



QUILLIAM

The Muslim Brotherhood in the UK

The Prime Minister recently commissioned an internal government review into the philosophy, activities and influence (at home and abroad) of the Muslim Brotherhood. This review has been commissioned, presumably, in order to inform government policy towards the organisation. As part of the review, interested parties were asked to send submissions which were not allowed to be more than 3,000 words, including a summary of up to 500 words.

Quilliam has a history of challenging Islamist extremism and narratives ever since its inception, as well as providing policy guidance for the same. Therefore, we deemed a submission important, especially at this critical juncture in the global struggle against Islamist-inspired extremism.

The Muslim Brotherhood is the intellectual inspiration behind all Islamist groups that are operating today and, arguably, their jihadist offshoots such as al-Qaeda. Jihadist groups have their roots firmly in ideas that key ideologues from the Brotherhood pioneered in the last century.

Concepts such as 'takfir', which refers to the process of judging Muslims (individuals, regimes, societies and states) to be apostates and infidels if they do not wholly conform to a given (highly austere and politicised) interpretation of Islam, was developed and popularised by a key ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood called Syed Qutb (in the modern era). This concept was subsequently used to justify violence against a whole range of

targets. This is also a concept that groups like the “Islamic State” (IS) are currently using to justify killing other Muslims in Iraq and Syria.

Muslim Brotherhood linked organisations and individuals have also helped popularise Islamist ideologies in the UK for many years and have, arguably, primed British Muslim communities for more extreme Islamist groups to recruit thereafter.

It is also important to recognise that other Muslim-majority countries have finally woken up to the threat of Islamism as espoused by the likes of the Muslim Brotherhood, including most of the states in the Arabian Gulf, with the exception of Qatar who continue to support them. However, the remit of our submission is the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK and recommendations on how the British government should view and interact with this entity and its various front groups.

The below submission is part of wider research that Quilliam has undertaken with reference to the Muslim Brotherhood in the West and was submitted to the National Security Secretariat on 30th May 2014.

Abstract

1. The Muslim Brotherhood is an organisation that emanates from Egypt and is regarded as a mother-ship to Islamism from which various Islamist and Jihadist groups derive. It seeks to bring about a global Islamist state governed by their particular and highly politicised interpretation of Islam. Although they are currently tactically engaging in a democratic process, the organisation does not rule out support for violence either in its past or, currently, in Syria.
2. The Brotherhood has a history of working with its activists to set up various front organisations in Europe and the UK in particular. These may be linked through a complex web of apparently distinct entities to launch a concerted and multi-pronged attack on Muslim communities in order to popularise Islamism. In addition to this, Brotherhood members are encouraged to join other organisations that may or may not be Islamist in origin in order to influence or co-opt them into alliances. Furthermore, the Brotherhood is inherently anti-western, anti-Semitic, homophobic, sexist and disdainful of non-Islamist Muslims and liberals.
3. The Brotherhood has been outlawed in its country of origin (Egypt) and has been designated a terrorist entity. Other countries such as Saudi Arabia have followed suit. We are not proposing the same for the UK since it is a liberal and democratic nation that should allow for the expression of a diverse range of viewpoints and respect basic rights. We should also allow individuals and entities that are not breaking the law to operate and exist.
4. There needs to be a better understanding of how the Brotherhood operates and what it hopes to achieve from its British base and front groups. Greater scrutiny of the activities of Brotherhood-affiliated groups and their links with their counter-parts in the Arab world is also needed. Their attempts to monopolise Muslim political representation as a tool to deflect criticism must be tackled and their engagement with government as a means to bring a more pro-Islamist foreign and domestic policy must be limited via a no-platform policy with government and public entities – as per the PM’s speech in Munich in February 2011.

