



# ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

## 2019 - 2020 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 Statement

*Assalamu alaikum  
warahmatullahi  
wa barakatahu*

**My dear Friends,  
Campaigners and Supporters,**

Yet again we have had another very challenging year. The work of standing for justice and campaigning for ever-increasing discrimination in this environment of hate, which primarily targets Muslims and others who stand for a fairer and just society both at home and abroad, is becoming an ever-increasing challenge.

As we have all witnessed, the rise of Islamophobia and the environment of hate being fuelled by media and politicians in the West, resulting in attacks on Muslims and mosques from New Zealand to Scandinavia and beyond is a testimony of the lack of political will to address the legitimate needs and aspirations of law-abiding Muslims in the West who want nothing but to be recognised as equal citizens. Muslims and people of other faiths are extremely thankful that last year we managed to practically see the end of Daesh. We know this would not have happened without the sacrifice of many in

the locality who have risen to challenge this abomination which killed and targeted more Muslims than anyone else.

However, we have seen the impact in the rise of super-nationalism and, if I may say, Fascism, hidden beneath super-nationalism. We are also seeing the further exclusion of Muslim voices and the shrinking of civil spaces where Muslims, and others, can challenge those in power. Those in positions of influence are trying to silence those who speak truth to power and are demonising them as either terrorists or anti-Semites.

Internationally, we continue to see the plight of the Rohingya Muslims being unchallenged, even though there is recognition and acknowledgement by the UN and International Criminal Court of their victimhood and of ethnic cleansing and acts of genocide. Yet, there is still no change and justice for them, either in Myanmar or wherever they flee to seek refuge, the main countries being Bangladesh and India.

The Palestinians continue to face injustice and brutality as a result of the illegal occupation of their lands. Even internationally recognised land is being given to their brutal occupiers.

The Kashmiris have lost their special status and India has shown its intention to fully annexing Kashmir in the most brutal way.

In India, we are witnessing the rise of ex-

treme Hindu nationalism under the leadership of the current Modi government which has shown that it is willing to take innocent lives whatever the cost. It shows it has the support of the international community, be it from the USA, Saudi Arabia or the Persian Gulf states. They have the blood of innocent Muslims on their hands.

We are also seeing the plight of Muslims in Xinjiang, China, a situation which highlights quite clearly that the Chinese government is totally confused between extremism and the legitimate aspirations of Muslims.

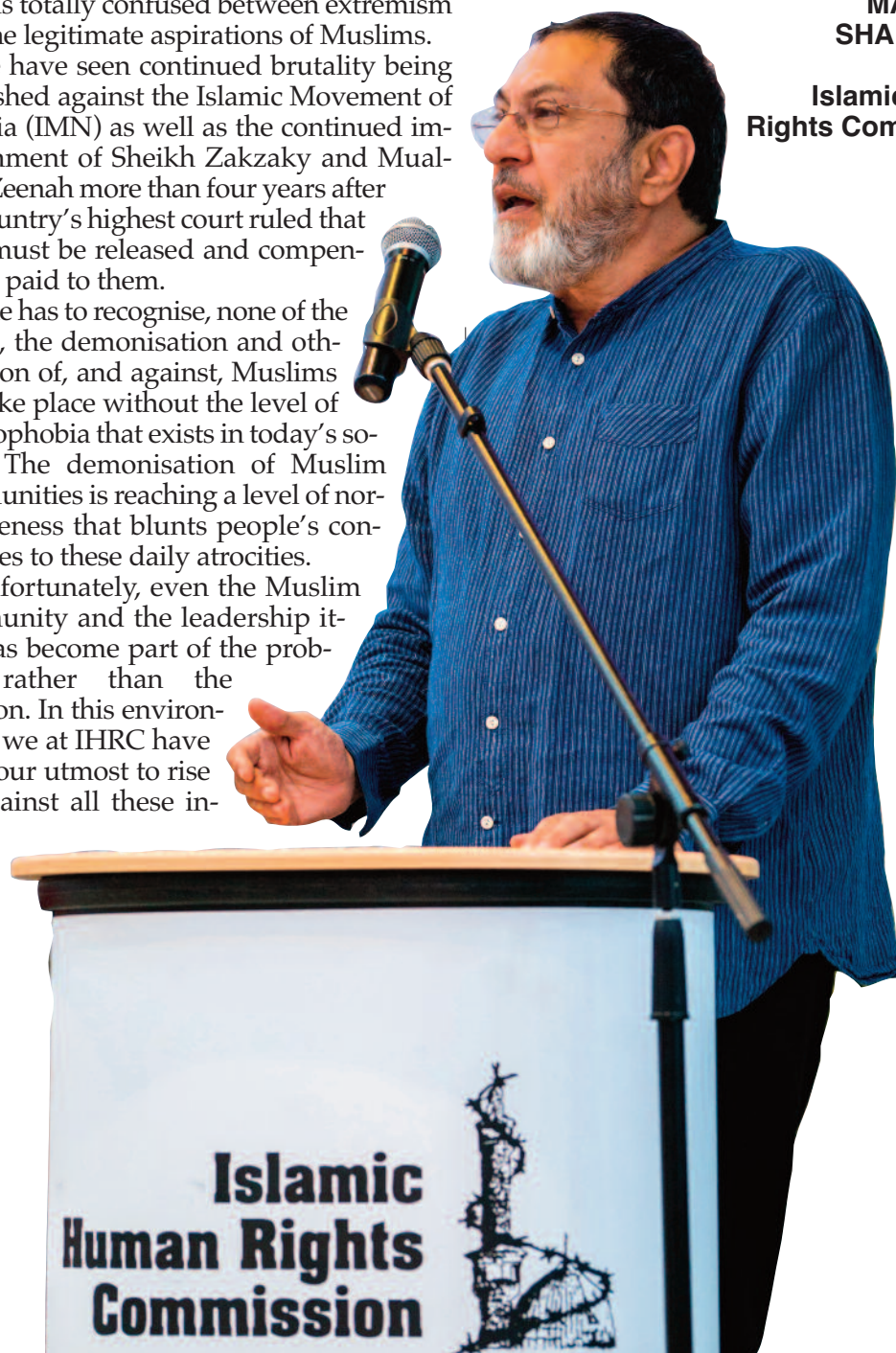
We have seen continued brutality being unleashed against the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) as well as the continued imprisonment of Sheikh Zakzaky and Mualima Zeenah more than four years after the country's highest court ruled that they must be released and compensation paid to them.

One has to recognise, none of the above, the demonisation and otherisation of, and against, Muslims can take place without the level of Islamophobia that exists in today's society. The demonisation of Muslim communities is reaching a level of normativeness that blunts people's consciences to these daily atrocities.

Unfortunately, even the Muslim community and the leadership itself has become part of the problem rather than the solution. In this environment, we at IHRC have done our utmost to rise up against all these in-

justices in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) of standing against injustice, no matter what, and being witnesses against injustice and trying to work towards a future that will have no oppressors and no oppressed. We want justice for all communities. In that task we seek your support. Please become a part of this movement and stand with us in our struggle for justice for all.

**MASSOUD  
SHADJAREH**  
Chair  
Islamic Human  
Rights Commission



# Events and Projects

## Islamophobia Conference, December 2019

The sixth IHRC Islamophobia Conference discussed the different ways the civil society space has shrunk, with a particular focus on the shrinking space for Muslim civil society organisations and how Islamophobia is driving much of this. The event was held concurrently in London and Glasgow and co-organised with Scotland Against Criminalising Communities.

