extremism” questionnaire which critics claim is aimed at Muslims.

Massoud Shadjareh, chair of the Islamic Human Rights Commission, said the questionnaire was “clearly racist and Islamophobic” and accused the local council of trying to profile Muslim children.

The survey has generated an outcry online, with many warning that it is “criminalising Muslim children” with its “implicit assumptions”.







Morning Star 6 June, 2015

HIGHLY-QUALIFIED teacher Hamid Mahmood blew the whistle on Islamophobia in education recruitment procedures yesterday after changing his name to Harry Mason landed him an interview at a school that previously rejected him.

After failing to be shortlisted twice for a job at Langdon Academy in east London last year, Mr Mahmood decided to try to "whiten" his name and apply again.

In less than seven hours, "Mr Mason" had an interview offer, despite having exactly the same qualifications and even the same phone number and home address as Mr Mahmood. Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) head of advocacy Abed Choudhury said Mr Mahmood was not alone.

"This is a wide employment issue. His experiment isn't even the first one. Others have done this in the past and they found out that when you drop an obvious Muslim name for an Anglicised one, suddenly they get a lot more success in their jobs."

Figures published last year by the National Office of Statistics showed Muslim men were almost 76 per cent less likely to get a job compared to their white counterparts.

"There has been a growth in Islamophobia

and anti-Muslim sentiment in the UK, coming from top down in the rhetoric used by the government and the rhetoric in the media," added Mr Choudhury.

BBC News 19 June, 2015

Massoud Shadjareh from the Islamic Human Rights Commission said it was "misguided and dangerous" to suggest that the solution was to tackle the ideology of Islam.

"The government for a very long time had associated barbaric groups like ISIS with not just Muslims, but the ideology of Islam - that they are somehow inter-tangled. The reality is that's not the case," he said.

The Scotsman 21 July, 2015

A spokesman for the Islamic Human Rights Commission, Arzu Merali, said: "Cameron's claims simply reinforce the now widely held prejudice that Muslim politics and practice are violently inimical to the society we live in.

"In fact, policy after policy from this and previous governments have forced Muslims

into silence over valid claims whilst lauding a fictional idea of European supremacy over them and other beleaguered minorities. It is time for a push-back against this divisive and sinister narrative."

Independent 27 October, 2015

The Saudi Arabian ambassador to the UK was yesterday accused by human rights activists of writing a "disingenuous, evasive and intimidatory" article that appeared to hint at a withdrawal of economic and security co-operation unless Britain treated the kingdom "with respect".

Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf bin Abdulaziz's opinion piece was published in the Daily Telegraph on the day the Islamic Human Rights Commission urged the UN to halt the execution of Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr, a Saudi cleric who had called for pro-democracy demonstrations.

The Spectator 11 November 2015

Today the IHRC has thrown a smoke grenade into the public debate by issuing 'findings' claiming that the UK government's counter-extremism and counter-terrorism policies are having a 'negative impact' on British Muslims.

Aljazeera.com 18 November, 2015

British government policies are fuelling a worsening "environment of hate" in which abuse, discrimination, and even the threat of violent assault have become the "normal experience and expectation" for Muslims living in the UK, according to the conclusions of a new report.

The study into the day-to-day experiences of British Muslims, carried out by the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), found a sharp rise in the number of people reporting verbal abuse and an increase in the number of physical attacks since the survey was last undertaken in 2010.

Herald Scotland 13 December, 2015

Abed Choudhury, head of advocacy for the London-based Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) also blamed the policy for contributing to the rise in Islamophobia. "This is coming from an institutional level. Muslims are constantly presented as a threat, as the "other" and that creates an environment of hate. It's top down.

"It is still in the early stages in Scotland, which is why it's important it makes a push. It's a toxic brand."

He called on council, medical and teaching staff to "make it unworkable" and think of sector appropriate interventions that didn't include reporting through Prevent. "The unions need to be at the forefront of this, and be seen to support their workers," he added.

Mail Online 7 January, 2016

Other speakers at CAGE events were no less inflammatory. One is Lena Mohamed of the Islamic Human Rights Commission – which has campaigned for the rights of terrorists including Abu Hamza.