Background

5. "Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope." ¹ - *Muslim Brotherhood Motto*
6. The Ikhwan al-Muslimeen, or Muslim Brotherhood, is a pan-Islamist organisation that was founded in Egypt in 1928. It is the world's first Islamist group and, in many ways, gave birth to all subsequent Islamist and jihadist groups that followed. It seeks to synchronize Islam and politics so that the state can be used as a tool to enforce a single interpretation of Islam on society. It is also inherently anti-western, anti-Semitic, homophobic, sexist and disdainful of non-Islamist Muslims and liberals.
7. The group was formed by a school teacher called Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949) who was involved in Egyptian nationalist politics and political activism that focused on the British occupation of Egypt. He was also deeply conspiratorial, anti-Semitic and an admirer of Hitler and the Nazis.² On western civilization he said "... *it is a civilization which carries in its own body the viruses of its own destruction*"³. On Jews, he said "...*The Jews are the agents of change and westernization, and responsible for the decline of the west as well as Islam.*" Al-Banna translated Mein Kampf into Arabic and called it 'My Jihad' whilst working hard to build alliances and provide support to the Nazi regime.
8. In its early years, the Brotherhood worked to seize political power by a gradual process, which began with education, recruitment and training. However, after a short while, it developed an ideology of belligerent *jihad* directed against colonialism, cultural modernity and the Jewish presence in Palestine. Al-Banna frequently glorified *jihad* and the physical act of self-sacrifice:

¹ Homepage, "Muslim Brotherhood Movement website (www.ummah.org.uk/ikhwan/), accessed Dec. 22, 2004. - *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S CONQUEST OF EUROPE* by Lorenzo Vidino

² "Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949) A Selection from the Majmu'at Rasa'il al-Iman al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna" Translated from the Arabic and annotated by Charles Wendel <http://pointdebasculecanada.ca/hassan-al-banna-praises-hitler-as-a-model-for-attaining-fortune-influence-and-success/>

³ *The Unique Decade 1942 – 1952 Ten Years with the Imam Hasan Al-Banna - Dr Hassan Hat-Hoot* Dar Al-Shurook Cairo, Egypt First Edition, 2000 Page 116, 117 and 118:

Jihad has been made obligatory on every Muslim by Allah. He has laid great stress on Jihad and has promised limitless recompense for martyrs and fighters . . . There is no system in the world which places so much emphasis on jihad and fighting; use of power; mutual discipline and unity; and defence of rights, as in Islam . . . the verses of the Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) are full of these high teachings. They, in clearest terms, invite towards jihad, fighting and art of fighting and draw attention towards all means of land and sea fighting.⁴

9. By the 1940s, the Brotherhood established a special secret paramilitary branch, al-Tanzim al Khas, which initiated a campaign of terror against the pro-Western Egyptian government and stands accused of assassinating a number of political personalities, including two prime ministers. Its activities led to the eventual assassination of al-Banna, in February 1949.
10. In the wake of al-Banna's death, a Brotherhood ideologue by the name of Syed Qutb (1906-1966) emerged as a key influential thinker and writer. Qutb promoted the doctrine of *takfir*- the process of judging Muslims (individuals, regimes, societies and states) to be apostates and infidels if they did not wholly conform to his highly-politicised interpretation of Islam. This condemnation was subsequently used to justify combative *jihad* against them.
11. Qutb believed that all Muslim societies had reverted to pre-Islamic paganism (*jahiliyya*), so true Muslims (in his view) were living in a context similar to that of Muhammad (P) in his early career i.e. surrounded by idolatry.
12. Qutb saw three definite stages for revolution:
 - I. Proclamation (*da'wa*) of the message to *jahili* (the state of pagan ignorance and immorality in pre-Islamic Arabian) society. This is what Muhammad (p) did in Makkah.

⁴ Hasan al-Banna, *Selected Writings of Hasan al-Banna Shaheed*, translated by S.A. Qureshi, New Delhi: Militant Book Centre, 1999, pp. 31-32.