For there to be effective political debate and actual functioning democracy, there needs to be effective and protected spaces to challenge political ideas and functions, and to hold the political class to account. An independent media is one facet of this, and civil society, its institutions, members, leaders and constituencies another. Both are

under extreme stress in across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Speakers at the conference who included Ramon Grosfuguel and Haim Breseeth discussed the impact on Muslim civil society of this stress, not just for Muslims but as an example of the serious deterioration of the current political culture.

## Genocide Memorial Day, January 2020

Our annual project, established in 2010, is a day focused on remembering man's inhumanity to man in the perpetration of genocides and genocidal acts. It takes place on the third Sunday of January each year.

This was the 11th annual GMD to take place since the event's inauguration in 2010. GMD commemorations since then have attracted a variety of speakers, diverse audiences and activists of all political, religious and ethnic backgrounds in highlighting the genocidal acts that are given insufficient exposure by the mainstream media. One of the event's main aims is to draw on the lessons of genocides throughout history so that the younger generation can recognise the signs leading up to them and prevent future atrocities.

For the GMD project, the act of remembrance is not limited by the background of either the victims or the perpetrators of any of the genocides. It aims to raise awareness of genocide in order for new generations to understand the causes and recognise the warning signs of such atrocities.

The aim of GMD is to help develop a culture where the burden of responsibility of the verse, "whoever kills a soul (...) it is as if he had slain mankind entirely" (Quran 5:32) becomes a norm for all humanity to internalise rather than just an ideal for theoretical discussion. The philosophy of this project by the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) rejects the notion that there is a hierarchy of victim depending on their background. By highlighting the people and power structures who have perpetrated genocides or genocidal acts, we want to hold the perpetrators to account within the framework of







GMD, as well as remember the victims of these genocides and genocidal acts. While the idea of this commemoration is firmly rooted in Islamic thinking, this commemoration is an inclusive event which encourages people of all faiths or none from all parts of the world to take part.

This year's UK event took place in London on 19 January 2020. The theme for #GMD2020 was 'Genocide Through Sanctions'. An attentive audience heard how conventional methods of waging genocide have given way in the cases of many countries to less visible but equally destructive boycotts led in the main by the United States.

In Iran, Washington is trying to force regime change by making life unbearable for its 80 million population. People with rare diseases are dying because of sanctions that make the importation life-saving drugs very difficult and make prices unaffordable. Even non-US companies, worried that they may fall foul of the law or be penalised for violating US sanctions, are refusing to sell Iran goods that are not on the sanctions list.

Iran finds itself in a similar position to Iraq under the regime of Saddam Hussein. There a crushing UN Oil for Food pro-

gramme applied in 1995 led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people under the pretext of pressurising Saddam Hussein to demilitarise.

Professor Ramon Grosfoguel highlighted the case of Venezuela where US sanctions are killing tens of thousands each year in Venezuela because of sanctions. The American Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington has calculated that due to the boycott the mortality rate increased 31% from 2017 to 2018. In 2019 the Trump administration extended sanctions to cover Venezuela's subsidised food distribution program which benefits six million households or more than sixty percent of the population. Prof Grosfoguel said: "If you control the calories consumed by a whole population that is something international law recognises as a form of genocide."

Further events were organised through the Decolonial International Network in Brussels, Amsterdam, Geneva and Mexico.

GMD also features an annual Poetry competition for children aged 11-18 which this year was won by Emily Gadd with her poem 'Holocaust'.



## Holocaust

Smoke.

Billowing out of the tower  
the screams of the half dead  
still raging through me.

Bones.

Being dragged out of the hell hole  
by loved ones, friends, comrades  
praying to run away.

Dust.

The only thing that survives  
we long to travel far away with it  
and fly off to Neverland

Now.

We remember the names of the  
dead  
and pray for them each night  
that it shall never happen again.

Emily Gadd

article dated 22 January 2020 headlined “Government pledges to act over teaching material that compares Gaza to the Holocaust”.

Amongst other things the article took issue with our distribution of Genocide teaching materials to educational institutions around the UK via the Times Educational Supplement website, with disapproval centering in particular on the comparison of Israel’s treatment of Palestinians with the Nazi

treatment of Jews during the Holocaust and our treatment of genocide in a wide, inclusive manner.

## Lesson Planning and Resources

IHRC provides a number of resources for use in planning lessons in schools and homework around issues relating to genocide, and genocide prevention. All the sections are periodically updated throughout the year and are available under the Genocide Memorial Day author account on the Times Educational Supplement resources site as well as on our website. The resources are suited to the following subjects: History, English Language and Literature, Sociology, Politics and Government Studies, Religious Studies, Citizenship, Civics and Media Studies.

This year, this aspect of the project came under attack from the pro-Zionist Times in an ar-





## Critical Muslim Studies Summer School, Granada, Spain, June 2019

Our annual week-long summer course took place again in the shadow of the Al-

hambra. Participants once again enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the effects of putting Islam and Muslims within the context of a modern, colonial, capitalist, patriarchal, western-centric and Christian-centric world system from some of the top scholars in decolonial studies such as Salman Sayyid and Hatem Bazian.







## Al-Quds Day

Our annual co-organised Al-Quds Day demonstration took place on the last Sunday of Ramadan, with thousands of people from all over the UK gathering outside the Home Office in London, to commemorate Al Quds Day – a day of solidarity for the oppressed, against aggressive, violent and racist falsifiers and oppressors. Approximately 9,500 fasting and non-fasting families, activists, students, professionals and clerics, of all







ages, walked through London to Whitehall, outside Downing Street with a small crowd of lurking Zionists and fascists.

The Home Office was chosen because Britain has a special responsibility towards the Palestinians – it was the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the continued support of the

Mandate authorities which made the Zionist takeover of Palestine, and the ethnic cleansing of two thirds of Palestinians possible. The current UK government continues to support the oppression of Palestinians, in defiance of the UN Charter and Security Council Resolutions.





# Campaigns

## Free Sheikh Zakzaky

2019 marked the fourth year of the illegal internment of Sheikh Ibrahim el-Zakzaky and his wife Zeenah by the Nigerian authorities. The year saw more important developments with things taking a marked downturn for the pair.

Since their arrests, IHRC has campaigned relentlessly for the Nigerian authorities to free the couple, who in 2019 were charged of culpable homicide for their alleged part in the death of a member of the security forces during a massacre by armed forces of supporters of the Islamic Movement in 2015 in which over 1000 innocent people are believed to have been killed.

The couple have now been detained for over four years despite the federal high court ruling in 2016 that their detention was unlawful and unconstitutional and ordering the Nigerian government to release them by January 16, 2017 and pay compensation. That ruling was never enforced with the state authorities in Kaduna deciding instead to prosecute the pair in 2018.

IHRC and other human rights groups have always maintained that the charges are politically motivated, part of a continuing

campaign to persecute Sheikh Zakzaky and also deflect official responsibility for the planned and systematic 2015 massacre which is now the subject of a preliminary investigation by the International Criminal Court.

It is scandalous that despite the scale of the massacre and the existence of mass graves in which they were dumped, to date not a single Nigerian official has been held to account.

Instead the Nigerian authorities have conducted a witch hunt against sheikh and his wife, and instead of applying justice the judicial system has been abused to keep them in prison in the hope that the ailing sheikh will die quietly, thus quietly removing the “problematic” figurehead of the Islamic Movement. A trip to India to receive urgently needed medical treatment was cut short after it became clear that the Indian authorities were obstructing that aim.

Later in 2019 the Nigerian authorities transferred the Zakzakys from what was effectively house detention to a federal prison where conditions would impact negatively on the Sheikh’s already frail health. IHRC appealed unsuccessfully to the government to reverse the decision.

