

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

A step towards greater consultation, cooperation and coordination on Muslim Affairs in the UK.

Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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Weekly Updates on Reports, Committees and Events: **Issue 29**

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Reports and Events Update

September 11th Reflections

The Muslim Council of Britain has scheduled an evening meeting at the Commonwealth Institute on 11th September 2002 to express sadness and sorrow for what happened last year, and also to reflect on the aftermath that has led to the loss of further innocent life and violations of civil liberties in many countries, and ominous threats of war against countries that had no involvement in those tragic events. Reverent Richard Charteris, The Bishop of London will be the Chief Guest at the event. Other MCB initiatives will be announced shortly.

Muslim Safety Forum Meeting

On 14th August 2002, Dr Abdul Raheem Khan attended a Muslim Safety Forum meeting at New Scotland Yard. The exploratory discussions recommended that the Forum exist independently of Scotland Yard and considered how this would be facilitated. The Forum seeks to register as a charity, establish a website and elect a body of Muslim representatives to participate. These issues will be discussed in greater details at a later date with the Chair of the London Task group and other MCB officers.

Committees Update

Media Committee

Article in The Daily Express

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the Media Committee, has written an article printed in the Daily Express speaking out against the threats of violence against Britain made by Omar Bakri and Abu Hamza al-Masri. Inayat writes that "the real victims of their hateful and inflammatory rhetoric have been British Muslims who are left facing a racist backlash" going on to describe hate attacks against mosques, cemeteries and Muslim individuals and urging that "it is surely time the media stopped giving undue coverage to fringe figures in our community."

He emphasised that the majority of British Muslims are opposed to a war against Iraq, but their rationale is down to the "undoubtedly heavy toll it would take on innocent Iraqi civilians and the unpredictable consequences in an already unstable region...Our opposition to a new war will be expressed only through democratic channels by conveying our concerns to our MPs and engaging in a debate with those who do not agree with us."

Letter to the Telegraph

Writing in response to an article that appeared in the Telegraph which mentions the threats of violence made by Omar Bakri and Abu Hamza, Inayat Bunglawala has today requested that the Editor include a more balanced viewpoint by putting forth the MCB perspective. (See above item).

Letter to the Guardian

Inayat Bunglawala has written to the Guardian editor to thank Raekha Prasad for her moving piece in today's issue about the depressing conditions being faced by the Ahmadi family now they have been returned to Germany. Inayat wrote of the disappointment felt by many that the Home Office did not use their discretionary power to allow this family to remain in the UK on compassionate grounds.

Social Affairs Committee

Mental Health Issues

On Friday 9th August, Shiban Akbar, Chair of the Social Affairs Committee, met with Gerard Leavey, the Assistant Director of Research & Development at Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust in Oxford. Mr Leavey is working in collaboration with Professor M King, of University College London, undertaking research to examine the relationship between religious organisations and mental health services in London.

The meeting discussed experiences in mental health issues relating to the Muslim Community. Specifically the meeting focussed on whether those that required psychiatric care believed that their problems could be addressed and help given in a spiritual context. The meeting also addressed the issue of whether religious leaders such as Imams were involved in the professional teams that assist those with psychological difficulties.

Cowley Road

On Monday 12th August, Shiban Akbar met with Bruce Houlston of East Oxford Action, Oxford, to discuss and resolve drug problems and other crimes especially amongst the Pakistani youths in Oxford. The meeting also highlighted the increase of prostitution on the Cowley Road, an area with a high concentration of ethnic minorities and Muslims live. Cowley Road also houses two of the four Mosques in Oxford.

Research & Documentation Committee

Islam & Health

Dr Aziz Sheikh, Chair of the Research & Documentation Committee, gave a presentation on 'Islam and Health' at the Tajdid 2002 conference in Nottingham on 10 August 2002.

At the same conference, on 14th August 2002, he also ran a workshop on 'The Role of Muslim Medics in a Pluralist Society'.

Census

On 16th August, Dr Aziz Sheikh will represent the MCB at a meeting at the FAIR office, with its CEO Abdul Aziz and Mr N Hameed, a civil servant from the Cabinet Office, working on religious diversity issues. The aim of the meeting is to discuss the ONS post-census report on religion.

Events

Event: **Young Muslims UK Sisters South England Summer Camp**

Date: Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th August

Held By: Young Muslims UK

Venue: Frylands Wood Scout Camp, Featherbed Lane, Croydon, Surrey

Contact: Tel: 07740 350945 Website: www.ymuk.net Email: yms_westlon@yahoo.co.uk

Information: What is wealth? What does it mean to be wealthy? And what relevance does today's "popular culture"

have to the UK's Muslim youth? What should our aims, aspirations and ambitions be in life? Is there a

place for Islam in all of this? A unique opportunity where you will have a chance to discuss all of these

issues, and more. In addition, there will be a whole range of activities that will exercise the body and the mind.

Event: From Sabra and Shatila to Jenin: the humanitarian and legal consequences

Date: 17th September 2002

Time: 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm

Held By: The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC)

Venue: School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Lecture Theatre, Main Building, Thornhaugh Street,

Russell Square, London, WC1 0XG

Contact: PRC Head Office: Tel: 0208 453 0919; e-mail: info@prc.org.uk;

Website: www.prc.org.uk

Information: This public seminar marks the 20th anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila masasacre and will be

chaired by Mr John Austin MP

Event: Muslim Demographics - the way ahead

Date: Thursday 26th September 2002

Contact: Chair of ReDoc, Dr Aziz Sheikh, c/o MCB office

Information: Topics for discussion include the census output on the religion question

Event: Million's March For Palestine

Date: 28th September 2002

Time: 1.00 pm

Held By: The Muslim Association of Britain

Venue: Congregating on Embankment and ending up in Hyde Park

Contact: MAB Head Office: 020 7272 2888 Mobile: 07958 329 879

Information: Play your part in the biggest mobilisation for Palestine in this country ever, insha'Allah.

It is a demonstration in support of all the Palestinian people. It is now no longer a concern only for

Muslims; but for anyone, Muslim or non-Muslim, who realises and is aware that every human on Earth

has a right to live and be treated fairly.

Event: Muslim Education in Europe Conference

Date: 27th - 29th September 2002

Held By: The Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK), The Association of Muslim Social Scientists

(Germany) & The Islamic Centre of Ireland.

Venue: Bonn, Germany

Contact: AMSS (UK), P.O. Box 126, Richmond, Surrey TW9 2UD, UNITED KINGDOM, Fax: 44 (20) 8940 4014

e-mail: amss@amssuk.com

Information: This conference sets out to coordinate and exchange expertise and experiences in monitoring, analysing

and assessing the development of education as it affects European Muslims. In doing so, it seeks to

develop an educational rationale which is capable of meeting the needs of the Muslim presence in the

West.

