



One in Seven UK Terror-related Convictions Linked to Islamist Group Now Threatening to Relaunch Centre for Social Cohesion Press Briefing: 01 June 2009

As radical organisation al-Muhajiroun says it is going to regroup, the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC) can reveal that one in seven Islamist-related convictions in the last decade have had links with the extremist group.

According to their [website](#), exiled hate preacher Omar Bakri Mohammed's group al-Muhajiroun is planning to relaunch in the UK. Though the statement is clearly intended to attract media attention to this small and unrepresentative group, there is reason to take al-Muhajiroun very seriously. New CSC research shows that 15% of all those convicted in the UK of terrorism-related offences were either members of, or have known links to, the organisation.

In addition, al-Muhajiroun claimed in 2000 to have recruited up to six hundred young British Muslims to fight violent jihad in Kashmir, Chechnya and Afghanistan, amongst others. Following the 9/11 attacks in 2001 the group increased its recruitment drive targeting prominent UK universities and mosques with Bakri calling for followers to 'embrace' martyrdom.

Originally founded in 1996 by Bakri, al-Muhajiroun disbanded in October 2004 before the government banned it. Until now Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jamma'ah (ASWJ), literally 'Adherents to the Sunnah and the Community', was the successor organisation to al-Muhajiroun, after its two previous successor groups, the Saved Sect and al-Ghurabaa, were banned in July 2006 for glorifying terrorism. Al-Muhajiroun is not a proscribed terrorist organisation by the Home Office, and according to Bakri, is "completely legal" and "extremely successful".

Last month the CSC [revealed](#) that leading members of ASWJ – including radical preacher Abu Izzadeen (aka Omar Brooks) and Simon Keeler – had been released from prison early only one year after they were convicted of terrorist fundraising and inciting terrorism overseas. Due to the men's close links to Bakri and Choudary, the CSC warned that the early releases would allow one of the most extreme Islamist organisations yet to be proscribed in the UK to regroup.

Douglas Murray, Director of the Centre for Social Cohesion, says:

"The statistic revealed by the Centre for Social Cohesion demonstrates why there is an urgent need for the Government to finally ban al-Muhajiroun – something that it should have done a long time ago.

"The fact that al-Muhajiroun followers have comprised one in seven Islamist-related convictions should be a wake-up call. The Government needs to realise that when these people say they are prepared to kill in the name of their religion, they mean it."

UK Terror convictions:

People with links to al-Muhajiroun convicted of UK Islamist-related offences since 1999 include:

Amer Mirza; March 1999 - A member of al-Muhajiroun, Mirza was sentenced in March 1999 for petrol-bombing a Territorial Army base in West London in protest of the resumed American bombing campaign in Iraq.

Iftikhar Ali; October 2000 – Convicted for distributing leaflets advertising an al-Muhajiroun event in Whitechapel – which called for a holy war against Jews – with the intention of stirring up racial hatred.

Omar Khyam; April 2007 – Sentenced to life for leading the 'fertiliser bomb' plot, which targeted London nightclubs and other public buildings. He became involved with al-Muhajiroun while studying for his A-levels and was reportedly sent by the group to fight in Kashmir in 2000. Khyam later trained with Lashkar e-Taiba and was in contact with senior members of al-Qaeda.

Waheed Mahmood [aka Abdul Waheed]; April 2007– Sentenced to life for his involvement in the 'fertiliser bomb' plot, where he was seen as the spiritual advisor. He met Omar Khyam in the late 1990s at meetings organised by al-Muhajiroun at local venues and a mosque in Crawley.

Jawad Akbar; April 2007 – Sentenced to life for his involvement in the ‘fertiliser bomb’ plot where he was in possession of bomb-making recipes. Akbar began attending al-Muhajiroun meetings while studying at Brunel University and attended a terrorist training camp in Pakistan in 2003 with Omar Khyam.