In the last year IHRC has written to many







international organisations and the Nigerian government urging them to secure the Zakzakys' release and end the pair's mistreatment immediately in a manner that is consistent with applicable domestic and international human rights laws and standards.

Throughout the year IHRC organised countless sit-ins, demonstrations, letter writing campaigns and other events all around the world to raise awareness of the issue and apply pressure on the relevant authorities to help secure the Zakzakys' freedom.

Apart from the UK, Free Sheikh Zakzaky protests and events were held in Canada, Indonesia, Sweden, Switzerland, India, Turkey, South Africa, Pakistan, Canada and Iran.

## Funding for places of worship

IHRC continued its correspondence with the Home Secretary about the discriminatory levels of security funding for places of worship in the UK

We sought a response to why Sajid Javid thought that allocating £5 million over three years is sufficient for the Muslim community of 3,372,966, the Hindu community of 1,021,449 the Sikh community of 404,891, the Christian community of 33,111,246 (according to the Office for National Statistic) as well as other communities, compared to the £51.7 million allocated over the last four years to the CST for the security of the Jewish community who has a population of 336,965 in the UK (according to the Office of National Statistics).

We made clear that the quantum of funds was paltry and an insult to the Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Hindu communities. If anything, it proves clear discrimination in the allocation of funds as compared to that which is provided for the Jewish places of worship, via the Community Security Trust (CST).

As has repeatedly happened after major incidents, there has clearly been a massive spike in attacks on Muslims in the UK since the attack on the Muslim community in Christchurch, New Zealand. Examples include: five mosques in Birmingham being attacked; in Scotland a mosque was attacked; in Surrey a teen was stabbed in what police believe was a suspected far-right terror attack; a Muslim woman's hijab was ripped off as she waited for her train at a north London station and six teens were arrested after vandalising an Islamic school in Newcastle.

Instead of giving equal protection to all communities, the Home Office has championed policies that have further demonised Muslims. Even where the Home Office has claimed to protect Muslims, it has done so under the the rubric of terrorism. For example the Muslim Contact Units were set up supposedly to help the Community, yet their main focus has been to gather intelligence on Muslims rather than the security of the community and operates on the assumption that Muslims are all terrorists or potential terrorists – a threat to security rather than a community who deserves protection. Narratives



of securitisation undercut various significant policy frameworks of your government and office as outlined in the EU funded project Counter Narratives to Islamophobia.

We reminded Mr Javid that everyone residing in the UK should be entitled to live here safely, without fear of violence and intimidation and urged him to abandon the two-tier security funding, where some communities are protected while others are left to the mercy of violent thugs and terrorists destroying and damaging their mosques, temples and gurdwaras.

## Boycott Israeli Dates

This annual project began in 2010 to raise awareness about conditions for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation and has since been taken up by many Muslim and Palestinian rights organisations.

The focus is on dates because of their symbolic importance to Muslims in the Islamic month of Ramadan, who traditionally eat them at sunset during the holy month to break the daylight fast.

Pro-Palestinian activists say dates account for about 15% of exports from Israel to the EU. Every year Israel expands its share of the global dates market – up 16% in 2011; up 23% in 2012, it surpassed Saudi Arabia to now become the world's 3rd largest exporter of dates (\$ terms) after Tunisia and Iran with an export value of \$151 million in 2014. After the Netherlands and France, the UK is Israel's largest market for dates worth \$23 million in 2014 with nearly 10,000 tons of Israeli dates being exported to the UK. A large proportion of that income comes from Muslims buying dates dur-

ing Ramadan.

Dates grown in the occupied territories are produced in Israeli settlements and although some Palestinians are employed there, they toil in harsh conditions to do work the settlers refuse to do themselves. Picking of the dates is hard work. During the pruning season, workers are dropped on the date palm trees by a hoisting crane at 5am, left perched on palms that soar to heights of 12 metres – the height of a four-storey building, and left there swaying in the wind for up to eight hours without even a toilet break. With no means to come down until the crane returns at the end of the day, the workers cling to the tree with one arm and work with the other to meet their quota. If they fall behind they risk losing their jobs.

Many of the workers are child labourers. The Israelis prefer to employ children – even issuing them official work





permits, as they can climb trees faster, work for less and it's easier to cheat and humiliate them. Out of desperate poverty Palestinian families are forced to take their children out of school and hand them over to the settlers to work for a pittance.

## Prisoner Packs

In line with the Quranic command "And feed with food the needy, the orphan and the prisoner, for love of Him," (76:8) IHRC continued its annual Ramadan campaign.

Muslim prisoners have a difficult time practicing their faith in prison. Not getting access to halal food, lack of prayer facilities, inadequate facilitation of fasting during Ramadan as well as discrimination from other prisoners are just some of the issues faced by Muslim prisoners. This is made worse by the sense of isolation from the Muslim community they feel. As one prisoner described it: "First of all, prison isn't easy as everyone makes it out to be... Once you're behind the door you think everyone's forgotten about you. Your friends, everyone forgets about you until you get out."

For female prisoners there are added hardships: many are estranged from their families, face prolonged separation from children and the prospects of returning to a community that may judge them.

In 2019 we supported our fellow Muslims in prison with a Ramadan starter pack, provided with funds raised by the general Muslim public. Each pack contained items to help prisoners make the most of Ramadan:

- 1x Quran
- 1x The Prophet's Ramadhan: How the Prophet Observed the Month of Ramadan
- 1x Knowing The Quran
- 1x Prayer beads
- 1x Perfume Jamid (perfume blocks) used to fragrance the room
- 1x headscarf (for females)



## Repression of China's Uighurs

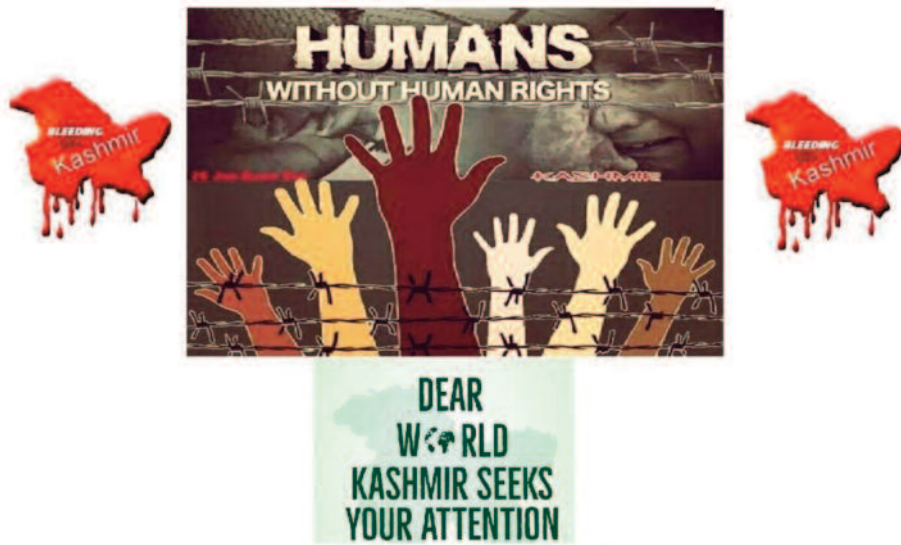
With increasing evidence emerging from China about the mass persecution of the Uighur community from Xinjiang province, IHRC initiated a letter writing campaign directed at leaders of Muslim countries, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the African Union, urging them to apply pressure on the Chinese government.

There has been a long history of mistreatment and persecution of the Uighurs, including the eradication of culture and heritage, religious persecution, mass transfers of populations in and out of Xinjiang and political suppression. This has intensified in the last two years with the mass round-up of Uighurs and their internment in so-called re-education camps to erase their sense of cultural and religious identity.