- II. Separation (*mufassala*) from unbelievers and all *jahili* society. This parallels Muhammad's (p) migration to Medina to organize the new Muslim community. This stage Qutb conceived of not as total physical separation, but as a spiritual separation while remaining in society to proclaim, recruit and organize.
 - III. Finally the fight (*jihad*) to implement God's new society on earth, similar to Muhammad's (p) victorious return to Makkah. *Jihad* is aimed first at Islamizing Muslim societies, toppling apostate Muslim rulers and establishing Islamic states under *shari'a*; these Islamic states are then able to extend *jihad* to the whole world.
13. Qutb was eventually executed for his activities in 1966, but not before some of his key works had been smuggled out of prison by his brother, Muhammad Qutb, and taken to the Gulf States. This included his now infamous 'Milestones', which is believed to have inspired the likes of Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam. In fact, these leading jihadist figures, with the exception of bin Laden, were members of the Brotherhood in their youth and inspired by Qutb's work. As such, the ideological momentum for salafi-jihadism was provided by Qutb.
 14. The Brotherhood renounced violence in the late-1970s and declared that it would operate as a non-violent political movement, whilst many of its more violence-inclined cadres went on to form a terrorist group called Tanzeem-al-Jihad. However, this did not prevent the Brotherhood from espousing anti-western, anti-Semitic and anti-Liberal rhetoric. It has also not prevented the Brotherhood from remaining committed to its original aim, namely the establishment of a global Islamist state.
 15. On the basis that the Brotherhood remains politically aligned to more violent and extreme Islamist groups, it is only ever in a position to criticise their tactics rather than their end goals. This is deeply problematic because their end goals are the main problem and extremism in general cannot be defeated until the end goals of all Islamist groups are undermined and discredited.
 16. Remaining non-violent and engaging in the democratic process is a pragmatic choice for the Brotherhood rather than an ideological one. This is a very important distinction that many western observers of the Brotherhood seem to miss, because shunning violence out of fear that it may undermine the goal of achieving an Islamist state is not the same

as shunning violence because it is inherently wrong. Hence, when Brotherhood outfits do consider violence to be a more conducive tactic for achieving its end goals they embrace it, as illustrated by the activities of Hamas in Gaza.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Syria

17. Regarded as the spiritual leader of the Brotherhood, Yusuf al-Qaradawi is very effective at utilising modern media and technology in order to disseminate pro-Brotherhood propaganda. His profile and status are maintained by his weekly satellite programme on al-Jazeera and his two websites, through which he issues guidance to Brotherhood members and millions of other Muslims.
18. Al-Qaradawi was the leader of the Brotherhood's activist wing and has been raising money for the group through his chairmanship⁵ of the Union for Good (I'tilafu al-Khayr) and Charity Coalition (Aathlaf al-Hin). He has also issued fatwas that support the use of suicide bombings against Israel and coalition forces in Iraq, including justifying the use of women and children for these missions.⁶
19. Al-Qaradawi, who has been barred from entering the UK, has stated that lands once held by Muslims may never be given up to non-Muslims and, if they are lost in war, it is the duty of all Muslims to re-take them, even if this process lasts until the end of the world.⁷ Conversely, he states, it is the duty of Muslims to liberate occupied territories and retrieve usurped land. The entire nation (i.e. all Muslims) are jointly responsible for such work in his view.⁸

⁵" Drawing a Line in the Sea: The Gaza Flotilla Incident and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" Edited by Thomas E Copeland, with Alethia H Cook and Lisa M McCarten – pg 76

⁶ "Qaradawi and the World Association of Muslim Clerics: The New Platform of the Muslim Brotherhood," Reuven Paz, *The Project for the Research of Islamist Movements (PRISM)*, Vol 2, No 4, Herzliya, November 2004

⁷ Question asked regarding "The Sacred Duty of Defending Jerusalem" with reply by Yusuf al-Qaradawi 14/05/2014

