

# THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

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

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## Muslim Council of Britain Weekly E-Newsletter

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**Friday 13 August 2004**

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## Reports and Events

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### **Home Office bid to outlaw incitement to religious hatred welcomed**

The Muslim Council of Britain welcomed the announcement made on 7 July 2004 by the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, regarding plans to outlaw incitement to religious hatred in the UK. The MCB continues to urge the government to introduce comprehensive legislation outlawing religious discrimination in the civil arena either by extending the Race Relations Act to include religion or under a new Single Equalities Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of race and religion. MCB Secretary General Iqbal Sacranie noted "One of the most important freedoms for all of us must be the freedom from hate."

For the full press release refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

### **Stop & Search Figures**

On 2 July 2004 the MCB released a statement regarding Home Office figures which revealed a huge 302% increase in the number of Asians who were stopped and searched by the police in 2002/2003 and served to confirm the impression that since 9/11 institutionalised racism in the police force has gradually been morphing into an institutionalised Islamophobia. "These figures are quite devastating and confirm what we have been hearing anecdotally from the experiences of a worryingly large and ever-increasing number of young Muslim men," said Iqbal Sacranie, MCB Secretary General. The MCB called upon the Home Office to re-examine this issue in six months time to see if there has indeed been any improvement on the issue of Stop and Search.

In a further statement, the Muslim Council of Britain criticised Conservative Party Leader Michael Howard for his speech in Middlesbrough (10th August) in which he vowed not to implement a key recommendation of the MacPherson Inquiry on Police Stop and Search activities. Dr Abdul Bari, Deputy Secretary General of the MCB said: "We are astonished...one would have thought that a Party that wishes to form the next government would have consulted with key stakeholders who have experience in this area before making such a commitment."

For the full press releases refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

### **CPS Fails to Protect Arabs and British Muslims**

On 1 July 2004 the Muslim Council of Britain issued a press release responding to the decision by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) not to prosecute the former television presenter Robert Kilroy-Silk for making racist anti-Arab remarks in his Sunday Express column dated January 4th 2004. MCB Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie said: "Once again, the CPS has failed to protect Arabs and British Muslims from overt incitement. Kilroy has a long history of making hateful remarks about Islam,

Muslims and Arabs. This was an opportunity for the CPS to show that racist remarks about Arabs are every bit as intolerable as racist remarks about Jews or any other racial grouping. The CPS has sadly failed this crucial litmus test and its decision will regrettably give comfort to bigots and xenophobes."

For the full press release refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **"Will Cummins" and the British Council**

Following the series of articles by one Will Cummins appearing in the Sunday Telegraph in July which revealed a wilful misreading of Islam, The Guardian's Diary column alleged that the author was one of the British Council's employees, Harry Cummins. The published articles included such assertions as "Christians are the original inhabitants and rightful owners of almost every Muslim land and behave with a humility quite unlike the menacing behaviour we have come to expect from the Muslims who have forced themselves on Christendom."

In the light of the Guardian's allegation against Mr Cummins, the Muslim Council of Britain made swift representations to the British Council. Subsequently an investigation has been undertaken during which time the British Council have suspended their employee pending the outcome.

The full correspondence between the MCB and the British Council can be found online at [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **Media Committee Seminar**

The Muslim Council of Britain's Media Committee are holding a special one-day seminar on Saturday 25 September 2004 at the brand new London Muslim Centre in Whitechapel.

The line up of speakers includes Professor Greg Philo (co-author of 'Bad News From Israel'), senior journalists from The Times, The Guardian and the Independent on Sunday; a senior editor of BBC News Online; representatives from OFCOM and the Press Complaints Commission and editors of the main UK Muslim publications. The cost of the seminar is £50 per person (including lunch and refreshments). Creche facilities will also be available at an additional cost.

For further information refer to [www.mcb.org.uk/mediatraining.html](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mediatraining.html)

## **DEFRA Consultation**

A five member Muslim delegation led by MCB Secretary-General Iqbal Sacranie, met Ben Bradshaw MP, Minister of State for the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), on Monday 28 June 2004, to present their views on the matter of religious slaughter of animals without stunning. The MCB delegation also included Dr Shuja Shafi, Chair of MCB's Health & Medical Committee, Dr Yunes Teinaz, Advisor to the Islamic Cultural Centre and Chowdhury Mueen Uddin, Deputy Director, Islamic Foundation, Leicester.