IHRC also arranged for researchers to assess the veracity of the reports of persecution and they will be publishing their findings soon.

We set up a resource page on our website dedicated to the issue.

**Join us to Demonstrate against Human Rights Violation In Indian Occupied Kashmir.**  
**On 6th Oct 2019 Start March Towards Guildhall Cambridge**  
**10:30am to 12:30pm (ends).**



## **Kashmir special status revocation**

Our ongoing campaign continued and was energised by the decision of the Indian government in August to revoke the special status of the occupied region.

IHRC considers the move to be a further expression of Hindutva nationalism and a sop to its proponents who have inexorably dragged the country down the path of religious exclusivism since the rise to power of the BJP.

The BJP has long advocated the abrogation of the autonomy Kashmir was granted in exchange for joining the Indian union after independence in 1947, a decision that was itself opposed by most of those living in the Muslim majority region and conflict over which has led to several wars between India and Pakistan.

Given the record of the BJP in favouring Hindus and discriminating against India's religious minorities there is every reason to fear that the decision will mark the first step in trying to alter the region's demographic balance by settling Hindus in the region.

The BJP has made no secret of its desire to settle scores of Hindus in the Kashmir Valley to reduce its 97% Muslim majority. Critics condemned earlier proposals which involved building heavily fortified colonies for Hindus resembling Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.

IHRC called on the international com-

munity to demand India withdraw both its latest surge of troops and reduce its pre-existing military presence in Kashmir.

We maintain a dedicated Kashmir resources page on our website.

## **Rohingya crisis**

With no end in sight to the continuing persecution of the Myanmar Rohingyas IHRC continued its campaign to pressure the international community to effect their return to Myanmar.

The persecution of Rohingyas has been ongoing for decades, however recently, since October 2016, there has been a large escalation of attacks. While it is still continuing in parts of Myanmar, some of the worst humanitarian catastrophes have already occurred. It is estimated that more than 20,000 people have been killed, with thousands of Rohingya internally displaced, accompanied by rapes, looting, torture and beatings.

According to the OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), as of March 2019, over 909,000 Rohingya refugees have gathered in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, which is now home to the world's largest refugee camp. There they remain, refusing early repatriation for fear for their lives. IHRC conducted a field visit to Cox's Bazaar and their accounts chime with evidence collected by other human rights organisations which detail widespread and unlawful killings as well as rape carried out by the Myanmar security





forces, at times with the support of vigilante mobs in their execution of a scorched-earth campaign.

In 2019, several separate international judicial actions were undertaken against Myanmar. The charges are the same in each:

**there is overwhelming evidence that the government itself contributed to the planning and the execution of the genocide**

genocide and other human rights abuses committed against the Rohingya minority in that country.

As expected, the Myanmar government has not accepted any of these proceedings and says that its own agencies will investigate any crime. However, no internal investigation has taken place since the crackdown on the Rohingya began three years ago and moreover there is overwhelming evidence that the government itself contributed to the planning and the execution of the genocide.

IHRC requested campaigners to write to the international community urging them to demand the Myanmar and Bangladesh governments cease harassment of refugees and internally displaced Rohingya.

## Guantanamo detention facility

IHRC continued to campaign for the release of the remaining detainees at the notorious detention centre.

11 January marked the anniversary of the confinement of the first detainees at the notorious Guantanamo Bay detention facility in the US. The internment camp was established by President George W. Bush shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States as part of his country's "War on Terror". Since then Guantanamo has become a byword for torture, rendition and indefinite detention without charge or trial. Guantanamo once held more than 650 Muslim men; today, some 40 still remain, nicknamed "forever prisoners". Nine detainees have died at Guantanamo, including seven from apparent suicide. Despite a pledge by President Obama to close the facility it remains open. In January 2018 President Trump signed an executive order to keep the camp open indefinitely.

Guantanamo is often understood by both its supporters and detractors as something that impacts a discrete group of men from a certain background. IHRC and many analysts contend that on the contrary, Guantanamo symbolises deep structural issues about the modern world, how it works, and what potential futures for oppressed and marginalised people can be.

In short Guantanamo is an overt symbol of the racisms that underpin the world order in the current moment. Understanding that is essential for all campaigners for justice.



# IHRC at the United Nations

**I**HRC is recognised globally as an experienced and highly respected human rights organisation. For many years 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. IHRC continued its work in the United Nations with reports and oral statements highlighting human rights abuses in various countries.

## ICCPR submissions

### Nigeria

Since at least 2014 the authorities in Nigeria have prosecuted a systematic and violent campaign to suppress the Islamic Movement of Nigeria. The campaign has taken the form of extra-judicial killings, arrests, intimidation (including torture), abuse of domestic law, destruction of the organisation's property, and restrictions on lawful activities.

The persecution of the movement has been characterised by massive state repression of its activities. Moreover, none of the officials responsible for committing serious human rights abuses have been held accountable for their actions. This report, prepared in May for the periodic review of Nigeria's implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), provides a detailed but non-exhaustive summary of state breaches of the ICCPR in respect of the ongoing crackdown on the Islamic Movement of Nigeria dating from 2014.

### UK

The last four years have seen a marked deterioration in racial/religious equality in Britain. A lurch to the right has been accompanied by the mainstreaming of discriminatory policy and racist discourse, particularly against Muslims. It has created an Environment of Hate in which prejudice and discrimination not only thrive but have become institutionalised and normalised. Our sub-



mission to the Committee on Civil and Political Rights falls into two parts, both of them based on recent IHRC research in this area. The first charts the extent of discrimination, explaining it as the product of a social and political environment created by actors. The second looks at the increase in denial of public space to Muslim Civil Society Organisations as a manifestation and a cause of discrimination against the community.

## Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States every 4-5 years. The UPR is a state driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations.

In March 2020, we presented two oral statements for the Universal Periodic Reviews for Iran and the UK. The submission on Iran focussed on the impact of continuing US sanctions on the country's ability to combat the Covid-19 outbreak, while the UK submission homed in on the shrinking political space for Muslim civil society organisations to operate in the state.

# Publications

**I**HRC published a range of books and reports over the course of the year

Saied Reza Ameli and Mohsen Ahoeei look at the devastating effects of sanctions, used not for the promotion of human rights but a tool of war.

The purpose of 'Subverting Sanctions: How Human Rights and International Law have been Violated' is to demonstrate the human rights dimensions of sanctions in the sample countries and to argue a legal framework necessary to bring a lawsuit against the US on the basis of flagrant violation of human rights. Mass human rights violations resulting from the past sanctions includes denial of access to health and medical services for sanctions.

