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**Support for Jihad continues at former Abu Hamza Mosque**  
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One of the trustees of the North London Central Mosque (aka Finsbury Park Mosque), Mohammed Sawalha, supports jihad in Israel and attacks against her allies. It has been [reported](#) that Mr. Sawalha was a signatory along with Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) deputy director-general, Dr. Daud Abdullah, to a [statement](#) which supports jihad. However, his connections with the North London Central Mosque were not revealed.

The North London Central Mosque was the base of hate-preacher Abu Hamza until 2005, when the Metropolitan Police Muslim Contact Unit [brokered](#) a deal which [handed over](#) the mosque to the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), who were considered by authorities to be a moderate Muslim group. The mosque hand-over was perceived at the time as a success in the government's counter radicalisation strategy.

The MAB has alleged connections to the Muslim Brotherhood, a theocratic Islamist group based in Egypt. The MAB was [founded](#) by Kemal Helbawy, who was at the time the spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood in the west. Al-Qaeda expert Peter Bergen has also [described](#) the MAB as a "Muslim Brotherhood group".

Mr. Sawalha, [described](#) by the BBC's *Panorama* as having "master minded much of Hamas' political and military strategy", is also a former leader of the MAB and is the President of the British Muslim Initiative (BMI), an Islamist pressure group.

The statement signed by Mr. Sawalha in Istanbul supports the jihad currently being undertaken against Israel and claims a victory for Hamas in the recent Operation Cast Lead:

"We affirm that the victory that Allah accomplished by means of our brothers the mujahidin, our defiant and steadfast kinsfolk in Gaza, was indeed achieved through His favor and help - exalted be He! It was also achieved through fulfilling the religious obligation of jihad in His way. This is a confirmation of His statement - sublime is He!"

The statement is also heavily critical of any peace initiatives in the region and claims that the Palestinian Authority has lost its legitimacy because it has given up violent jihad:

"We affirm in full conviction that the Palestinian Authority, whose mandate is coming to an end, is not eligible to represent the Palestinian people. It stands outside the will of its people, and has given up the choice of jihad in the way of Allah Almighty as an effective means in defeating the occupation and the liberation of the Islamic holy places."

"We affirm in full conviction that the so-called Arab peace initiative is a proven betrayal of the Islamic Nation and the Palestinian cause, and a blatant betrayal of the Palestinian people. It aims to criminalise the Resistance [muqawama] against the Zionist occupying entity in perpetuity through its de facto recognition of it..."

The statement also contains a threat to any country currently allied with Israel:

"[It is] The obligation of the Islamic Nation to regard everyone standing with the Zionist entity, whether countries, institutions or individuals, as providing a substantial contribution to the crimes and brutality of this entity; the position towards him is the same as towards this usurping entity."

According to CSC Researcher Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens:

"The statement to which Mr. Sawalha has put his name not only openly supports the civilian-targeting tactics of Hamas, but scoffs at any attempts towards a peaceful settlement. Furthermore, this statement contains clear and open threats to any countries allied with Israel, which includes the UK."

"This certainly contradicts the mosque's claims that it has removed all the extremist elements associated with it during Abu Hamza's reign."

"The fact that a leader of one of the most influential mosques in London considers it a duty for Muslims to undertake a violent jihad should be taken very seriously by the other trustees of the Mosque and local and national officials who are concerned with the radicalisation of young Muslims."

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**The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank**

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