Mizanur Rahman; 2006/2007– Convicted in November 2006 for stirring up racial hatred and in July 2007 for inciting murder during the Danish Embassy anti-cartoon protests of Islam’s Prophet Mohammed in London. Rahman was connected to al-Muhajiroun, and set up the internet forum ‘Followers of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama’ah Muntada’, regularly visited by extremists from al-Ghurabaa and the Saved Sect.

Umran Javed; January 2007 – Convicted for soliciting to murder and stirring up racial hatred during the Danish Embassy anti-cartoon protests in London. Formerly a key member of al-Muhajiroun, and was closely connected to its successor groups, al-Ghurabaa and the Saved Sect.

Abdul Muhid; 2007/ 2008 – Convicted in March 2007 for soliciting to murder during the Danish Embassy anti-cartoon protests, and in April 2008 for fundraising for terrorism, after a speech made in Regent’s Park mosque in November 2004. He led the Danish Embassy anti-cartoon protests, was a member of al-Muhajiroun and became a leading member of the Saved Sect.

Abdul Rahman Saleem [aka Abu Yahya]; 2007/2008 – Convicted in February 2007 for inciting racial hatred at the Danish Embassy anti-cartoon protests, and for inciting terrorism abroad in April 2008 after he encouraged others to kill British and US troops abroad. Former spokesman for al-Muhajiroun, he admitted undergoing military training in Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as recruiting Britons to be trained for jihad abroad.

Omar Brooks [aka Abu Izzadeen, aka Trevor Brooks]; April 2008 –Former leader of al-Ghurabaa and Saved Sect and a member of Ahl ul-Sunnah Wa al-Jamma. Convicted for fundraising for terrorist purposes and inciting others to kill British and US troops abroad.

Simon Keeler [aka Sulayman Keeler]; April 2008 – Member of al-Muhajiroun and leader of Ahl ul-Sunnah Wa al-Jamma. Convicted for fundraising for terrorist purposes and inciting others to kill British and US troops abroad.

Shah Jalal Hussain; April 2008 – Convicted for fundraising for terrorist purposes against British and US troops abroad. Former member of al-Muhajiroun, he previously stated that Whitehall and Downing Street are ‘legitimate targets’ for suicide bombings and that he would readily martyr himself if necessary.

Ibrahim Abdullah Hassan [aka Abdul Haq] April 2008– Convicted for inciting others to kill British and American troops abroad. He is known to have associated with al-Muhajiroun and its members.

Habib Ahmed; December 2008 – Convicted for membership of al-Qaeda and possessing documents containing details of al-Qaeda operatives. Police claim Ahmed, who arranged for British citizens to visit terrorist training camps, was a member of al-Muhajiroun.

Ali Beheshti; April 2009 – Former member of al-Muhajiroun, Beheshti was convicted for conspiracy to firebomb the home of Martin Rynja, the publisher planning to release a book on Islam’s Prophet Mohammed’s wife Aisha. Beheshti protested at the Danish cartoon rally in 2006, where he dressed his 20-month old daughter in a ‘I love al-Qaeda’ hat.

British nationals fighting abroad:

British nationals with links to al-Muhajiroun who were killed fighting abroad include:

Aftab Manzoor; October 2001 – Joined al-Muhajiroun, fought on behalf of the Taliban and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and was subsequently killed in Afghanistan.

Afzal Munir; October 2001 – Regularly attended al-Muhajiroun meetings, fought on behalf of the Taliban and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, and was killed in Afghanistan.

Asif Hanif and Omar Sharif; 30 April 2003 – A visitor to al-Muhajiroun’s London offices and associate of Bakri, Hanif carried out a suicide bombing that killed three and wounded 65 at a bar in Tel Aviv, Israel in April 2003. Hanif’s accomplice Sharif, whose failed device failed to detonate, had forged links with Omar Bakri and Abu Hamza following a trip to Syria and attended Bakri’s talks before departing for Israel.

The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank

The Centre for Social Cohesion * Clutha House * 10 Storey's Gate * London * SW1P 3AY

***0207 222 8909 * mail@socialcohesion.co.uk ***