Welcoming the Government's decision to retain the exemption from stunning for the Halal and (Jewish) Schechita methods of slaughtering animals, Iqbal Sacranie said: "The Halal method is the least painful and most humane way forward. We are pleased that the Minister has agreed to review his Department's draft response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council's report in light of other scientific evidence available."

Following this meeting, the MCB's Health & Medical Committee submitted a response to DEFRA on the issue of farmed animals and 'dhabiha' - the basic principles that make it the least painful method of slaughter. The submission noted that the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) statement that "slaughter without pre-stunning is unacceptable" was misleading and not based on objective evidence.

For the press release on this issue refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **MCB Launches Second Residential Leadership Development Programme**

Following its first successful 10-day Leadership Development Programme which ran from October 2003 - April 2004 and comprised of two three-day residential modules and four single days, The Muslim Council of Britain will be running two parallel programmes of 20 participants each in 2004/5. The first will be for those aged between 19-25, and the second, for those aged 26-40.

The courses are to be run from purpose-built training centres such as the Sundridge Park Conference Centre, Bromley. In addition to skills training, the emphasis will be on self-development, systems thinking and imbuing a spirit of Islamic values. It will further develop participants' understanding of the diversity and dynamics of British Muslim community.

For further information, please refer to [www.mcb.org.uk/training](http://www.mcb.org.uk/training). If you or any of your colleagues who may be potential participants are interested in the programme, please complete or forward the application form found online and return to the MCB Office by Monday 13 September 2004.

If you would like to find out more or would like to have an informal discussion with a previous participant or the Programme Director or Co-ordinator, please email: [admin@mcb.org.uk](mailto:admin@mcb.org.uk).

## **Media Training Day**

On Saturday 10 July 2004 the Muslim Council of Britain organised a useful day of one on one radio and TV interviews facilitated by journalist Alex Kirby at Devonport House, a conference centre in Greenwich. Mr Kirby provided practical tips and interviewed each of the participants via the radio and TV mediums. Throughout the day, Mr Kirby provided additional insights into the workings of the media organisations and the "mindset" of journalists. The MCB intends to organise similar training sessions in the near future.

## **Books for Schools-Manchester SACRE hosts conference**

Following the official launch of the Books For Schools Project in March 2004 a follow-on conference was organised on 30 June 2004 where resources were presented to an audience of Manchester school heads, RE teachers and members of SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education).

After a welcome by Councillor Tommy Judge, Head of SACRE, Tahir Alam, Chair of the MCB Education committee, delivered a clear and detailed overview of the project, commenting on the lack of Islamic resources available in schools today and highlighting the importance of sharing common values, at a time when misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islam are rife.

This was followed by interactive presentations of both the Primary and Secondary resources. Local head teachers positively contributed to the evenings proceedings, particularly through emphasising the fact that respect for any religion can only be achieved through education and understanding, which in turn will create acceptance between cultures and a harmonious society.

The conference was concluded with a vote of thanks to the Books for Schools team from Mr Mick Waters, Chief Education Officer of Manchester City, for the professional presentations and assured the team of his continuing support.

## **MCB decries character assassination of Dr Al-Qaradawi**

On 7 July 2004 The Muslim Council of Britain issued a statement voicing its concern at the inflammatory reports in the press regarding the visit to the UK by the distinguished Muslim Scholar Dr Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, President of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, who is a voice of reason and understanding. The MCB statement underlined the belief that the smear campaign against Dr Al-Qaradawi was being orchestrated by the Zionist lobby who were evidently angered by Dr Al-Qaradawi's staunch opposition to Israeli State brutality against the Palestinian people.

For the full press release refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **MCB deplores vilification of Muslims institutions**

The Muslim Council of Britain released a statement on 29 July deploring in the strongest terms the front-page article in The Times printed on the same day as clearly part of an ongoing campaign to demonise Islam and mainstream Muslim organisations in the UK. The Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Iqbal Sacranie, said that the article, in trying to link two prominent and respectable British Muslim institutions with "terrorists", was baseless and dangerous.

