

# MCB

The Newsletter of The Muslim Council of Britain

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# The Common Good

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*The newsletter is named after the MCB's commitment to the shared seeking of the common good for our society.*

## Affiliating to the MCB

The MCB is a representative body of established national and regional organisations as well as local mosques, Islamic centres and specialist institutions. It has over 350 affiliates, plus individuals committed to helping the work of MCB. These organisations and individuals come from diverse and varied specialities and interests: mosques, charities, the medical, educational, social and legal fields, business - the list could go on. They are united in their commitment to seeking the common good. **If you would like to join in this work and this commitment then please contact the MCB for further information and an affiliation form.**

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## Respect for rule of law - MCB seeks transfer of British detainees

The incarceration and detention of British Muslims both overseas and in the UK in the aftermath of September 11 is a betrayal of values that can prompt turmoil in the community. Dozens of families have had their peace shattered by a knock at the door. Since January, over twenty Muslims have been seized in swoops and dawn raids, only to be released because of lack of evidence. MCB representatives and affiliates attend regular meetings with Metropolitan Police and have used every opportunity to impress on the Police that such 'fishing expeditions' not only belittle their reputation but damage a lot of the good relations built up over the years with Muslim community organisations.

When the Home Secretary first issued his list of proscribed organisations in February last year, the MCB warned that the Terrorism Act 2000 was a bad law that erodes civil liberties. Recent court cases have confirmed that repressive overseas regimes are placing pressure on the Government to detain and extradite political dissidents.

Dr Jafer Qureshi of the Community Affairs Committee of the MCB has also established contact with the parents of one of the Tipton detainees. In his view, these 'were just street kids who have been manipulated

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## Prince Charles meets Muslim Youth



HRH The Prince of Wales poses for a photo with teenagers from Manchester

HRH The Prince of Wales hosted an Eid reception for Muslim youth at St James's Palace in London on Wednesday evening, December 19th.

The Prince of Wales invited over 200 Muslim teenagers and young adults from all over the country to celebrate Eid and learn about the Prince's Trust and the Visual Islamic Traditional Arts project

(VITA) run by the Prince's Foundation. Among other notable guests were Prince Naseem Hamed, Ambassador of the Prince's Trust and Dr. Richard Stone, Chairman of the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia. Yousuf Bhailok, Secretary General of the MCB thanked the Prince of Wales for his

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*Respect for rule of law -  
continued from page 1*

by others". The MCB supports the parents' plea that the Government should seek the transfer of these adolescents back to the UK for trial. The MCB has received correspondence drawing comparisons to the FCO's vigorous actions to ensure fair treatment and conditions for British citizens in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The MCB has already held one meeting with a US embassy official, and Secretary General Yousuf Bhailok is pursuing with Government a proposal for the MCB to become part of an inspection team, along with from the National Council for the Welfare of Muslim Prisoners (NCWMP), to visit the British Muslims interned at the outrageous Camp X-Ray in Cuba. Moreover the MCB is fully behind calls for the transfer of the detainees for trial in Britain. The 'quality' of the evidence offered by the US is a cause for concern. Justice can only be obtained where there is respect for the rule of law.

*Prince Charles hosts Youth event -  
continued from page 1*

generous invitation. He stated that the Prince of Wales was regarded as the 'Patron' of the Muslim Community in the UK and was widely respected at home and abroad for the support he had shown the Muslim community both prior to and more importantly since, September 11th. The Eid reception would be a memorable event for those present.

HRH The Prince of Wales thanked the youngsters for accepting his invitation to celebrate Eid at St James's Palace and for travelling to be there, especially those that had come from as far as Bolton and Preston.

The Prince of Wales acknowledged the contributions made by the British Muslim community to British society saying that they formed part of the 'very rich tapestry that makes an enormous difference to the diversity and richness of our country'. He added that it was important to achieve 'unity through diversity'.

He stated that all religions ultimately sought to arrive at the same truth and that they simply traversed different routes to get there. He argued that what united the religions was much greater than that which divided them and that it was necessary for all to seek the common ground.

He said that in a world that is becoming increasingly secular and materialist it was important for all those that believed in an 'invisible dimension' and a 'mysterious element' to our lives to unite to ensure that the really important values were remembered and celebrated.

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**White Paper on Immigration Policy**



The White Paper on citizenship, immigration and asylum, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven - Integration with Diversity in modern Britain', published by the Home Office in February is a wide-ranging document outlining the Government's proposals on asylum policy, work permits, border controls, marriage and family visits and citizenship and nationality.

Key points of the White Paper are:

- Citizenship ceremony and oath of allegiance.
- Start discussion about British Asians getting married in the UK rather than in the Indian sub-continent
- Disturbances in North last summer due in part to failed civic identity. Need to strengthen fabric of society through shared understanding.
- Britons involved in war crimes or terrorist groups abroad may have their citizenship deprived.
- Economic migrants with the right skills will find it easier to live and work in Britain
- Compulsory language tests for new immigrants to avoid polarisation and ease integration
- Language tests to be applied more rigorously for Ministers of Religion (includes Imams)
- Non-Britons already resident in the UK who are appropriately qualified may change their immigration status to Minister of Religion
- Need to ensure that migration does not adversely affect developing countries
- Family visits: bond scheme idea has been scrapped, but a viable alternative is being sought
- Clamp-down on bogus marriages; increase of the probationary period for leave to remain on the basis of marriage and consider a revision of the rules to prevent switching into marriage for people entering the UK for 6 months or less.