<http://www.onislam.net/english/ask-the-scholar/international-relations-and-jihad/jihad-rulings-and-regulations/174510-the-sacred-duty-of-defending-jerusalem.html?Regulations=>

⁸ Ibid

20. The Brotherhood believe the conflict in Syria is a holy war and that it is the duty of all Muslims to fight against the Assad regime. The Brotherhood has created the Institution of the Syrian Revolution Shields, which is a union between Brotherhood Militias and other armed groups in Syria, like the Katayeb al-Farouk, the Al-Tawheed and the Imam Hassan Al-Banna Group, the latter of which is directly in coalition with al-Qaeda linked groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra. All of these groups also use the Brotherhood slogan. The Brotherhood held an official conference where they endorsed a call for jihad in Syria by any and all means available.⁹ They went on to say:

*“Jihad is necessary for the victory of our brothers in Syria - jihad with mind, money, weapons; all forms of jihad”*¹⁰

21. Al-Qaradawi has also called for a jihad in Syria stating that anyone who supports the Syrian regime must be fought whether they are military or civilian.¹¹ He quotes Quranic verses to justify this and, as such, has also issued an edict calling for able-bodied Muslims to go to fight in Syria.¹² To further help his cause, al-Qaradawi has turned the struggle for freedom into a sectarian war and has issued statements whereby he states that Shias are not Muslims and must be killed.¹³

The Muslim Brotherhood Network in the UK

22. The Brotherhood has a network of organizations in the UK which are very well established and were set up by members that moved to the UK from Arab countries. This network is used to disseminate pro-Brotherhood messages and create support in such a way as to make it seem as though the Brotherhood represents the interests of Muslims in general. The influence of this network on British Muslims is great and

⁹Article in Daily News Egypt - Brotherhood supports calls for jihad in Syria
By Manar Mohsen Accessed 30/04/2014 <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/06/15/brotherhood-supports-calls-for-jihad-in-syria/>

¹⁰ Article Middle East Online published First Published: 13/06/2013 <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=59461>

¹¹ Al-Jazeera TV with Yusuf al-Qaradwi – published online 2/01/2013 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-e-J2977xB4>

¹² Article Middle East Online published: 13/06/2013 <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=59461>

¹³ Lecture by Yusuf al-Qaradawi “ Shias are not Muslims and must be killed”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQwft3CjVcc>

disproportionate, because most Brotherhood affiliated groups are run by well-educated and very active individuals who work among welfare organizations and study groups.¹⁴ This network includes the following groups:

Muslim Association of Britain (MAB)

23. The MAB is the main representative of the Brotherhood in the UK and is clearly inspired by Hasan al-Banna and Syed Qutb.¹⁵ Founded in 1997 by Kamal al-Helbawy, the London-based spokesman in Europe for the Brotherhood, the MAB aims to draw attention to perceived injustices against Muslims throughout the world and seeks to mobilize both Muslims and non-Muslims to campaign on these issues. The MAB was one of the groups involved in organizing the 'Stop the War Coalition' at the time of the 2003 war in Iraq¹⁶.
24. The current MAB president is Dr Omer al-Hamdoon and he, like leaders of a number of other extremist organizations in the UK, takes considerable care in presenting a moderate exterior to the non-Muslim public whilst concealing the core ideology of the group. MAB caused controversy when one of their leaders, Daud Abdullah, signed the Istanbul Declaration. This declaration instructed Muslims to attack foreign navies after Gordon Brown had offered Royal Navy resources to help monitor events in Gaza and to stop weapons being smuggled into the territory.¹⁷

¹⁴ Michael Whine, "The Advance of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK", in Hillel Fradkin, Husain Haqqani & Eric Brown, eds., "Current trends in Islamist Ideology", Volume 2, Center on Islam, Democracy, and the Future of the Muslim World, Washington DC: The Hudson Institute, 2005, pp. 30-39.

