



## THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL COHESION

Clutha House  
10 Storey's Gate  
London  
SW1P 3AY  
Tel: 0207 222 8909  
mail@socialcohesion.co.uk  
www.socialcohesion.co.uk

Welcome to the January 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 CSC is an independent, non-partisan think tank.

### **Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab**

In the wake of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's failed Christmas Day attacks, CSC Director Douglas Murray wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* highlighting the high levels of Islamist radicalisation that takes place on British university campuses. Murray said of Abdulmutallab:

[He] could hardly have found a place more conducive to his views. British universities have been a hub of the global Islamic terror threat for more than a decade.

Murray was also quoted discussing the prevalence of radical preachers on UK campuses in the *Independent*. Murray said "If any other student society were inviting those sort of speakers on to campus they would be closed down in seconds."

A *Daily Express* article exploring the links between pro al-Qaeda preacher Anwar al-Awlaki and the Detroit bomb plot quoted CSC Researcher Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, author of a CSC briefing paper on al-Awlaki's popularity in the UK. The *Daily Express* reported that the CSC "has long warned about the danger of radicalisation on college campuses."

Meleagrou-Hitchens further discussed the role of al-Awlaki in radicalising young British Muslims for the *Observer*, saying that:

The preacher has long been a highly respected figure within a number of British university Islamic societies because, unlike most other radical preachers, Awlaki speaks English as a first language, and being born and raised in America has given him a good understanding of western culture. This makes him very appealing to young western Muslims.

CSC Researcher Houriya Ahmed was also quoted in a *Daily Telegraph* article discussing al-Awlaki and campus extremism. She said:

We have repeatedly warned that academic institutions and mosques are hotbeds of Islamist radicalisation. It is time university authorities, mosques and relevant government bodies take on greater responsibility for the extremism that takes place in their own backyards.

Reporting on Islamist radicalisation in the UK, the *Daily Mail* referred to the findings of CSC's 2008 report *Islam on Campus*, the most comprehensive survey of Muslim student opinion in the UK. Hannah Stuart, the author of *Islam on Campus*, was quoted in a *Daily Telegraph* article studying Abdulmutallab's views while he was studying at University College London. The article also referred to the findings of *Islam on Campus*.

Stuart was also quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* discussing the links between Islamist terrorist plots and British university graduates.

### ***Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy***

Haringey council resumed its funding of the Islamic Shakhshiyah Foundation (ISF), an educational charity with close links to the radical Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT). Funding was suspended in November 2009 after the CSC's report *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy* revealed that the ISF, which runs two schools in London, had received £113,411 of Government money.

The CSC then issued a [press release](#) exposing the radical nature of the curriculum being taught at the school – which included teaching armed jihad – and how closely it matched HT's draft constitution. The extremist nature of the curriculum was covered in the *Spectator* and the *Daily Telegraph*, as well as a number of [blogs](#).

The CSC revealed in the [Sunday Mercury](#) that a Conservative Party councillor in Birmingham shared a platform with a member of HT at the Birmingham Muslim Education Conference. The Conservative Party have stated that, if elected, they will ban HT. Hannah Stuart, co-author of *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy* was quoted in the article, stating that:

This incident highlights the distance between local and national government. When it comes to calling for a ban, they need to organise themselves better.

Benedict Rogers, Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, wrote a blog on [Conservative Home](#) calling *Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy* a “jaw-dropping reading”. He wrote a further blog for [Conservative Home](#) describing the report as “excellent”.

### **The Centre in the press**

CSC Director Douglas Murray reviewed *The Cartoons That Shook The World* by Jytte Klausen for [Literary Review](#). The book studies the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy, but chose not to reproduce the cartoons for the publication. Critical of the book and the author, Murray wrote:

In the wide range of positions it is possible to take between people who draw cartoons of other peoples’ prophets and those who try to kill people for doing so, Klausen chooses to position herself equidistant between the two positions, as though to take a side, or even veer towards a side, would present an error of taste or judgement.