**The New Colonialism: the American Model of Human Rights** /eds. Arzu Merali and Faisal Bodi

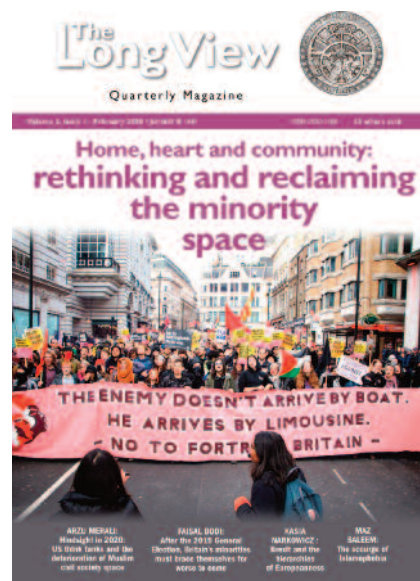
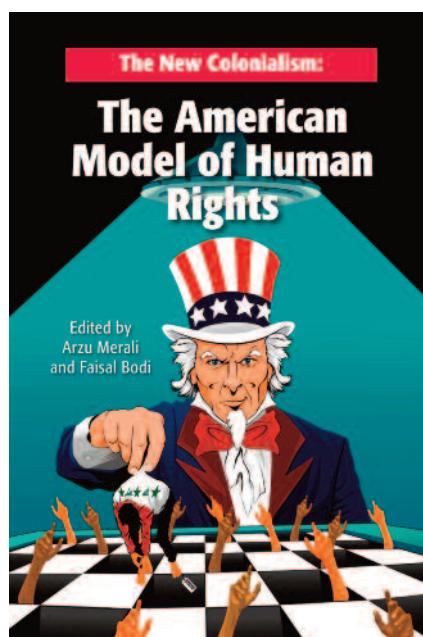
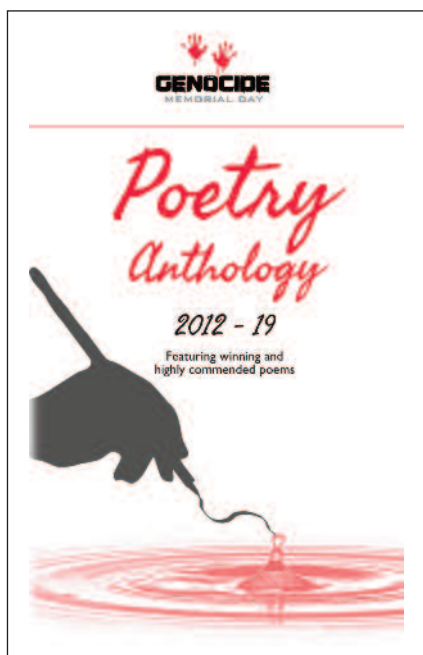
Based on IHRC's conference of the same name, this book presents nine contributions from scholar-activists looking at how human rights as theory and practice have been co-opted by the US as part of brutal, racist and colonial foreign and domestic policies.

Topics under discussion include elucidations of the theaters and praxis of the new colonialism: third colonialism in cyberspace; the US media, Islamophobic representation and the violation of civil and political rights; the export of the Guantanamo regime from US praxis to refugee detention in Australia; the cross-fertilization of counter-insurgency praxis from France (in the Algerian war of independence) to the US and then beyond.

There is also detailed discussion about the underlying presumption that US praxes are







simply exercises in hypocrisy. Chapters discuss the Kerner Commission's findings and set them within the foundational story of the US as one in which racism and the consequent violation of rights en masse are deeply embedded in the legal and political system of the country. The idea of the US as an aspirational state founded on a land 'discovered' is exposed as an obfuscation of the genocidal project that not only preceded its foundation, but was central to the imaginary of the US as a state. There is also a deep and nuanced critique of the Enlightenment ideas that the US is often presented as embodying – at least in theory.

With papers from Saied R. Ameli, Laurens de Rooij, Mary K. Ryan, Saeed A. Khan, Tasneem Chopra, Sandew Hira, Ramon Grosfoguel, Rajeesh Kumar and Sohail Daulatzai.

## Genocide Memorial Day Anthology 2012-2019

This anthology brings together all the entries from winners, runners-up and those highly commended from the Genocide Memorial Day poetry competition in one volume. Since its establishment in 2010 by IHRC, GMD events have taken place across the world, established by different organisations working on their own or as part of both the Universal Justice Network (UJN) and the Decolonial International Network (DIN). Events have taken place in London,

Jerusalem, The Hague, Paris, Brussels, Kuala Lumpur and many other places.

In the UK, running alongside the event itself and the website which provides resources for schools, teachers and activists on the various themes, has been the poetry competition for young people.

## Political Islamophobia at American Policy Institutes: Battling the Power of Islamic Resistance

by Hakimeh Saghaye-Biria

Overviewing these three think tanks' obsession with Islam and Muslims since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Saghaye-Biria discusses the implications for Muslim societies of the direction of travel proposed.

## The Long View

Our quarterly magazine went from strength to strength drawing in esteemed academics and activists. Inaugurated in 2019, The Long View contains essays commissioned to look forward and in depth at important issues. The Long View attempts to provide a space for thinkers to analyse in the long term and (kick)start or continue conversations on the same.

# Legal and Advocacy

**S**ince 1997 IHRC has been at the forefront of tackling anti-Muslim discrimination and prejudice. From the very outset of our operations we have helped many people. Over the years we have expanded the support we provide. IHRC Legal helps people with employment, discrimination and immigration matters. We advise on the full range of immigration applications to the Home Office and also any matters relating to discrimination. IHRC Legal is regulated by the UK government regulator, Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) at Level 3.

The IHRC Advocacy team supports people who have been the victims of racial or religious discrimination. We support people to identify relevant issues / who to complain to, draft the complaint itself, and give representation, where this is necessary.

This being the fifth year of operations, it has seen a caseload of mainly UK immigration law work with excellent outcomes. The overwhelming majority of our cases resulted in positive outcomes for our clients. In the 12 months from October 2018 out of 122 active cases 70 have been successful; 41 remain work in progress; 1 case did not proceed for lack of instructions, 4 were withdrawn, and only 4 have been unsuccessful, 3 of which are being challenged by way of an appeal and in the 4th matter, the client will be reapplying very soon.

To date, IHRC Legal has helped 141 individuals (adults and children) who did not have status in the UK, obtain permission to remain in the UK.

IHRC Legal has helped 27 destitute individuals (adults and children) who had leave to remain in the UK, but did not have permission to access public funds/benefits, remove the aforementioned restriction from their leave to remain.

To date, IHRC Legal has waived £184,097 (out of a possible total of £205,508) in Home Office and Immigration Health Surcharge fees on behalf of clients through the fee waiver application process. That represents a success rate of 89%.

Our main priority at IHRC Legal is getting more cases - we are not looking for

funds from the public. We are looking to take on more employment and also immigration cases. The more paying customers we get, the more we can reinvest into IHRC (including IHRC Legal). This is not a directly publicly funded service, nor is it a profit making endeavour, as all funds go back into the organisation. Our focus is more on getting more people to come and use our services.

If you're suffering discrimination, unfair treatment or harassment at work, we're here to support you and help you to seek justice. You may also be entitled to financial compensation.



Contact us for affordable expert legal advice and assistance. For more information, including other funding options, or to speak to our team please contact us.

**IHRC**  
Legal



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Open Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm

# Gallery and Bookshop

**T**he last twelve months have probably been the busiest since the gallery and bookshop opened. They continue to serve as a venue for exhibitions, films, author evenings and children's storytelling.

## April 2019

### **Author Evening with Dr Sadek Hamid and Prof Tahir Abbas: Political Muslims**

The aftermath of the events of 9/11 heightened media, academic and public interest in Islam and Muslims around the world and often focused on the increasing population of young Muslims and generating anxieties about religious radicalism, Islamism and conflicts in multicultural societies. Few studies, however, have been explored how a new generation of Muslims are reshaping their societies in positive ways. In their edited international comparative volume 'Political Muslims', Tahir Abbas and Sadek Hamid offer cutting edge perspectives on Muslim youth, presenting them as agents of creative social transformation and as active participants in cultural and community organizations that practice resistance and to negotiate change by offering a series of case studies that cross the globe, contributors capture the experiences of being young and Muslim in ten countries—the United States, Canada, Britain, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir.