The MCB's Public Affairs committee has initiated a process of consultation among MCB affiliates and its committees on these proposals, so that a formal submission can be made by the closing date, 21 March 2002. Comments and observations can also be e-mailed to the MCB office. Views have already been received on the issue of arranged marriages and the reference to the disturbances in the North of England last summer. For example, the White Paper seeks to set the disturbances in the North last year in the context of a debate on naturalisation. The MCB's own research suggests that this is off the mark - the disturbances involved British-born young people frustrated by poor schools, poor housing, lack of recreational facilities and poor employment prospects. Mr Blunkett hopes that his proposals - also warmly received by the Opposition Front Bench - will provide 'strategic direction' in a crucial area. It is up to the Muslim community to participate in the democratic process to ensure that any new legislation is based on sound reasoning.

**Eid Reception at the Commons**

The MCB's Central Working Committee and affiliate organisations were invited by MPs Ernie Ross, Tony Baldry and Menzies Campbell QC, to the House of Commons on Tuesday December 18th for 'Afternoon Tea' in celebration of Eid ul-Fitr.

The Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Tony Blair and the Home Secretary Rt. Hon. David Blunkett addressed the gathering. The Foreign Secretary Rt. Hon. Jack Straw also attended and MPs Simon Hughes (Liberal Democrat Home Affairs spokesperson), Mike O'Brien, Phyllis Starkey and peers Baroness Pola Uddin and Lord Ahmed were also present.

The MCB Secretary General, addressing the Home Secretary, expressed his disappointment at the exclusion of incitement of religious hatred in the newly passed Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security bill and pressed Mr Blunkett to introduce a new, more comprehensive bill to outlaw religious

discrimination and incitement to religious hatred.

Baroness Pola Uddin spoke of the common causes that united British society and the need to meet and address problems together.

The Home Secretary responded by conveying his own disappointment at the failure of the clause on incitement to religious hatred to pass through the House of Lords and asked Muslim to appreciate the impossible situation in which he found himself when confronted with the probability of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security bill failing in its entirety if a compromise was not reached.

The Home Secretary wished all those present 'Eid Mubarak' before departing.

The Prime Minister arrived shortly before the end and speaking to all those gathered paid tribute to the work of the Muslim community.

PEOPLE

Dr. Jafer Qureshi, member of the Central Working Committee of the MCB has been invited to join an Expert Advisory Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, examining the role of psychiatry in relation to international terrorism and political violence.

The MCB also congratulates the following Muslim individuals who have attained public recognition of their work and have been awarded honours in the New Year's Honours list 2002.



Dr Abdul Rashid Gatrad

OBEs

■ Dr Abdul Rashid Gatrad. Head, Paediatrics Department, Manor Hospital, West Midlands. For services to Paediatrics and to Ethnic Minority communities. He is co-author (with Dr Aziz Shaikh) of the landmark publication 'Caring for Muslim Patients'.

■ Dr Khizar Humayun Ansari. Director, Centre of Ethnic Minority Studies and Equal Opportunities, Royal Holloway College (RHC), University of London. For services to Higher Education.

■ Dr Moussa Jogee, MBE, JP. Deputy Chair, Commission for Racial Equality Scotland. For services to Race Equality.

MBEs

■ Mrs Shama Mahmood Ahmad. For services to the community in Newham, London.

■ Chaudhury Mohammed Anwar. For services to Community Relations in Middlesex. Mr Anwar is an executive member of Enfield Race Equality Council and Chairman of Enfield Bangladesh Welfare Association.

■ Shaukat Butt, JP. Member, Glasgow City Council. For services to Local Government and to the community.

■ Mrs Freda Hussain. Headteacher, Moat Community College, Leicester. For services to the community in Leicester.

■ Mrs Parveen Mirza. For services to Community Relations in Nottingham.

■ Abdul Karim Shakoor. Outreach Worker, Cartwheel Community Arts. For services to Art in Manchester.

EVENTS

ISB LAUNCHES ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK



Posing with the Pledge, from left to right: Sarah Joseph, Sher Khan, Rt. Hon. John Prescott, Yousuf Bhailok, Simon Hughes and Dr Munir Ahmed

The Islamic Society of Britain launched Islam Awareness Week on Monday November 5th at the House of Commons.

The launch was attended by the Secretary General of the MCB, Yousuf Bhailok; Rt. Hon. John Prescott MP, Deputy Prime Minister; Rt. Hon. Oliver Letwin MP, Shadow Home Secretary; and Rt. Hon. Simon Hughes MP of the Liberal Democrat Party. Muslim parliamentarians Mohammad Sarwar MP, Khalid Mahmood MP, Baroness Uddin, Lord Ahmed and Lord Patel hosted the launch.

Islam Awareness Week took place in the context of the attacks on the US and the bombing of Afghanistan that followed suit.

For this reason, the objectives of the week to promote better understanding of Islam and Muslims - were more important than ever before.

The IAW project received an enormous amount of support from various sections of society including politicians, newspaper editors, faith, and community groups. The support came in the form of public statements and the signing of a 'Pledge to British Muslims'.

To read the pledge and learn about activities organised as part of Islam Awareness Week visit the IAW website at [www.iaw.org.uk](http://www.iaw.org.uk)

Islamic Relief receives Royal Commendation for relief efforts in Afghanistan

HRH The Prince of Wales on his visit to Islamic Relief's offices on 1st November praised the relief agency for its 'wonderful work...to alleviate the terrible suffering of the refugees in Afghanistan'.

The Prince stressed the importance of the 'private citizen' to play his part pledging that he would be matching his donation to the Red Cross Afghan Crisis Appeal and urged others to 'do what they can to help tackle what is fast becoming a humanitarian catastrophe of unimaginable proportions'.

Muslim Prisoners in Europe Conference

Stockholm, Sweden  
January 14 2002

Iqra Trust UK and the Swedish Islamic Council jointly hosted a conference on Muslim prisoners in Europe in Stockholm, Sweden on January 14th 2002 with the support of the Prison Service Chaplains of the two respective countries.