"There appears to be an unfortunate campaign to vilify Islam and British Muslims by some right-wing and pro-Israeli commentators. This is not responsible journalism, especially at a time when all of us should be seeking to promote better understanding and enhance community cohesion."

For the full statement refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **Humanitarian crises beset Sudan and Bangladesh**

The Muslim Council of Britain has been following with deep concern the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of Sudan. On Monday 26 July an MCB delegation met the Sudanese Ambassador to discuss relief needs and better understand the situation on the ground from the perspective of the Sudanese Government. Recognising the overriding responsibility of the government of the Republic of Sudan to ensure the well-being of its citizens, the Ambassador, His Excellency Dr Hasan Abdin, attended a meeting organised by the Muslim Council of Britain on 4 August 2004 which briefed Muslim community leaders and Muslim media on the crisis in Darfur. Representatives from Muslim relief agencies also attended and spoke at the meeting. Additionally the MCB has obtained briefings from independent sources.

MCB affiliates working in the field of emergency relief have launched special appeals to aid refugees of the Darfur region in Western Sudan and in flood stricken Bangladesh.

## **Carnage in Najaf al-Sharif**

The carnage in Najaf is setting the scene for years of strife in Iraq. The MCB believes there is no military necessity for the excessive and disproportionate use of force by the Americans in Najaf. Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, Deputy Secretary-General of the MCB said: "We did not realise that the US vision of a 'liberated and democratic' Iraq would include the bombing of civilians in their places of worship..."

For the full statement refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **Attacks on Churches in Iraq**

Following the targeting of churches in Baghdad and Mosul on 1 August 2004, which killed at least 11 people and injured many more. Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary-General of the MCB said, "Whatever the context and whatever the circumstances there is no justification whatsoever for attacking places of worship. It is repulsive and totally unacceptable."

## **Imams and Language skills**

On 22 July 2004 Home Secretary David Blunkett announced a new pre-entry English language requirement for ministers of religion, including imams, that will come into force from September 2004. The MCB, in the course of the Home Office's consultation with the community on this issue, had pressed that the regulations should not apply to imams visiting the UK on lecturing tours. MCB affiliate the Islamic Foundation, that runs training courses for imams, had also urged that the requirement of Level 6 (IELTS) was unreasonable and Level 4 should be adopted - this proposal was accepted for a two year period for all faiths.

## **Meeting with Iranian Delegation**

On Friday 23 July 2004 an all women MCB delegation led by Dr Reefat Drabu, Chair, Women & Family Affairs Committee (WAFA) attended a meeting with a delegation from Iran headed by Mrs Zahra Shojaie, Advisor to the President and Head of the Centre for Women's Participation, at the invitation of Iranian Embassy in London. The meeting was attended by the Iranian Ambassador Morteza Sarmadi, the Deputy Ambassador Mr Majid Ghahremani and First Secretary Mr Malek Hossein Givzad.

The MCB delegates gave an overview of the role, achievements and voluntary nature of the organisation. The parties exchanged ideas, discussed areas of mutual interest and explored ways of working together in future that would strengthen cultural ties and be a mutually enriching experience.

Iranian representatives also included Mrs Azam Nouri, Legal Advisor to the Interior Minister; Ms Paridokht Vahidi, Legal Advisor to the Cultural, Education and Research Deputy of Planning and Management; Mrs Rafat Bayat, Member of Parliament and Ms Leila Onsori, Expert on Women's Development, International Development Centre for Women's Participation.

Delegates from the MCB included Mrs Jasmine Ansari, Secretary, WAFA; Ms Shiban Akbar, former Chair, Social Affairs Committee; Mrs Adeela Rashid, Muslim Women's Helpline; Mrs Tahera Versi, Advertising Manager, The Muslim News and Mrs Tahmina Saleem, the MCB's Press Liaison Officer.