## June 2019

### **Author evening with Dr Irene Zempi: The Routledge International Handbook of Islamophobia**

Islamophobic hate crimes have increased significantly following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7. More recently, the rhetoric sur-

rounding Trump's election and presidency, Brexit, the rise of far-right groups and ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks worldwide have promoted a climate where Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments have become 'legitimised'.

The Routledge International Handbook of Islamophobia provides a comprehensive single-volume collection of key readings in Islamophobia. Consisting of 32 chapters accessibly written by scholars, policy makers and practitioners, it seeks to examine the nature, extent, implications of, and responses to Islamophobic hate crime both nationally and internationally.

### **Author evening with Seyfeddin Kara: In Search of Ali ibn Abi Talib's Codex**

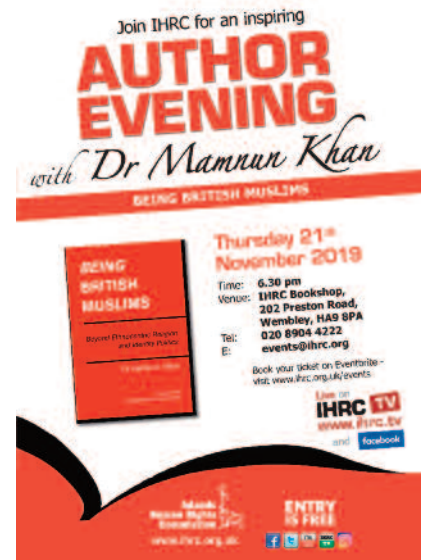
The history of the text of the Qur'an has been a longstanding subject of interest within the field of Islamic Studies, but the debate has so far been focused on the Sunni traditions about the codices of Caliphs Abu Bakr and 'Uthman b. 'Affan. Little to no attention has been given to the traditions on 'Ali b. Abi Talib's collection of the Qur'an. This book examines both Shi'i and Sunni traditions on the issue, aiming to date them back to the earliest possible date and, if possible, verify their authenticity. To achieve this, the traditions are examined using Harald Motzki's isnad-cum-matn method, which is recognised as an efficient tool in dating the early Islamic traditions and involves analysis of both matn (text) and isnad (chain of transmission) with an emphasis on finding a correlation between the two.

## July 2019

### **Children's Book Launch with Mariam Hakim: An Ocean in One Drop**

IHRC was delighted to host an exclusive children's book launch with author Mariam Hakim for her first book 'An Ocean in One





Drop'.

An Ocean in One Drop is a children's picture book retelling the ancient tale of Hajar's desert struggle to find water for her infant son. This story is revered by Muslims worldwide and is honoured within the Hajj pilgrimage. The book promotes the power of women's narratives and is retold by Jamila's grandmother, who has returned from Hajj with some wondrous Zamzam water that connects to this traditional tale.

The event was such a success that Mariam Hakim was welcomed back in February 2020 for another reading.

### Author evening with Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan, Waithera Sebatindira and Lola Olufemi: A FLY Girl's Guide To University

A FLY Girl's Guide to University is a collection of memoirs, essays, poetry and prose from four women of colour who studied at the University of Cambridge. It is a multi-faceted calling out of the wrongness underpinning their shared experience at Cambridge, and the experiences of others in similar institutions throughout the UK. But they describe it best: 'The purpose of our book is simple: we believe that our lives, our experiences, and our voices matter, especially in a place of power, pervasive whiteness and exclusivity. Our voices not only deserve to be heard but must be because the 'Cambridge experience' of a middle-class, white, cisgendered, able-bodied man is not the only one. Ours cannot be silenced.

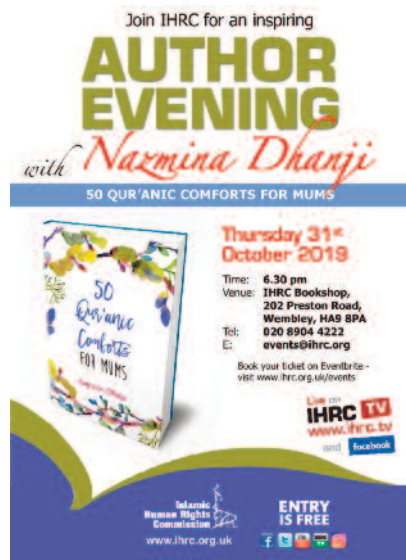
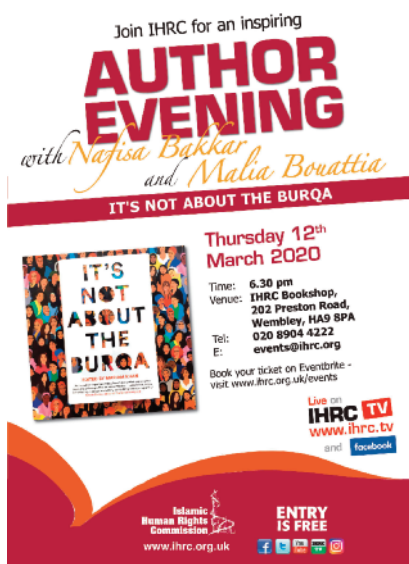
## August 2019

### Children's Book Launch with author S.N. Janali: The House Of Ibn Kathir - Year Captain

It's Yusif's second year at the Dar Al Ilm Academy for Boys, and his new role as Year Captain is proving to be a lot harder than he had ever anticipated. As trouble brews in the School Council, and the Headmaster's 'mystery plans' unfold, the pressures of being a leader mount up. Yusif begins to wonder if he is really cut out for the job. But with help from Reda, Warsoma, Daud and the other boys from the House of Ibn Kathir, will he be able to step up to the mark?

### Author Evening with Katy Sian: Navigating Institutional Racism in British Universities

Navigating Institutional Racism in British Universities critically examines the experiences of racism encountered by academics of colour working within British universities. Situated within a critical race theory and postcolonial feminist framework, the book centres the voices of the interviewed academics, and draws upon personal experiences and reflections through a critical auto-ethnography. It unpacks a range of complex and challenging questions, and engages with the way in which racial politics in



the academy interplay and intersect with gender. The book presents a textured narrative around the various barriers facing academics of colour, and enhances understandings of experiences around institutional racism in British universities.

## What's happening to the Uighurs?

Reports coming out of China have increased concerns regarding the situation of the Uighur community from Xinjiang province in the north-west. There has been a long history of mistreatment and persecution of the Uighurs, including the eradication of culture and heritage, religious persecution, mass transfers of populations in and out of Xinjiang and political suppression.

Arzu Merali, Head of Research at Islamic Human Rights Commission and Abed Choudhury, Head of Legal and Advocacy, were joined by Uighur activist Enver Tohti Bughda for a public discussion of the issue.

## September 2019

### Author Evening with Sarah Marusek: Faith and Resistance

What kind of decolonial possibilities exist in today's world? Exploring the rise of Islamic activism in Lebanon and the Middle East, and drawing transnational parallels with other revolutionary religious struggles

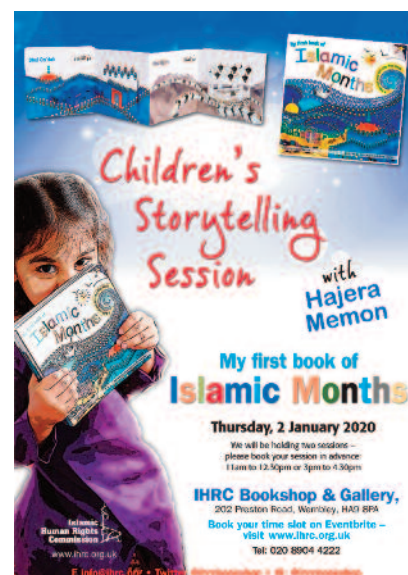
in Latin America and South Africa, Sarah Marusek offers a timely analysis of the social and political evolution of Islamic movements. The growing popularity of Islamic movements means that many groups, which emerged in opposition to Western imperialism, are now also gaining increasing economic and political power. Based on more than two and a half years of ethnographic fieldwork in Lebanon, Marusek paints a picture of how resistance is lived and reproduced in daily lives, tracing the evolution of the ideas and practices of the charities affiliated with Hizbullah and the wider Islamic resistance movement. Adopting a dialectical approach, Faith and Resistance discusses the possibility for resistance groups to reconcile acquiring power with their decolonial aspirations. In doing so, the book acts as a guide for liberation struggles and those engaged in resistance the world over.