The CSC was featured in [Private Eye](#), which covered a briefing that the CSC has submitted to the House of Commons committee report on Press Standards, Privacy and Libel. The briefing outlined how the law firm Carter Ruck attempted to sue the Centre on behalf of the charity Interpal. Referring to the CSC as an organisation “which investigates white and Islamist far-right groups”, Private Eye wrote that “those champions of free speech at Carter-Fuck are making pots of money by, among other things, menacing the critics of radical Islam.”

Douglas Murray and CSC Researcher Robin Simcox wrote an article on the failings of multiculturalism and the rise of Islamist and white supremacist extremism in the UK for the [American Spectator](#), writing that:

Politicians continue to stick their head in the nearest sandbox, perhaps aware that a problem created by a generation could not be solved overnight. Rather than beginning to rethink the policies that have resulted in so many Europeans turning to extremist groups, they seem to have reconciled themselves to the idea that they govern a continent of several million closet racists. If this attitude persists, we are in deeper trouble than we previously thought.

Murray also recently wrote the 2009 Charles Douglas-Home Memorial Trust Award essay, discussing ‘To what extent is Sharia already operating in Britain?’ Extracts from the essay were reproduced in [The Times](#). Murray wrote:

[Sharia] presents us with a new challenge. By allowing different laws to be applied to people of different ethnic origins, based on the notion that there are laws which would be good enough for you but not good enough for me. If Sharia’s future in Britain is indeed inevitable, then our collective future as a cohesive and tolerant society cannot be.

Murray was quoted in [TIME](#) magazine on Muslim integration into Europe following the Swiss referendum vote to ban the building of minarets. Murray said:

All societies are unwelcoming to outsiders, but Europeans have been far more welcoming to Muslims than their critics allow. The onus of these claims of discrimination always seem to go the same way: to show that Europeans are innately racist. Which is a gross insult.

The CSC’s recent briefing paper on the British support network for Anwar al-Awlaki was discussed in the [Spectator](#). A blog written by Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens for [Standpoint](#) critical of the political Islam course run at the School of Oriental and African Studies was referred to on the [Daily Telegraph](#) blog.

### **Campus activism**

Queen Mary University’s Dialogue and Debate society were set to hold an event at Queen Mary University titled “Shariah law – compatible in the modern world?” featuring Jamal Harwood, HT spokesman and “head of legal affairs”, and chaired by Reza Pankhurst, a member of HT who was jailed in Egypt in 2002. Hizb ut-Tahrir was banned from university campuses by the National Union of Students in 2004. The CSC informed

Queen Mary student union of the event, which was subsequently cancelled. The CSC's actions were covered in the [Daily Telegraph](#), and the event's cancellation – as well as the CSC's previous attempts to raise awareness of radicalisation at Queen Mary – were covered by [BBC News](#), as well as the [London Student](#).

### **Public appearances**

Douglas Murray spoke on BBC World Service alongside London-based imam Usama Hasan about Umar Abdulmutallab and the attempted Christmas Day bombing of an aircraft heading to Detroit. He also appeared on BBC Six o' Clock News to discuss the issue.

Murray spoke on LBC Radio and Radio 5 Live about Switzerland voting to ban the building of minarets. He also discussed the British military campaign in Afghanistan alongside the Secretary of State for Defense, Bob Ainsworth MP, on Radio 5 Live. Murray also discussed issues such as the anti-mosque protests that took place outside Harrow Mosque and the forthcoming Chilean elections on the BBC World Service.

Murray spoke at UCL in a [debate](#) organised by Student Rights and the UCL Human Rights Society. Speaking alongside Professor Eric Heinze of Queen Mary University, the topic of the debate was 'Should student unions take political stances?'

**Press enquiries: 0207 222 8909 / 07538 248610 / [pressoffice@socialcohesion.co.uk](mailto:pressoffice@socialcohesion.co.uk)**

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

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