The Iqra Trust Prisoners Welfare works to promote better understanding of Muslim inmates in British prisons providing prison-imam support services, organising cultural awareness events and offering educational materials to Muslim prisoners.

With the rise in the European Muslim prison population this event is being organised to provide an opportunity for practitioners,

academics and welfare organisations to share experiences and examples of good practice.

Maqsood Ahmed, Muslim Advisor to the Prison Service in the UK and Dr Salah El-Hassan of Iqra Trust attended and addressed the conference on their work for the British Muslim prison population.

Balham Mosque

The Al-Risalah Education Trust has received capital funding to the amount to £3 million from the Department of Education and Science. The sum is subject to the approval of the School Organising Committee (SOC) and is a step toward the present Government's commitment to increase the number of inclusive faith schools in Britain.

Chairman of the Trust Iqbal Sacranie welcomed the announcement made by the Education Secretary Estelle Morris saying "we are delighted that the Government will provide capital funding for this well deserved project which will benefit the local community in South London".

If you are an affiliate body of the MCB and have some good practice projects/initiatives you would like covered then please contact the MCB on 020 8903 9650 or email: [media@mcb.org.uk](mailto:media@mcb.org.uk)

## Meeting with Editors

The MCB's Media Committee has been diligent in meeting with editorial teams at the various national newspapers to discuss the manner in which Islam and Muslims are portrayed in the press before and more importantly, since, September 11th.

### The Times

A delegation from the MCB met editorial staff at The Times on Tuesday 6th November 2001. The delegation had a one and a half hour discussion with Tim Hames (Chief Leader writer) and Michael Binyon (Leader writer). The issues discussed included the paper's coverage of matters relating to Islam and Muslims.

The Times later ran an editorial on the need for Britain to increase its 'awareness of Islam'. The MCB delegation included Inayat Bunglawala (Secretary, Media Committee), Ahmed Versi (Editor, Muslim News), Daud Abdullah (Palestinian Return Centre) and Sher Khan (Islamic Society of Britain).

### The Independent

An MCB delegation met The Independent's editorial team, including, Ian Birrell (Deputy editor), Adrian Hamilton and Matthew Hoffman on Thursday 1st November 2001. The MCB commended The Independent's coverage of Muslim affairs. There was a lively discussion about the role of Islam in the UK. An account of the meeting appeared in The Independent's supplement on Saturday 3rd November 2001. Members of the MCB delegation included Inayat Bunglawala, Ahmed Versi, Daud Abdullah and Sher Khan.

### Daily Mail

Inayat Bunglawala and Ahmed Versi met senior editorial staff at the Daily Mail on Thursday 6th December 2001 to discuss issues arising from the recent controversy over the article about the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The ensuing discussion was wide-ranging and constructive. The Daily Mail team apologised for the deep offence that was caused to the British Muslim community and pointed out that they had responded promptly by printing a high profile apology on page 2 of the newspaper together with three letters, including one from the MCB (Tuesday 20th November).

Other topics discussed included the proposed legislation to outlaw incitement to religious hatred, the development of the British Muslim community and the need for regeneration funds to help Muslim youth in the towns of northern England.

### Evening Standard

The MCB media team also met the editorial team of the Evening Standard on Tuesday 20th November 2001. The Evening Standard's representatives were Max Hastings (Editor), Philip Evans (Executive Editor) and Don Berry (Associate Editor). The meeting discussed issues related to the coverage of Islam and Muslims.

## MCB and TV

The MCB Secretary General, spokesperson for the MCB, has appeared on numerous TV news programmes where he has presented the policies and stand of the organisation on topical issues.

A delegation from the British Muslim community, including Mahmud al-Rashid, Deputy Secretary General of the MCB and Inayat Bunglawala, met with various Heads of News from the BBC, ITN, Sky and members of the press on Wednesday 31st October 2001.

Assistant Secretary General Afzal Khan and Manzoor Moghal of the Federation of Muslim Organisations (Leicestershire) appeared on BBC's Kilroy programme on Thursday November 8th. The programme debated the issue of young Britons travelling through Pakistan into Afghanistan to fight with the Taliban.

## MCB Rebuts of Carol Sarler's slur

The Daily Express published a full-page article by Inayat Bunglawala for the MCB, on Tuesday 20th November 2001 in response to Carol Sarler's venomous article (15th November). The paper published an edited version; for the full text see the MCB web site.

### Islam: The Natural Way

The MCB has sent a copy of 'Islam the Natural Way' by Abdul Wahid Hamid to editors, journalists and religious correspondents at TV, radio and national and regional newspapers. At a time of increased focus on Islam and Muslims, the Media Committee felt it appropriate to provide journalists and editors an authoritative introduction to Islam.

## Media Consultative Committee

The Media Committee of the MCB has launched a 'Consultative Committee' composed of newspaper journalists and editors, Muslim media experts and media practitioners to address the problem of terminology in print journalism. The Committee was inaugurated by Lord Weatherill during Islam Awareness Week and will meet shortly.

## Letters

### Trevor Phillips, Deputy Leader, GLA

The Media Committee has conveyed its appreciation to Trevor Phillips, the Deputy-Leader of the Greater London Authority, for his open letter to the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, which appeared in The Guardian on Dec 19th 2001

### Radio 4 Today Programme

The Media Committee contacted the Editor of the BBC Radio 4 Today programme in response to the broadcast on January 7th 2002 of inflammatory remarks of Hassan Butt. These remarks had received very wide coverage in the British media which the MCB said would only succeed in harming community relations in this country.

The MCB also communicated with the Radio 4 Today programme about James Naughtie's interview with the advisor to the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon on 13th December 2001. The letter urged the Today programme to adopt a more robust approach in its questioning of Israeli officials.