## October 2019

### Film Screening and Q&A: The Uprising by Pravini Baboeram

This documentary zooms in on collective challenges of communities of colour. In 9 self-written songs Pravini connects the fight against Blackface, the struggle for the recognition of colonial crimes that the Netherlands has committed in Indonesia, the fight for the liberation of Palestine and the struggle in the political field for an inclusive society. "The Uprising" offers a unique view of the resist-





ance against racism in Europe through the eyes of people of colour.

More screenings took place later in the year in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

## Author evening with Imam Dawud Walid: Towards Sacred Activism

IHRC was honoured to host Dawud Walid, currently the Executive Director of the Michigan chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MI) and a Senior Fellow at Auburn Seminary based in New York. Towards Sacred Activism is an attempt at providing concise, general guidance to Muslims in the West regarding engagement in social justice activism from an Islamic perspective.

## Author Evening with Nazmina Dhanji: 50 Qur'anic Comforts for Mums

This book draws on the comforting words of the Creator in the Qur'an and offers a way to focus your heart and mind to what the day brings. 50 Qur'anic Comforts is tailored precisely for busy parents who often have no time to read the paper or their Twitter feeds, let alone a whole book! It is for them to keep by their bedside to dip into for daily inspiration and support, offering a different perspective or just some food for thought when its needed the most.

## Author Evening with Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan: Postcolonial Banter

Postcolonial Banter is Suhaiymah's debut collection. It features some of her most well-known and widely performed poems as well as some never-seen-before material. Her words are a disruption of comfort, a call to action, a redistribution of knowledge and an outpouring of dissent.

Whilst enraged and devastated by the world she finds herself in, in many ways that world is also the normalized and everyday reality of her life. Hence, whilst political and complex in nature, her poetry is also just the reality of life for her and others like her. Life in a world where structural violence is rife makes it a shared knowledge, and sometimes, when possible, that shared knowledge is the subversive in-joke, the bonding glance of solidarity, or the passing nod of affection used by those who know it to survive those structures themselves.

## November 2019

## Author evening with Dr Mamnun Khan: Being British Muslims

This highly thought-provoking book, packed with incisive observations and analyses on a wide range of issues facing British Muslims, offers concise yet extensive com-



mentary on the cultural and intellectual contentions in contextualising Islam in the UK.

As of 2018, roughly 50% of the UK's Muslim population was born in the UK. With this shift comes, on one hand, the loss of "old-ways" of experiencing the world and navigating one's place within it, and on the other hand it comes with the excitement and opportunity to make "new culture." The questions now facing British Muslims are: "From where can British Muslims get their inspiration?" and "What should be the nature of this new culture?" These questions are becoming ever more important as the UK's Muslim population is expected to grow from 5% to 10% by 2050. Thus, the author's clearly presented analysis provides critical and constructive insights for readers wanting to understand how to make faith more meaningful and relevant, going from a largely immigrant ethnocentric religion and identity politics to one formed on intelligent and confident theocentric understanding.

**December 2019**

## **Decolonising Ecology**

This talk by Professor Ramón Grosfoguel, a leading decolonial scholar, and Sandew Hira, the co-director of the Decolonial International Network, was organised to discuss how issues of decoloniality need to be considered in conversations and activism around climate change.

## **Reaching For The Stars – A Youth Empowerment Workshop**

Many pre-teens and teenagers go through the dilemma of not knowing what to do or how to reach their full potential. Tiny Mu'mins laid on this empowerment workshop at IHRC to unmask tools to equip the youth to identify and achieve their true po-





tential. Tiny Mu'mins empowerment workshops aim to help children and young people understand how they learn, how the brain works to significantly increase perseverance in learning.

## January 2020

### Children's Storytelling Session with Hajera Memon: My First Book of Islamic Months

This was a fun-filled day of storytelling and activities for children by Hajera Memon promoting her latest book, My First Book of Islamic Months.

### Book Launch with Saeed A. Khan & Arzu Merali: The New Colonialism – The American Model of Human Rights

IHRC held the conference The New Colonialism: The American Model of Human Rights in February 2018 to unmask the systemic problems that undergird US Excep-

tionalism, with a focus on the Americanisation of Human Rights as tool of US led foreign policy rather than a transformative discourse that seeks to liberate individuals, groups and indeed large sections of society who are oppressed by unjust systems.

This book presents nine contributions from scholar-activists looking at how human rights as theory and practice have been co-opted by the US as part of brutal, racist and colonial foreign and domestic policies.

## February 2020

### Children's storytelling session

IHRC was delighted to welcome back author Mariam Hakim for a children's storytelling session for her book, An Ocean in One Drop.

Jamila's grandmother has returned from Hajj with some wondrous Zamzam water. Join Jamila on a storytelling adventure as she learns about this water and how it connects to Hajar – the woman at the heart of Hajj. An Ocean in One Drop is a children's picture book retelling the ancient Islamic tale of



Hajar's desert struggle to find water for her infant son.

### **Film Screening: The Battle of Algiers**

IHRC screened this seminal movie to tie in with the publication of *The New Colonialism: The American Model of Human Rights* eds. Faisal Bodi and Arzu Merali. So-hail Daulatzai's chapter on the movie, 'The Past as Prologue' looks at how this tale of resistance that inspired generations has been instrumentalised by the US and other forces as a celebration of colonial practice to be mirrored in the war on terror.

## **March 2020**

### **'We Choose Extraordinary' and 'With Kindness, With Kindness: Singing Towards Care for Allah's Creatures' with Elizabeth Lymer**

In this children's double-bill Elizabeth Lymer dropped in for a session of singing and lullabies based on her book 'With Kindness, With Kindness: Singing Towards Care for Allah's Creatures' and to talk about her work-in-progress book, "We Choose Extraordinary".

### **Children's Storytelling Session with Na'ima B. Robert: My Du'a For You**

In this lyrical book about du'a by award-winning children's author, Na'ima B. Robert, a parent shares her vision for her child. From strong faith to good deeds, from kindness to creativity, each du'a is from the heart and designed to resonate with parents everywhere as well as inspire and comfort their children.

### **Author evening with Nafisa Bakkar : It's Not About the Burqa**

*It's Not About the Burqa* started life when one of the contributors, Mariam Khan, read about the conversation in which David Cameron linked the radicalization of Muslim men to the 'traditional submissiveness' of Muslim women. Mariam felt pretty sure she didn't know a single Muslim woman who would describe herself that way. Why was she hearing about Muslim women from people who were demonstrably neither Muslim nor female?

Taking one of the most politicized and misused words associated with Muslim women and Islamophobia, *It's Not About the Burqa* has something to say: twenty Muslim women speaking up for themselves. There are essays about the hijab and wavering faith, about love and divorce, about queer identity, about sex, about the twin threats of a disapproving community and a racist country, and about how Islam and feminism go hand in hand. Funny, warm, sometimes sad, and often angry, each of these essays is a passionate declaration, and each essay is calling time on the oppression, the lazy stereotyping, the misogyny and the Islamophobia.

