



THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL COHESION

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Welcome to the June email update from The Centre for Social Cohesion. The CSC is the first think-tank in the UK to specialise in studying radicalisation and extremism within Britain. The Centre is an independent, non-partisan think tank.

Press Releases

The Centre for Social Cohesion [revealed](#) through the [Daily Mail](#) that radical preacher Abu Izzadeen was released from prison only one year after he was convicted of terrorism related offences. Commenting on the decision, CSC Director Douglas Murray said:

“The early release of a hate preacher like Abu Izzadeen demonstrates that the British courts are still far away from understanding the very clear and present danger that this country is facing from militant Islamists.”

The story was picked up by a broad spectrum of the media, and was front page of the [Daily Express](#). It was also covered by the *Daily Telegraph's* [newspaper](#) and [blog](#), [Guardian](#), [Evening Standard](#), [London Paper](#), [Press Association](#) and [BBC News](#). The CSC's discovery was reported extensively across the UK's regional press.

The Centre in the Press

Following the discovery that convicted hate preacher Abdullah al-Faisal was producing an online magazine promoting extremist material, Douglas Murray was quoted in the [Sun](#) describing the development as “very worrying”.

In the wake of the statistic revealed by a Gallup poll on Muslim opinion in Europe that two thirds of Brits do not feel that Muslims are loyal to the UK, Murray's comments were the basis for an article in the *Daily Star* and the *Hindustan Times*:

“We can't force people to have positive attitudes to co-habiting or sex before marriage but we can encourage people not to live lives apart. The biggest mistake we've made in this country is to encourage people to live in separate communities. It means that people not only don't feel loyalty but they feel they don't have to feel loyalty.”

Following interviews with staff members, the [Independent](#) used CSC research for an article on the informal money transferring system used in the UK to fund the terrorist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The article focused on LTTE support in the UK following their defeat in Sri Lanka's recent civil war.

In his monthly column for political and cultural magazine [Standpoint](#), Murray analysed the incoherence of Home Office policy on individuals excluded from the UK following their release of a list of those currently banned. Murray was especially critical of Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, saying that:

“Trying to construct a coherent policy from the wreckage of her earlier judgments, Smith recently produced a UK 'least-wanted list.' The 'initiative' proved a typically strenuous attempt to equate the dangerously real problem of Islamist extremists who come to Britain to preach violence with those who have views that are disagreeable and offensive. The only thing the stunt truly did was to draw a blanket of moral equivalence over the carcass of Jacqui Smith's career.”

CSC Researcher Houriya Ahmed authored an article for the *Guardian's* [Comment is Free](#) discussing the ways in which the Taliban in Pakistan have perverted sharia and are abusing human rights. Houriya commented that:

“Muslims in Malakand should be able to choose freely how to follow Islam out of personal conviction, regardless of whether their interpretations conform to majority or minority opinion. They should be allowed to believe that listening to music is not un-Islamic; that women can shop in public without wronging Islam; and that Sikhs should be protected based on common nationality, not religion.”

Houriya is also now a regular contributor to the new political blog [Spittoon](#), a “venue for the views and ideas of a group of writers and activists who oppose religious supremacism and clerical fascism in all its various stripes and denominations”.

Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, a Researcher at the CSC, authored an article for the political blog [Harry's Place](#) discussing how the decision by British parliamentarians to invite Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal to speak at the House of Parliament has provided the terrorist group with a huge morale boost and bestowed upon them ill-deserved legitimacy.

Meleagrou-Hitchens also wrote an article for [Now Lebanon](#) that looked at the British government's attempts to negotiate with the political wing of Hizbullah, and their belief that this wing of the party held a different outlook to the military wing. Meleagrou-Hitchens said that even the group themselves say there is no difference between the political and military wings, calling Britain's actions:

“A symptom of a peculiar pathology that has crept into a number of Western governments since 9/11, where they will insist on providing groups like Hezbollah with excuses that the latter never seem to make.”

CSC Researcher Robin Simcox discussed the forthcoming European elections in the context of the MP expense scandal in his monthly column for the [Henry Jackson Society](#). Simcox said that public anger was:

“A culmination of the anger people feel at being dictated to about what issues they should care about and which ones should be discussed...The two subjects in which this has manifested itself most explicitly are immigration and the European Union – and it should come as no surprise that the fringe groups most likely to benefit in the elections are those that explicitly promise to deal with these issues.”

Gabrielle Nejad – currently a Research intern at the CSC – also wrote an article for the [Henry Jackson Society](#) on public disillusionment in the parliamentary system following the MP expense scandal.

Publications

The latest CSC report *A Degree of Influence: The Funding of Strategically Important Subjects in UK Universities*, the first ever study to analyse the high levels of foreign funding entering British academia, continued to receive interest from the US. The report was once again referred to in [Commentary](#), and Douglas Murray and Robin Simcox, author of the report, contributed an article for the American think tank [Hudson Institute](#) outlining the report's findings. Discussing the fact that the Iranian government were in talks with UK universities to fund Islamic studies centres, Murray and Simcox said:

“If it weren't happening it would be almost impossible to believe that the world's current largest sponsor of terrorism is now actually funding the institutions that the UK government thinks are part of the means of stopping extremism. It appears that UK higher education is open, not so much to the highest, as to the most degraded bidders.”

Media & Public Appearances

Douglas Murray appeared on BBC London News to discuss the recent convictions against the men who attempted to firebomb the house of Martin Rynja, the London publisher who was proposing to release *The Jewel of Medina*. Murray stressed that no religion should be above criticism, including Islam, and attempts to intimidate those who exercise the right to criticise was an intolerable intrusion which should not be accepted in the UK.

Murray also spoke at Capitol Hill, Washington, on a Middle East Forum conference on ‘Libel Lawfare: Silencing Criticism of Radical Islam’. Other speakers included Frank Gaffney, president of the Center for Security Policy, Alan Dershowitz, the Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, and Andrew McCarthy, director of the Center for Law and Counterterrorism at the Foundation For Defense of Democracies.

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