### Media Committee questions 'Terrorist Capitals' phrase used by ITN

The Media Committee wrote to Richard Tait, Head of News at ITN to complain of a news bulletin by ITN reporter Terry Lloyd on December 28th. In the bulletin Mr Lloyd alleged that the shoe-bomber Richard Reid had visited various 'terrorist capitals' prior to his attempted attack on the American Airlines flight.

The MCB received a letter from the Deputy Editor of ITV News, Robin Elias, dated 10th January 2002, in which he has apologised to the MCB and agreed "that the phrase 'terrorist capitals of the world' was inappropriate."

### New Statesman and Orientalism

The MCB responded to the cover story in the New Statesman "The Great Koran Con Trick", but this was not published and neither has the magazine apologised.

## Recent MCB Press Releases

<b>25th Jan</b>	Holocaust Memorial Ceremony - MCB regrets exclusion of Palestinian tragedy
<b>22nd Jan</b>	We must hold true to our values
<b>15th Jan</b>	Muslims and British Government launch 'Target 2015'
<b>7th Jan</b>	MCB utterly repudiates cowardly call to attack British targets
<b>14th Dec</b>	MCB urges comprehensive legislation on Religious Hatred
<b>10th Dec</b>	MCB questions Blunkett's use of English
<b>4th Dec</b>	MCB urges Europe to Restrain Israel
<b>7th Nov</b>	MCB supports legislation on incitement to religious hatred
<b>30th Oct</b>	MCB condemns killing of Christians in Pakistan
<b>15th Oct</b>	MCB welcomes PM's commitment to Palestinians
<b>9th Oct</b>	MCB opposes War on Afghans - Insists on Justice
<b>7th Oct</b>	Grave concern over military action
<b>7th Oct</b>	Islamic values are our guide - Statement of British Imams and Scholars
<b>3rd Oct</b>	British Muslims welcome changes to law announced by Home Secretary
<b>1st Oct</b>	Muslim Representatives meet Conservative Party Leader
<b>28th Sept.</b>	Muslim delegation meets with PM
<b>19th Sept.</b>	British Muslims urge Justice not Vengeance
<b>18th Sept.</b>	Statement by the MCB on the occasion of the special House of Commons debate
<b>11th Sept.</b>	MCB expresses total condemnation of terrorist attacks in US

Activities of the Media Committee are also reported in the MCB's weekly electronic newsletter. You can subscribe via the MCB web site: [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## Meeting with Home Office Officials

Deputy Secretary General Mahmud Al-Rashid, Iqbal Sacranie, Tanzeem Wasti and Khalid Sofi met with Home Office Ministers John Denham and Angela Eagle on Monday November 26th to discuss the Government's inclusion of incitement to religious hatred in the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security bill. The meeting followed on from an earlier meeting held on November 13th attended by Iqbal Sacranie and Mahmud Al-Rashid at which concerns at the limitations of the clause on incitement to religious hatred were expressed.

The MCB delegation voiced their concerns at the inclusion of a clause protecting against religiously motivated crime alongside others overtly relating to security matters and at the limited scope of the new legislation. Muslims are seeking a comprehensive civil anti-discrimination legislation package.

The ministers assured the delegation that the MCB would be fully consulted on the proposal to implement the EU Employment Directive (that outlaws discrimination in employment on religious and other grounds) and to discuss ways of tackling religious discrimination beyond the field of employment given recent research on the nature and extent of Islamophobia.

Home Office officials agreed to review suggestions made by the Muslim delegation.

The inclusion of the clause on incitement to religious hatred was subsequently removed from the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security bill following protestations from peers.

## British Council All Party Parliamentary Group meeting

Iqbal Sacranie attended a special meeting of the British Council All Party Parliamentary Group on Tuesday November 20th.

The meeting, called to discuss the importance of cultural dialogue between people of differing cultures, focused specifically on the cultural relationship between the UK and the Islamic world. The meeting was chaired by Derek Wyatt MP and was attended by over 50 peers and MPs.

Dr Phyllis Starkey, MP and PPS to the Foreign Office, spoke of her experiences in the Palestinian region. Iqbal Sacranie provided a briefing on the Muslim community in the UK.

## Meetings at No. 11

Yousuf Bhailok and Iqbal Asaria, Chair of the Business and Economics committee, have attended the regular breakfast meetings convened by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in December and February. On November 13th, Iqbal Asaria, attended a Seminar at 11 Downing Street together with the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr George Carey, and other faith group leaders. The seminar was organised to discuss the need to revive 2015 targets of reducing world poverty and the need to increase aid budgets with a renewal of the commitment of 0.7% of GDP. The participation of faith and other groups in the developmental process was also discussed and approved.

## Department of Culture, Media and Sport

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the Media Committee and Dr Abdul Raheem Khan attended a meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on 2nd October 2001.

The issues of reporting and representation of Muslims in the British media was discussed. The meeting at the DCMS was followed up with a meeting hosted by the Broadcasting Standards Commission at which principal media

organisations and regulators were invited to discuss these matters further.

## Department of Health

### Faith Communities and Teenage Pregnancy

Shiban Akbar, vice chair of the MCB Social Policy, welfare and Regeneration committee attended a seminar organised by the Department of Health on 'Teenage Pregnancy and Issues for Faith Communities' on October 17th 2001.

The seminar was organised by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit at the DoH, in conjunction with the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy.

### Meeting with Deputy Medical Officer

Doctors Mujahid Qureshi, Abdul Raheem Khan and Jafer Qureshi of the MCB Health and Medical Committee met with Policy Advisor and Deputy Medical Officer Sheila Adams at the Department of Health on Monday November 19th.