## **Muslim GPs and medical students**

Following a front-page article in the Mail on Sunday on 1 August 2004 which alleged that Muslim doctors in Britain are refusing to treat patients who suffer from sexually transmitted diseases, the MCB released a statement deploring and rejecting this unfounded assertion. "A doctor's duty is to treat his/her patients irrespective of how the illness was acquired. We are not allowed to be judgemental - that is the Creator's prerogative. The Qur'an clearly encourages the saving or attempting to save even one human life which it equates with the saving of all mankind. The statement that the Qur'an "'forbids them from helping sufferers' is totally wrong and a misrepresentation of facts. The Ahadith (sayings of the Prophet) explain that for every illness Allah has also provided a cure."

A letter from the MCB's Health & Medical Committee was published in the Mail on Sunday the following week on 8 August 2004. For the full letter refer to the Media section, Letters to the Editor/Producer at [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **Joiners**

### **MCBDirect Project Officer**

Fereeha M Idrees has joined the MCBDirect project in August. Fereeha has an MA in Journalism Studies from the University of Westminster and many years of practical experience as a film

scriptwriter and newspaper journalist. She has also served as Communications Officer for two years with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Fereeha describes herself as a "huge fan of the MCB". She will be based at the Stratford Office and can be contacted on [mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk](mailto:mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk)

### **Press Liaison Officer**

Tahmina Saleem has joined The MCB's Media Committee as its Press Liaison Officer. She will be the main point of contact for media related enquiries and can be contacted at [media@mcb.org.uk](mailto:media@mcb.org.uk)

The MCB welcomes them on board and we hope they will find the work and atmosphere fulfilling and rewarding, insha Allah.

### **Dinner at the Tate**

On the invitation of Dr Stephen Deuchar, Director of Tate Britain, Dr Akber Mohamedali, MCB Treasurer, attended a dinner on 19 July 2004 to mark the collaboration between the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and Tate Britain.

### **Launch for Charter Renewal**

On the invitation of Mr Michael Grade, Chairman of the BBC, Mr Iqbal Sacranie, MCB Secretary General attended the launch of the BBC publication "Building Public Value: renewing the BBC for a digital world", the BBC's contribution to the DCMS consultation and debate on Charter Renewal in 2006. The launch was held on 29 June 2004 at the Royal Institute of British Architects. BBC Chairman Michael Grade and Director-General Mark Thompson laid out the BBC agenda for change, outlining the future contribution the BBC could make to life in a modern, diverse and fully digital Britain over the next decade.

### **British Muslims and the Labour Market**

The launch of the report 'Aspirations and Reality: British Muslims and the Labour Market' by Zamila Bunglawala took place at the Work Foundation on 22 July 2004. The Secretary General of the MCB attended and spoke at the launch welcoming the findings of the report which addressed issues such as unemployment and inactivity levels along with specific barriers affecting Muslim youth and Muslim women. The report provided detailed statistical analysis of the resource and infrastructure limitations faced by British Muslims. The report called for a Muslim employment target to help address the imbalance currently faced by Muslims in order to ensure employment practices are able to meet their needs.

### **European Court's Anti-Hijab Ruling Discriminates Against Muslim Citizens**

The Muslim Council of Britain disagreed strongly with the ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg, on Tuesday 29 June 2004 in the case of Leyla Sahin v Turkey. The international court, whose decisions also have effect in the UK Courts, ruled that the prohibition of the Islamic

headscarf (hijab) by the Turkish government in universities did not violate Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

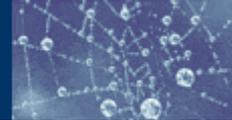
## **MCB's Website in the news**

The Oxford academic Liat Radcliffe, writing in the recent issue of 'Islam and Christian-Muslim relations' noted: "[The MCB] maintains, and regularly updates, a comprehensive and easily navigable website that includes both current and historical information about what it has done to further various causes of concern to British Muslims, including meetings held in government and media circles". In researching his article on "the not insubstantial participation of British Muslims in British foreign policy making", the author made considerable use of source material drawn from the website.