Jonathan Laurence, "Managing Transnational Islam in Western Europe: The Limits of Institutional and Post-national Approaches", Department of Government, Harvard University, Paper prepared for presentation at the conference "Immigration in a Cross-National Context: What Are the Implications for Europe?" organized by: The EU Center at Syracuse, <http://www.lisproject.org/immigration/papers/laurence.pdf>, viewed 27 September 2005; Maréchal, Brigitte, "The Muslim Brotherhood and Religious Authority in Western Europe", *Muslim Religious Authority in Western Europe*, Conference report by the International Institute for the Study of Modern Islam (ISIM), Leiden, 30 September – 1 October 2005.

¹⁵ M. Kortmann, K. Rosenow-Williams (ed.), *Islamic Organizations in Europe and the USA* A multidisciplinary perspective, (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 206

¹⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2765041.stm>

¹⁷ Istanbul Declaration entitled "A statement by the religious scholars and proselytisers (du'a) of the Islamic Nation (ummah) to all rulers and peoples concerning events in Gaza" signed by Daud Abdullah – Can be viewed here <http://www.hurryupharry.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/istpdf.pdf>

Cordoba Foundation

25. In March 2008, David Cameron delivered a speech in which he exposed the Cordoba Foundation as a front for the Brotherhood with close connections to people with extremist views.¹⁸ The founding leader of the Cordoba Foundation is Anas al-Tikriti, a British-Iraqi supporter of the Brotherhood in Britain, who served as President of the MAB before leaving to help form the British Muslim Initiative (BMI).
26. In 2006, al-Tikriti expressed support for *“the right of the Iraqis to engage in legitimate resistance against foreign occupation”*.¹⁹ Presumably this meant fighting British soldiers too. He supports Hamas, which he says should not be regarded as a terrorist organisation.²⁰ He has also written in defence of the Muslim Council of Britain’s decision to boycott Holocaust Memorial Day, describing it as a *“principled stand”*.²¹

British Muslim Initiative (BMI)

27. BMI was formed in 2007 by former leaders in the MAB; Mohammad Sawalha, Azzam Tamimi, and Anas al Tikriti.²² Sawalha is, according to the BBC’s John Ware, a former Hamas operative.²³ He is alleged to have master-minded much of Hamas' political and military strategy from London. He fled to London in 1990 from where he is a major fundraiser for Hamas.²⁴ It has been alleged that he is still engaged in continued support for terrorist activities.²⁵

¹⁸ David Cameron - 2008 Speech to Community Security Trust – transcript can be viewed here <http://www.ukpolitics.org.uk/node/4534>

¹⁹ al-Tikriti statement *“Al-Zarqawi’s Importance Was Exaggerated”* on Ikhwanweb 9/06/006 <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=4138>

²⁰ Comment is Free article by al-Tikriti *“Hamas is not al-Qaeda”* 21/09/2009 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/sep/21/hamas-al-qaida>

²¹ Article in The Guardian by al-Tikriti *“Forgetting to Remember”* 04/12/2007 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/dec/04/forgettingtoremember>

²² *“The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist”* edited by Barry Rubin page 127 can be viewed here

[“The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist”](#)

²³ *“Faith, hate and charity:”* Panorama programme BBC One 30/07/2006 Transcript <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/5234586.stm>

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Anthony Browne, *“Time for Truth about this Sinister Brotherhood”*, *The Times*, 11 August 2004.

Institute of Islamic Political Thought (IIPT)

28. Azzam Tamimi is the Director of IIPT – he is a senior MAB activist who has represented MAB at many meetings. Tamimi claims to act as an advisor to the Hamas leadership in the Middle East and describes himself as a “sympathiser and supporter.”²⁶ Furthermore, during a BBC radio programme he stated that suicide bombing is justified in Islamic theology.²⁷ In November 2004, while being interviewed for the BBC programme Hardtalk, Tamimi said that sacrificing his life in a suicide bombing in Israel/Palestine would be “*a noble cause. It is the straight way to pleasing my God and I would do it if I had the opportunity.*”²⁸