The HMC advised the Government on the incidence of Diabetes, Heart and Cardiovascular diseases and Mental Health in the Muslim community.

## Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Dr Abdul Raheem Khan attended the launch of the Annual Consular Review 2001 on October 29th at the invitation of James Watt, Head of the Consular Division at the FCO.

## Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Dr Abdul Majid Katme, member of the Health and Medical committee attended the Muslim Organisations Working Group meeting organised by the Food Standards Agency on Tuesday January 8th 2002.

The Muslim Organisations Working Group meets quarterly with DEFRA (formerly MAFF) and the FSA to discuss issues pertaining to religious slaughter. The meeting held on January 8th discussed slaughterhouse facilities for the upcoming Eid al-Adha.

## Commission for Racial Equality

Dr Fatma Amer attended a meeting called by the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, Mr Gurbux Singh, on October 2nd 2001.

Mr Singh invited a number of representatives from the Muslim community in Britain to meet to discuss difficulties facing the UK's ethnic minority communities in the aftermath of September 11th.

## Burial Space in London

Dr Abdul Raheem Khan attended a meeting at the Greater London Authority (GLA) on the matter of burial space shortage in the City on Monday November 12th.

The meeting, convened by the Deputy Chair of the GLA, Mr Trevor Phillips, invited members of various faith communities in London - Hindus, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians and Muslims - to discuss the issue of shortage of burial space and the possibility of re-using graves if consistent with the traditions of each faith.

Mr Phillips noted that Muslims and Jews were the two communities for whom the shortage of burial space would present the greatest difficulty.

## The Prince's Trust Advisory Board on Inter-Faith Outreach

The Prince's Trust has invited Iqbal Sacranie and Iqbal Asaria to participate in an advisory group, 'Inter-faith Outreach', that will advise on how the Prince's Trust may more successfully engage with

young people from minority communities in the UK.

The President of the Prince's Trust, HRH The Prince of Wales, is keen to renew the Trust's efforts to address the problem of insufficient involvement of Muslims and other minorities in a more systematic way.

## Letters to MPs

### Letter to the Foreign Secretary

The International Affairs committee wrote to the Foreign Secretary with regard to the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Palestine.

The MCB called upon the Government to take immediate steps to halt the escalation in violence and killing of innocent Palestinians, many of them schoolchildren. The letter stated that Israel was using the international climate since September 11th under the guise of a 'war on terrorism' to pursue its own militaristic designs in the West Bank and Gaza and intimidate the Palestinian population.

The MCB reminded the Government that it was obliged under the UN Charter, to render all necessary assistance to the Palestinian people so that they may regain their fundamental human rights and freedoms.

### Letter to Conservative Party Leader

The Media Committee sent a letter to the Conservative Party leader, Mr Iain Duncan Smith expressing the MCB's concerns over a speech he gave to the Conservative Friends of Israel on 10th Dec 2001.

Mr Duncan Smith had called on the BBC to refer to Palestinian resistance groups as 'terrorists' but somehow himself failed to call on Israel to also leave the occupied territories.

### Letter to Shadow Home Secretary

The MCB wrote a letter of thanks to the Conservative MP Rt. Hon. Oliver Letwin in appreciation of his rebuttal of comments made by Baroness Thatcher on there not having been 'enough condemnation from Muslim priests'. Mr Letwin stated that both he and the leader of the Conservative Party Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith had met with Muslim leaders all of whom had 'strongly condemned' the atrocities in the US. Mr Letwin distanced the Conservative Party from the remarks made by the former Tory party leader claiming that they were misinformed.

### Letter to the Secretary of State for Educational Skills on admission policies of faith schools

On 4th February the MCB wrote to the Rt. Hon. Estelle Morris, Secretary of State for Education, on the proposed amendment to the Education Bill to fix a quota for the inclusion of other faith children in faith schools in England and Wales. The Secretary General's letter noted, "The Muslim Council of Britain believes it is right that faith schools deliver an inclusive national curriculum and work in close partnership with other maintained schools to build greater understanding between different religious communities. If the Dobson amendment were to become law we believe that the barrier between private schools and the state sector would be built up, not broken down. Muslim schools would welcome children of all faiths as long as they are willing to be taught with the ethos of a Muslim school, however we are against fixation of a quota whatever it might be". Moreover the MCB noted that the proposed 25% quota did not apply to existing faith schools, the majority of which are Anglican and Roman Catholic schools.

## Social Policy, Welfare and Regeneration

### Article 13

Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Chair of the Social Policy, Welfare and Regeneration (SPWR) Committee, on December 12th attended the pre-launch of the Race and Employment Directives Consultation Document at the Department of Trade and Industry.

Under the Directive all member states will be required to implement provisions against discrimination in employment based on religion or belief by 2nd December 2003. It will force the government to enact legislation to address both direct and indirect religious discrimination in the workplace. The Directive will provide some protection against cases of religious discrimination in employment.

The SPWR committee has participated in a number of meetings and activities including:

#### ■ Interfaith Foundation

On the invitation of His Excellency Prince Hassan of Jordan, Imam Sajid participated in a one day conference on "The Importance of Encounter in Education".

#### ■ Islamophobia Commission

Imam Sajid attended and addressed an emergency meeting of the Islamophobia Commission on 20th September, 2001 on the Islamic view on jihad, suicide bombings and terrorist attacks. The Commission has published a booklet on "Addressing the Challenge of Prejudice and Islamophobia". Copies can be obtained from the Islamophobia Commission, 356 Holloway Road, London N7 6PA.

#### ■ Three Faiths Forum

Imam Sajid, Dr Abdul Majid Katme (Health and Medical Committee) and Dr Abdur Raheem Khan (Membership Committee and London Task Group) attended and addressed an emergency meeting of the Three Faiths Forum at the House of Commons on September 24th 2001.