### **Children's singalong and author event with Elizabeth Lymer**

Elizabeth Lymer joined us to read her work-in-progress book "We Choose Extraordinary", which encourages children to learn how you can use their imagination to make this choice. Children brought along their favourite toy animals to sing from a new collection of songs Elizabeth designed to inspire proper care of animals.





# IHRC Productions and Social Media

## Documentaries

We are currently finalising our TV series 'How Did We End Up Here?' looking at the background to key current crises, including the persecution of the Rohingya, Brexit, the Grenfell Tower fire, the incarceration of Sheikh El-Zakzaky and many more issues. Our documentary filmed in Bosnia with additional education material will be ready soon.

## Podcasts

IHRC's podcasts have gained a loyal and steady following. They can be found on our website under the Multimedia section, as

well as on Soundcloud and iTunes.

Most new podcasts focus on the Genocide Memorial Day project, but many archived events are being added.

## Video, Film and social media.

Almost all IHRC events are recorded and added to our Youtube (IHRCTv), Facebook and Vimeo (IHRCTv) pages for posterity, alongside our weekly video messages. Our previous documentaries can also be found on our Youtube and Vimeo channels. IHRC continues to live broadcast most of our events on [www.ihrc.tv](http://www.ihrc.tv). Our Instagram, Twitter and Facebook channels are going from strength to strength. Our Flickr account has been updated with more archive material.



# IHRC in the Media

A significant part of our work involves disseminating our output to as wide an audience as possible and to that extent IHRC representatives routinely take part in interviews for news, radio and TV discussion programmes. Articles written by our staff are published in newspapers and journals. Below are some of the highlights.

1 January 2020

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/01/07/in-killing-soleimani-trump-s-only-success-is-the-uniting-of-a-once-divided-iran-view>

This article written by IHRC chair Massoud Shadjareh argues that the extrajudicial killing of Iranian official Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi Al-Mohandis by US forces will set back Western-Iranian relations by decades, with repercussions not only across the region but across the world.

7 December 2019

<https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/the-toxic-islamic-human-rights-com->

[mission-is-pushing-poisonous-nonsense-about-jews-1.473670](#)

In a bid to undermine IHRC's Islamophobia conference, 'Islamophobia and Silencing Criticism of Israel', the Jewish Chronicle commissioned establishment mouthpiece Fiyaz Mughal to say that we are pushing 'toxic narratives' about Jews.

8 January 2020

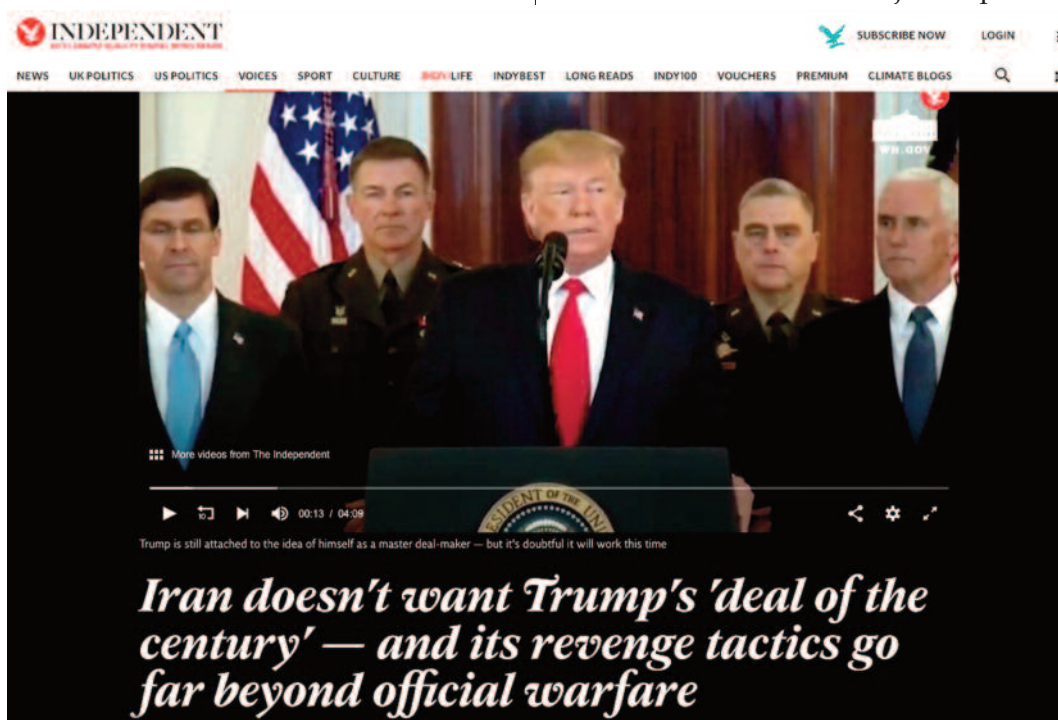
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/iran-trump-speech-revenge-soleimani-nuclear-deal-a9276066.html>

In this piece of the Independent, IHRC media officer Faisal Bodi says that the assassination of Qassem Soleimani represents an escalation of the longer war that the US has been waging against Iran since the foundation of the Islamic Republic in 1979.

26 November 2019

<https://time.com/5739590/muslim-woman-anti-semite-tube/>

IHRC Chair Massoud Shadjareh opines that



the video of a hijab-wearing Muslim woman confronting an anti-Semite on a London Underground train which went viral in the UK and beyond should prompt many of us to question our assumptions about how Muslim and Jewish communities interact — especially as political tribalism and divisions become more entrenched on both sides of the Atlantic.

10 October 2019

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/iran-propaganda-group-ihrc-gets-1-2m-from-taxpayer-backed-charity-r2lh7jkc9>

Britain's pro-Zionist right-wing press continued its unceasing smear campaign against IHRC, led this year by the Times. In October the newspaper published a raft of articles attacking IHRC as a pro-terrorist organisation. IHRC's response came in the form of an article by Faisal Bodi saying that the attack was symptomatic of an Establishment that seeks to drive dissenting Muslim voices out of the public space.

<https://5pillarsuk.com/2019/10/16/the-times-and-the-targeting-of-dissenting-muslim-voices/>

10 October 2019

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7557865/Jeremy-Corbyn-slammed-backing-pro-Iran-campaign-group.html>

Ahead of the 2019 UK General Election, the pro-Zionist press also used Jeremy Corbyn's association with IHRC as a beating stick, accusing him of rubbing shoulders with an anti-Semitic and anti-British, pro-terrorist group.

26 July 2019

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/its-not-me-its-you-how-uk-government-has-islamised-dissent>

A new paper from the Commission for Countering Extremism associating anti-imperialist views with 'violent extremism' prompted IHRC's head of research Arzu Merali to argue that the government is applying the copybook for Muslims to Britain's left.

Opinion | Islamophobia



## First Muslims, now the left: How the UK government has Islamised dissent

Arzu Merali

26 July 2019 14:18 UTC | Last update: 7 months 3 weeks ago

New paper from the Commission for Countering Extremism associates left-wing views with 'violent extremism'







**Palestine:  
we will never  
give up fighting  
for you**

“

In this environment, we at IHRC have done our utmost to rise up against all these injustices in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) of stand- ing against injustice, no matter what, and being witnesses against injustice and trying to work towards a future that will have no oppressors and no oppressed. We want justice for all communities. In that task we seek your support. Please become a part of this movement and stand with us in our struggle for justice for all.

”

**Massoud Shadjareh**

Chair, Islamic Human Rights Commission



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