She told students: 'Prevent is a strategy that fits within the narrative of a racist, white supremacist agenda. It is part of a structure of systemic racism that includes anti-Muslim hatred.

'This particular vilification of Muslims is integral to the operation of this state.'

Middle East Eye 20 January, 2016

Abed Choudhury of the Islamic Human Rights Commission also expressed concern about the increase in Channel referrals, and said that placing a legal requirement on teachers to report on students was having a "divisive effect" on communities.

"Subjecting Muslims to deradicalisation programmes for holding alternative views smacks of indoctrination meted out to dissidents by authoritarian regimes both present and past."





Christian Post 7 March, 2016

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has been named "Islamophobe of the Year" by a U.K.-based Islamic rights group.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission announced the Manhattan real estate mogul as its so-called "Islamophobe of the Year" at its annual satirical "Islamophobia Awards" gala dinner that was held on Saturday, according to a statement issued by the organisation.

The billionaire GOP frontrunner took home the organisation's top award after he issued a call last December for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States."

Newsweek March 22, 2016

A U.K.-based lobby group has petitioned the International Criminal Court (ICC) to

investigate clashes between the Nigerian military and a Shiite movement in which hundreds were killed.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission made a submission to the court prosecutor on Monday, citing evidence from eyewitnesses, that the actions of the Nigerian military during clashes with the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) in December 2015 amounted to crimes against humanity.

The Guardian, March 22, 2016

The Islamic Human Rights Commission issued safety advice to Muslims in Britain. It said women travelling on public transport should avoid "the window seat as you may be 'blocked in' by a potential assailant. Always select the seat next to the aisle so that you can quickly leave if necessary."



# IHRC Media

## IHRCTV

Throughout the year IHRC has organised a variety of events at the local and international level. These events have showcased a number of diverse speakers who have delivered many captivating talks. These include our annual events such as the Islamophobia Conference, the moving Genocide Memorial Day and our most revered event of the year, the Islamophobia Awards, in addition to our countless author evenings and documentary screenings. These events can be found on IHRCTV, our official YouTube channel.

This year saw the completion of two major documentaries that discussed issues that have been ignored by major news channels. "Zaria Massacre" and "Forgotten Genocide", which was positively received by over 100 people who attended the highly acclaimed première.

So far our documentaries have been screened in a number of locations ranging from art venues to universities and we are constantly on the search for other potential venues and organisations to work alongside in order to reach a wider audience with our documentaries.

## Social Media

This year saw the continued growth of IHRC's many social media platforms - Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Soundcloud and Vimeo.

@IHRC on Twitter features alerts to new press releases, campaigns, articles and other forms of news. The Twitter handle @IHRC-Bookshop is especially devoted to the books IHRC sells and the publications it produces.

The IHRC Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Islamic-Human-Rights-Commission-109724959498/>) is great for interaction as users can leave messages of support, suggestions and provide commentary on the latest articles. On Instagram we post photography from all our events and behind the scenes work at the office. All our video content is uploaded to both

Youtube ([www.youtube.com/user/IHRCtv/](http://www.youtube.com/user/IHRCtv/)) and



Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/user2933030>). Events like the Islamophobia Awards and Genocide Memorial day can be seen LIVE wherever you are in the world on [www.IHRC.TV](http://www.IHRC.TV)

On Soundcloud (<https://soundcloud.com/ihrc>) we have uploaded audio of talks and discussions from a number of different individuals like Ramon Grosfoguel and Imam Al-Asi. IHRC also offers its supporters a number of different mailing lists to subscribe to for weekly information. These include alerts list for weekly general updates (<http://eepurl.com/OnJE9>), the IHRC Bookshop list for new titles and discount codes (<http://eepurl.com/WDZE1>) and the Islamophobia list for a carefully curated monthly newsletter (<http://eepurl.com/bWDnML>)

In the future, IHRC supporters can look forward to an overhauled website. Currently we have a vast amount of online content to offer – on the IHRC website there is access to press releases, campaigns, alerts, news media, video footage, images and more. In the coming months we are looking ahead to a more slick and accessible website where it will be so much easier to access content.



- **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/>

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