#### ■ National Association of Standing Conference on Religious Education

Imam Sajid addressed the National Association of Standing Conference on Religious Education (NASACRE) on October 11th. He examined the issue of 'Schools and Muslim Pupils and Exclusion on the basis of Religious Observance'.

#### ■ Oxford Independent Advisory Group

Shiban Akbar, vice chair of SPWR Committee has been nominated for membership to the Oxford Independent Advisory Group (OIAG). The group aims to increase trust and confidence in policing amongst the minority communities in Oxford.

Shiban was invited on October 31st by a member of the Christian congregation to discuss the possibility of strengthening Muslim-Christian relations in Oxford. A meeting with Ministers from several Christian denominations will take place on November 11th.

Shiban was invited by the Area

Commander of Thames Valley Police to a 'Community Interface Luncheon' on Tuesday December 18th.

#### ■ Radio for Development

Shiban Akbar has been actively involved in the 'Radio for Development' project in co-ordination with James Greenshields, Executive Director of Radio for Development (RFD) and Mahmoud Salih, Director of Education and Information at Iqra Trust. RFD, to assist on the religion and culture project, approached the MCB. The project hopes to equip young people with skills that will allow them to participate as active citizens within their communities and beyond, providing them with greater confidence to challenge injustice and inequality.

■ Imam Sajid attended the Association of Muslim Social Scientists Conference on 'Unity & Diversity' on October 20th 2001.

■ On October 24th Imam Sajid addressed the World Congress of Faith's meeting in response to Dr Jim Kenny's speech on 'Globalisation Down'. Imam Sajid spoke on 'Islam, British Muslims and Demonization'.

■ Imam Sajid attended and addressed the International Conference on Global Ethics organised by the University of Glasgow from 29-30th October 2001.

## Legal Affairs

Suleman Osman, Secretary of the Legal Affairs Committee, attended meetings of the UK Coalition for the International Criminal Court (ICC). The UK is the 42nd state to ratify the treaty that seeks to establish an International Criminal Court for the trying of individuals accused of crimes against humanity.

## International Affairs

### Meeting with the Pakistan's Ambassador to London

An MCB delegation headed by Tanzeem Wasti, Chair of the International Affairs Committee, met with HE Abdul Kader Jaffer, Pakistani High Commissioner on Friday January 4th.

The delegation met to discuss the current situation in Pakistan and the rising tensions between Pakistan and India.

### International Affairs Committee meeting

The International Affairs Committee held a committee meeting on Friday January 4th. Members of the committee gathered to discuss events in Palestine, Kosova and Pakistan.

## Arab League

Tanzeem Wasti, Chair of the committee, along with Dr Abdul Bari, Dr Daud Abdullah and Majid az Zeer (from the MCB affiliate Palestinian Return Centre), Dr Jamil Sherif and M Sajjad met the Secretary General of the Arab League Amr Moussa in London on Friday November 9th, to brief him on the issues facing the British Muslim community

since September 11 and the stand that had been taken. The Arab League Secretary General said that the international situation was very grave and it was incumbent on Muslims the world over to act wisely and use the channels of debate and discussion to present their views.

### Meeting with General Parvez Musharraf

MCB Secretary General Yousuf Bhailok, Asst. Secretary General Afzal Khan, Tanzeem Wasti and Iqbal Sacranie attended a meeting hosted by the Pakistan Embassy in London for General Parvez Musharraf, President of Pakistan, on Thursday November 8th.

The meeting held with British Pakistanis preceded the President of Pakistan's meeting with the British Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Tony Blair.

## Business and Economics

### MCB assists Prince's Trust on framework for business loans

The Secretary General Yousuf Bhailok attended His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales' visit to Groundwork Trust in Oldham on Tuesday November 27th to launch an agreed framework on business loans for Muslims from the Prince's Trust.

Iqbal Asaria, chair of the Business and Economics Committee co-ordinated efforts between the Prince's Trust and Muslim scholars in issuing a ruling relating to Muslims that apply to the Trust for business and start-up loans. The ruling of Sheikh Nizam Yacoubi of Bahrain stipulates that the administrative fee charged by the Prince's Trust to run the scheme is not analogous to interest payments on loans and Muslims therefore, were as entitled as any other group to avail themselves of opportunities offered by such a scheme.

The Business and Economics committee has additionally indicated its willingness to assist in a 'Mentoring Scheme' and to participate in any future reviews of The Prince's Trust Business Programme. It is hoped that these collaborative measures will make the scheme more accessible to potential Muslim applicants.

### CSFI seminar on Islam and Finance

Iqbal Asaria, Chair of the Business and Economics Committee, and Iqbal Khan of HSBC, addressed an audience of City bankers on 'Islam and Finance' on Friday November 2nd.

The meeting, convened by the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation (CSFI), was organised to discuss the Islamic modalities with a group of City bankers and professionals working in banking and financial institutions. The meeting was attended by over 30 participants and an array of issues were discussed.

## Youth

### OFSTED Consultation meeting

Basma El Shayyal, Chair of the Youth committee attended the Office for Standards

in Education's consultation meeting entitled 'Inspecting Pupils: Social, Moral, Spiritual & Cultural Development in State Schools' on Thursday November 1st.

The meeting was attended by different sections of the teaching community and faith groups to address the question of how to inspect and evaluate spiritual, moral and cultural development effectively in schools.

## BBC World Service

Basma El Shayyal was interviewed by the BBC World Service Arabic division on the reaction of Muslim youth to September 11th on November 7th along with Fadi Itani, MCB Treasurer, and Majid az-Zeer of the Palestinian Return Centre.