Centre for the Study of Terrorism (CFSOT)

29. The CFSOT was set up by its current Chairman Dr Kamal al-Helbawy who joined the Brotherhood at the age of twelve. He served as the official spokesman of the Brotherhood in the West from 1995-1997.²⁹ His profile states he helped create MAB, becoming its first founding president.³⁰ Helbawy is on record praising Osama bin Laden, denying al-Qaeda’s involvement in 9-11 and justifying the murder of Israeli children. He described bin Laden as ‘a great Mujahid’ (holy warrior) and prayed that he “*...join the prophets, the martyrs and the good people.*”³¹

Summary

30. The principal problem posed by the Brotherhood network in the UK is that not enough is known about their unpublicised activities and they have a track record of preaching hate and supporting extremist forces around the world. When you combine their hate-filled and intolerant agenda with their sophisticated political operations and desire to reach out to and influence Muslims, monopolising Muslim political representation in the process, there is serious cause for concern. The representation

²⁶“Palestinian radical was guest of US ambassador”, The Guardian 21/12/2002 [Jeevan Vasagar](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/dec/21/israel)
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/dec/21/israel>

²⁷ BBC Radio 4 - Downloaded 23/05/2014

²⁸ BBC News “Hardtalk” interview with Tamimi 02/11/2004
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/hardtalk/3985403.stm>

²⁹ Helbawy Facebook profile <https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?v=info&expand=1&id=198223513536336>

³⁰ IBID

³¹ <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/press-releases/senior-british-islamist-praises-osama-bin-laden/>

tactic they deploy also allows them and their supporters to construe any criticism of their activities to be deemed criticism of the Islam and Muslims at large.

31. The Brotherhood relies on creating of a series of organisations and institutions, each with its own unique role, controlled by a complicated web of interlocking directorates. Some of the groups are fronts for illegal or subversive activities, while others conduct legal and legitimate operations. The strategy is similar to that used by the Communists to organize dissent and win control of trade unions and peace movements. In this case, the targets are Islamic institutions.
32. The manner in which Brotherhood groups are operating i.e. without restriction or oversight, is having a detrimental effect on our society and national security. One of their most influential spiritual leaders is openly calling for Muslims globally to respond by any and all means possible to the civil war in Syria. This has serious implications for the security of the UK because the use of influential scholars to justify this from an Islamic perspective is playing a major part in encouraging British citizens to travel to Syria and fight.

Recommendations

33. Currently, the Brotherhood has been outlawed in its country of origin (Egypt) and has been designated a terrorist entity.³² Other countries such as Saudi Arabia have followed suit.³³ We are not proposing the same for the UK since it is a liberal and democratic nation that should allow for the expression of a diverse range of viewpoints and respect basic rights. We should also allow individuals and entities that are not breaking the law to operate and exist.
34. There needs to be greater understanding of how the Brotherhood operates and what it hopes to achieve from its British-base and front groups. There needs to be more scrutiny of the activities of Brotherhood affiliated groups and their global links. Their attempts to

³² Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood declared 'terrorist group' BBC News 25/12/2013
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25515932>

³³ Saudi Arabia declares Muslim Brotherhood 'terrorist group' BBC News 07/03/2014
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-26487092>

monopolise Muslim political representation and use it as a tool to deflect criticism also needs to be tackled, whilst their engagement with government needs to be acknowledged as part and parcel of an attempt to bring about a more pro-Islamist and Brotherhood foreign and domestic policy.

35. Action is required as per the PM's speech in Munich where he stated:

“First, confronting and undermining this ideology. Whether they are violent in their means or not, we must make it impossible for the extremists to succeed... so, no public money, no sharing of platforms with ministers at home.”³⁴

We, therefore, advocate a no-platform policy for Brotherhood-linked organisations and individuals in the UK.

³⁴ PM's speech at Munich Security Conference – 05/02/2011 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference>