



THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL COHESION

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

The CSC in Parliament

David Cameron, the leader of the Conservative Party, cited the findings of CSC's latest report, *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy*, at [Prime Minister's Questions](#). Cameron asked the Prime Minister why over £113,000 of government money – as revealed by the CSC – had been allocated to the Islamic Shakhsiyah Foundation (ISF), a charity closely linked to extremist group Hizb ut-Tahrir. Cameron devoted four of his allocated six questions to the Prime Minister on the subject, who agreed to look into Cameron's claims.

Cameron's comments – including his error in referring to the money given to ISF as being part of a pathfinder scheme aiming to prevent violent extremism – received widespread coverage. His questioning was covered in the [Financial Times](#), [Guardian](#), [The Times](#), [The Sun](#), [Independent](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Daily Mirror](#), [Evening Standard](#), the front page of the [Daily Express](#), the [Spectator](#) and on [Sky News](#), [BBC News](#) and the [Press Association](#). It was also covered in comment pieces in the [Daily Telegraph](#), [Independent](#) and [The Times](#).

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Communities, Schools and Families, [wrote](#) to Michael Gove MP attempting to refute the CSC's revelations over the funding of ISF. He also wrote a comment piece on this for the [Daily Telegraph](#). David Cameron's defence of his claims was reported by [BBC News](#) and [The Times](#). An article by Andrew Gilligan in the [Daily Telegraph](#) was written in support of the CSC's findings, and criticised Ed Balls' defence of schools linked to Hizb ut-Tahrir. Michael Gove wrote a piece for the [Daily Telegraph](#) highlighting the dangers of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the radical nature of the ISF curriculum. The article also praised the work of the CSC in raising awareness of the issue. Gove raised the ISF issue [again](#) in Parliament at the Children, Schools and Families Questions.

The CSC issued a [press release](#) clarifying the error Cameron made in his questioning to the Prime Minister and where he had deviated from the CSC report – as well as outlining the numerous government errors and inaccuracies in their attempts to defend the awarding of tax-payers money to an extremist organisation.

Public and Media Appearances

Following the controversy over Cameron's statements at Prime Minister's Questions, Hizb ut-Tahrir's links to the ISF were the subject of two separate episodes of BBC 2's Newsnight. The first episode focussed on the flaws in Cameron's questioning, while the [second episode](#) was based on the CSC's report into Hizb ut-Tahrir. It provided evidence of the radical nature of the ISF's curriculum, and exposed what was being taught at the time that government money was given to ISF. Houriya Ahmed, co-author of *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy*, was interviewed on the programme, as well as on Talk Sports Radio about the report. Hannah Stuart, fellow co-author of *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy*, was interviewed on [BBC News](#) and [BBC Radio Berkshire](#), discussing the report's findings. Stuart's comments were featured in an article on the [BBC Berkshire website](#).

CSC Director Douglas Murray was interviewed by Al-Jazeera to express his concerns about the racist political slogans and imagery being utilised by white supremacist groups. He also appeared on BBC Radio 4 to discuss the role of faith in the work place alongside Paul Woolley, Director of Theos, the religious affairs think tank. Murray also appeared on the Radio 4's Moral Maze alongside Claire Fox from the Institute of Ideas, *Daily Mail* journalist Melanie Phillips and former Conservative MP Michael Portillo. Murray spoke on BBC Radio 5 Live on whether countries should apologise for their past actions, in the context of Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's apology for the abuse suffered by British children who were sent to Commonwealth countries from care homes and orphanages in the 1940s and 50s.

Interviewed by Secure Freedom Radio, Murray discussed the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir in the wake of the CSC's recent report, and appeared on LBC Radio to discuss levels of immigration into the UK. Robin Simcox also went on LBC Radio to address the issue of the impact of immigration on the National Health Service.

Murray addressed MEPs, diplomats and journalists at a British Council [conference](#) at the European Parliament in Brussels titled 'Europe and Islam: whose identity crisis?' alongside Daniel Hannan MEP and Pál Schmitt, Vice-President of the European Parliament. He also gave a press conference, as well as interviews to numerous international broadcasters and journalists, including Pakistani television and CNN.

Murray spoke at a training day for local government practitioners which aimed to counter honour-based violence, organised by the Local Government Information Unit. He discussed the findings of [Crimes of the Community](#), CSC's report into honour-based violence. Murray also continued his tour of UK campuses, addressing the University College London. Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens addressed a conference organised by the Black Workers Group, part of the Citizens Advice Bureau, on future threats to and opportunities for social cohesion in the UK.

New CSC strategic briefing

In the wake of the discovery that Nidal Hassan, the gunman suspected of carrying out the 5 November 2009 attack on Fort Hood, Texas, had been in previous contact with pro al-Qaeda preacher Anwar al-Awlaki, the CSC released a [strategic briefing](#) revealing the extensive post 9/11 network of UK organisations which have promoted and defended Awlaki.

The CSC has actively campaigned against allowing Awlaki, who is linked to a variety of terrorist plots, a platform in the UK and has been successful in ensuring his talks and sermons have been cancelled at a variety of university campuses and mosques. The strategic briefing, authored by Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, exposed a number of university Islamic societies and mosques, as well as a civil servant and a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, as all giving platforms or voicing support for Awlaki.

The briefing's findings were covered in [The Times](#), [Scottish Times](#), [Daily Telegraph](#) and the [Weekly Standard](#). Meleagrou-Hitchens also wrote about Awlaki's connections for [Hudson New York](#).

The CSC in the Press

In his monthly [column](#) for political and cultural magazine Standpoint, Douglas Murray wrote of his attempts to highlight to Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats, some of the anti-Semitic comments made by Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Jenny Tonge. Clegg subsequently told the Jewish Chronicle that 'the very suggestion that I might explicitly or tacitly give cover to racism, I find politically abhorrent and personally deeply offensive.' In response, Murray wrote:

'[Clegg] explains that he is "half-Dutch, quarter Russian, quarter British" and "married to a Spaniard". Perhaps this apparently educated man is unable to see that this has nothing whatsoever to do with whether or not his party harbours a conspiracy theorist and bigot on its benches. Having been asked specific questions...Clegg simply took refuge in objecting to a personal accusation of racism that had not been made.'

Murray also wrote an article for [Hudson New York](#) on BNP leader Nick Griffin's appearance on Question Time, and the controversy surrounding the show.

The Centre's report into honour violence, *Crimes of the Community*, was [referenced](#) in Jacqueline Rose's article on honour crimes for the London Review of Books.

Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, on his Standpoint [blog](#), criticised the decision by the government's Department of Communities and Local Government team of John Denham and Shahid Malik to engage with Inayat Bunglawala and the Muslim Council of Britain. Melanie Phillips referred to the blog on the [Spectator](#).

Robin Simcox blogged for Conservative Home on Conservative party [policy](#) on Hizb ut-Tahrir, Ed Balls' [spinning](#) of the ISF controversy and Iranian [funding](#) of US universities.

Upcoming

Douglas Murray will continue his ongoing campus tour at UK universities throughout December.

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The Centre for Social Cohesion is an independent think tank

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