Basma also gave an interview to the BBC World Service Arabic on British Muslim youth observing Ramadan on November 27th. The programme focused on the observance of Ramadan in Britain and religious activities organised by Muslim youth during the month.

## Health and Medical

### NHS Asian Tobacco Campaign

Dr Shuja Shafi, Secretary of the Health and Medical Committee (HMC), attended the Iftar organised by the NHS Asian Tobacco Campaign at East London Mosque on Friday November 30th.

The NHS Tobacco Campaign aims to reduce the high levels of smoking and chewing tobacco prevalent in the South Asian communities (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi). The media campaign, now in its second stage, is working with communities at the grass roots to raise awareness of the serious health risks associated with tobacco use.

The HMC committee has participated in a number of meetings and activities including:

### DoH and MCB launch Meningitis campaign

The Department of Health, in conjunction with the MCB, The Association of British Hujjaj and the Muslim Doctors and Dentists Association, launched the campaign against meningitis on Monday November 5th at the Islamic Cultural Centre in London. Attending for the MCB were doctors Mujahid Qureshi and Abdur Raheem Khan.

The Chief Medical Officer, Prof Liam Donaldson spoke on the need for British Hujjaj to ensure they were fully protected against various strains of meningitis through insisting GPs administer the quadrivalent meningococcal vaccine. The DoH is keen to counter strains of meningitis that have in the last two years claimed the lives of Hujjaj returning to the UK due to inadequate protection.

The Department of Health has prepared a leaflet entitled 'Guard against Meningitis and save lives at Hajj or Umrah this Year'. The leaflet is available in Urdu, Arabic, Bengali, Gujarati, Turkish and Somali, as well as in English, and can be obtained by writing to the DoH at PO Box 777, London SE1 6XH.

■ Dr Abdur Raheem Khan, Chair of the Membership committee, has been named Medical Adviser to the British Hajj delegation.

The Islamic Cultural Centre, London, has provided administrative support to the delegation. A team of 4 doctors from the MCB affiliate Muslim Doctors and Dentists Association are included in the delegation.

■ Dr Shuja Shafi, Consultant Microbiologist at Middlesex Hospital, on behalf of the MCB, attended the second Diana, Princess of Wales Lecture on AIDS, organised by the National AIDS Trust on December 13th.

■ Dr Abdul Majid Katme, member of the Health and Medical committee, took part in a televised debate on 'Embryonic Stem Cell Research' on Friday November 30th.

■ The Health and Medical Committee has been successful in its application to the Department of Health regarding health initiatives for ethnic minorities. The HMC has received a £25,000 grant for the establishment of an ethnically sensitive health promotion unit within the Rochdale Walk In Centre. This project is lead by Dr. Khalid Anees.

## Families and Women's Support

Dr Fatma Amer attended the Women's Relief 'Ramadan Dinner' on Wednesday November 28th.

Women's Relief is an independent voluntary organisation that provides free and confidential advice, information and support services to women. The event was organised to allow members of the local community and representatives of other voluntary women's organisations to come together and share experiences, build on networks and offer an opportunity for women to meet other women and organisations engaged in similar work.

## Research and Documentation

### Census Results 2001

Dr Jamil Sherif, Chair of the Research & Documentation Committee, and Professor Muhammad Anwar, the MCB's advisor on Census matters, held a meeting on Thursday November 29th with staff of the 'Ethnicity & Identity Branch' at the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The purpose of the meeting was to press the case for census output on the religion question to be similar in detail and scope to that proposed for ethnicity. The ONS is presently planning to place only a very limited set of statistics and cross-tabulations in the public domain.

Dr Sherif is also a member of an interfaith group, the Religious Affiliation Group, and reported back on the results of the ONS visit to its meeting on December 7th.

The MCB has also conducted an online Youth Survey in December 2001 on their views on the world crisis and their perceptions of the best as well as the most difficult aspects of living in Britain. About 100 teenagers participated and the findings will be published on the MCB web site.

## Public Affairs Committee

The MCB has written to Peers to urge support for legislation on Incitement to Religious Hatred

The Public and Legal Affairs committees of the MCB also wrote to crossbench Peers and Bishops in the House of Lords urging them to support the clauses on Incitement to Religious Hatred in the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill.

## London Task Group

The London Mayor Ken Livingstone hosted a reception for Asian Businessmen in London on Tuesday December 11th. The event had been organised to develop the Mayor's partnership with Asian businesses in the capital and in recognition of the contributions of ethnic minority businesses to the economic and cultural life of the city.

Aslam Ijaz of the London Task Group and Social Policy, Welfare and Regeneration committee represented the MCB.

## Lambeth Palace Reception

The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Dr. Muhammad Sayed Tantawi, was the guest of honour at a reception organised by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace on 30 January. This included a ceremony for the signing of an agreement for the promotion of a dialogue between Al-Azhar and the Anglican establishment. Members of the MCB present were Dr. Jafer Qureshi, Dr. Fatma Amer, Dr. Basil Mustafa, Dr. Imam Jalil Sajid and Dr. AbdurRaheem Khan.

## Other news

■ The Jewish Society of Cambridge on October 18th held a debate on multi-faith reflections on 'Has Moral Relativism Gone Too Far'. Prof. Dawud Noibi addressed the audience on behalf of the MCB.

■ At the invitation of the OSCE and the Foreign Office, the MCB has nominated Muhammad Afzal Khan, Assistant Secretary General, to participate at a conference in Kyrgyzstan in February.

## Appeal for Funds

The MCB exists to serve the community and the country and to work together for the common good. Our aim is to be representative of the Muslim community requires us to deliver a service that ensures the protection of their interests. Recent MCB activity including the lobbying of peers and ministers on vital issues such as religious discrimination, Section 28, the Prevention of Euthanasia Bill and Census 2001 all involve significant costs. The MCB relies on the dedicated input of various individuals - professionals and specialists in their fields - who give their time and energy as they too are committed to serving the community. Without adequate investment however our resources are scarce and we are frustrated in our scope for development. It is only through the sustained support of those who share the MCB vision that we can hope to realise our potential and fully deliver a service to the community. As MCB Treasurer I invite you to join us in our work and so help to promote the common good.

*Fadi Itani, Treasurer*

Bank Details: HSBC, Wembley Park Branch, 122 Wembley Park Drive, Wembley HA9 8HT, Account Number 11227408 Branch Sort Code 40-46-10

## Target 2015 booklet launch



Rt. Hon. Clare Short, Minister for International Development, joins Muslims in launching the Target 2015 initiative. From left to right: MCB Secretary General Yousuf Bhailok, Dr Hany El-Banna, Clare Short, Iqbal Asaria and Chowdhury Mueenuddin.

The Rt. Hon. Clare Short MP, Secretary of State for International Development joined the MCB, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid to launch 'Target 2015: Halving World Poverty' on Wednesday January 16th.

The booklet launch took place at Portcullis House in London. MCB Secretary General Yousuf Bhailok, Dr Hany El-Banna, Managing Director of Islamic Relief and Chowdhury Mueenuddin, Vice Chair of Muslim Aid attended the launch.

Target 2015 is a new collaboration between the British Government and British Muslim charities to realise the common good. It is an attempt to turn a shared vision of reducing global poverty into reality by working together.

Clare Short speaking at the event said that 'the duty now was not one simply of charitable donations, or moral giving, but a matter of justice'. She stated that Target 2015 was the international system's operationalisation of recommendations and agreements forged at UN conferences on how to alleviate abject poverty.

The MCB Secretary General commended Clare Short and the Chancellor, Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, for their leadership in combating world poverty through debt reduction and foreign aid. He also commended them on their approach in promoting consultation with faith communities.

## Launch of Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

Baroness Blackstone, Minister for the Arts, on December 4th launched the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPW Scheme) at Christ Church in Spitalfields, London. The scheme enables listed buildings used as places of worship to apply to for financial assistance for repairs and maintenance. An estimated £30 million will be made available from the public purse to finance essential repairs.

For information and application forms visit the LPW Scheme website at: [www.lpwscheme.org.uk](http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk)

## Pledge to British Muslims

An MCB delegation met with the Leader of the Opposition Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP at Conservative Central Office on Monday November 11th. The meeting, called by the Conservative Party leader, was arranged following the publicity surrounding the 'Pledge to British Muslims'; an Islam Awareness Week initiative.

The Conservative Party leader reiterated his support for tolerance towards British Muslims stating that his non-signing of the pledge was not intended to deter from his party's commitment to increase and improve the role of British Muslims in British society and party politics.

**We are looking for sponsors for the newsletter and other MCB projects. Those interested are kindly requested to contact the MCB Office for details.**

## The Arab and Muslim Worlds - What Next?!

Dr Hany El Banna represented the MCB at the conference held at the House of Commons entitled 'The Arab and Muslim Worlds - What Next?!' on Wednesday November 28th.

Dr El Banna delivered a speech on the nature of the Muslim diaspora community in Western Europe and its engagement at all levels: social, political and economic, in the host societies. He noted that Muslims were now citizens and stakeholders in their respective societies and were in a good position to bridge the chasm of ignorance that had for so long divided the Oriental and Occidental worlds.

Dr El Banna cautioned against the courting of fringe groups in the Muslim community whose statements did not represent the true face of Islam. He also called upon Muslims to heed the message of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), for the adoption of the balanced, 'middle way'.

Dr El Banna is the Managing Director of Islamic Relief.

**THE MCB WISHES ALL READERS  
EID MUBARAK ON THE OCCASION  
OF EID UL ADHA**

## Launch of London Muslim Centre

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and HRH Prince Mohammed-al-Faisal-al-Saud jointly launced the London Muslim Centre project in Whitechapel on 23 November 2001. The London Muslim Centre project is the flagship faith-based regeneration project initiated by East London Mosque, initially known simply as "the extension project".

The new building, immediately adjacent to the Mosque, will contain expanded community facilities that can be used for a range of purposes from conferences and community events to over-flow prayer facilities for Jummah prayer on Friday and over Ramadan. There will be retail and office space, youth and women's facilities, educational facilities, ICT centre, café, library and many other services.

Chowdhry Mueen-Uddin of East London Mosque and the MCB Central Working Committee thanked both Princes for giving up their time to offer support for the Mosque. In a speech very well received by the Princes, Mr Mueen-Uddin commented that he was tempted to say that Royal Princes were a bit like London buses, "you wait for ages for one to come along, and then two arrive at once"!

## Muslim Community in Britain responds to Afghan Crisis with staggering £1.3 million!

The British Muslim community has responded to Islamic Relief's Emergency Afghanistan Appeal with tremendous generosity.

Within a few weeks of its launch the appeal has raised an incredible £1.3 million. 'Your donation is saving the lives of thousands of innocent Afghans, many of whom are women and children. Islamic Relief conveys to you their sincere prayers and thanks', said Imran Madden, Islamic Relief's UK Manager.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE MCB  
SUNDAY 28 APRIL 2002  
LONDON  
Affiliates are requested to  
respond promptly to  
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by the MCB office**

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MCB acknowledges with gratitude the sponsorship of this newsletter by **Muslim Aid**.



*Whoever saved a life it would be as if he saved the life of humanity' Quran 5:32.*

Since the founding of Muslim Aid in 1985 this Qur'anic verse has been guiding Muslim Aid's work to alleviate the suffering and poverty of people around the world from Albania to Zimbabwe'.

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