## **RIMA Re-Launch**

Dr Abdul Bari, MCB Deputy Secretary General attended the re-launch of the new-look RIMA (Race in the Media Award), the flagship media awards ceremony for the CRE, held at Kensington Roof Gardens, London on 8 July 2004. RIMA is aimed at recognising those journalists, editors, producers and performers who have covered race issues in a responsible and sensitive way. Trevor Phillips, Chair of CRE London, welcomed attendees and outlined his vision for the new-look awards. Special guest at the event was Rory Bremnar who amongst other guises appeared in the 'spitting image' of Bush and Blair.

A MULTI-FAITH POLICE SERVICE



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## **Affiliate News**

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### **Notice to MCB Affiliates**

The Muslim Council of Britain would like to remind its affiliates that they can advertise events, news and job opportunities nationally free of charge through the MCB website and MCB E-Newsletter.

- To register events go to: [http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/event\\_add.php](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/event_add.php)
- To register community news go to: [http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/news\\_add.php](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/news_add.php)
- To register jobs: send and email to: [mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk](mailto:mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk).

Automatic registration will soon be possible insha'Allah.

### **Pro-Hijab Conference**

Pro-Hijab, a network of organisations committed to protecting the right of Muslim women to wear Hijab and the freedom of religion for all people of faith, held a conference on 12 July 2004. The conference

was attended by more than 300 delegates, representing 102 organisations from 15 countries around the world. The speakers included amongst others the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Professor Tariq Ramadan, College of Geneva; Sarah Joseph, EMEL Magazine; Anas Al Takriti, Muslim Association of Britain and Milena Buyum, National Assembly Against Racism.

Issues discussed included Hijab, the consequences of its ban in France and other European countries, its significance to Muslim women, human rights implications and legal actions against restrictions on religious practices, the impact of the ban on the host city - London, and all other communities, and the way ahead for challenging the ban.

The conference served as a starting point to bring about educational campaigns for a greater understanding of the Hijab in order to create greater harmony between different religious communities. Pro-Hijab is calling for September 4 2004 to be marked as International Hijab Solidarity Day and is in the process of organising worldwide events as a mark of solidarity with all those Muslim women and girls subjected to Hijab bans.

For further information refer to [www.prohijab.net](http://www.prohijab.net), E-mail: [info@prohijab.net](mailto:info@prohijab.net)

### **MYH Runners in the British 10K Race 2004**

The MCB Affiliate, Muslim Youth Helpline registered a team of runners for the British 10K Race on Sunday 1 August 2004. Last year's team of 12 runners, with the kind help of generous sponsors, managed to raise over £2,000 for the Helpline enabling the launch of a freephone telephone service. Since then the Helpline has been able to respond to over 1,400 further enquiries from young Muslims in need. This year MYH had a team of 30 runners who raised further funds towards the cost of extending the Helpline's opening hours to Mon - Fri 6pm - 12 am and Sat - Sun 12pm - 12am.

For further information please email [info@myh.org.uk](mailto:info@myh.org.uk) or call 0870 774 3518

### **Our Children Our Future**

A one-day international educational conference on "Our Children Our Future," organised by MCB Affiliate Jami'atul Ummah - a prominent Islamic Secondary School in East London, was held on Sunday 11 July 2004 at Wembley Conference Centre, London. More than 3,000 people attended the conference at which Shaykh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, President of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, was the Chief Guest, delivering a powerful speech urging unity in the face of problems quoting the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who said, "A believer to another believer is like a structure of a building which strengthens each other - there is a mutual process of strengthening and help."

The Conference covered a wide range of issues from the education of Muslim children to the broader issues such as the economy and racial and religious tolerance that affect the lives of Muslims in the UK.

Professor Khurshid Ahmad, Rector of the Leicester-based Markfield Institute for Higher Education and a Senator from Pakistan said that children are also blessings from God. "They are like our eyes. Give them time, love, care and also share with them. . .It is our responsibility to make our home their first educational institution."

Conference organiser Hasan Mueenuddin said in a statement: "We are unanimous about one issue: that in order to survive with dignity and honour in this multi-cultural society, we need to be actively involved to motivate our children that they can achieve high standard of moral education."

Further speakers included Dr Shabbir Ally, Director of the Toronto-based Institute of Islamic Information, Dr. Kamal el-Helbawy, London, Maulana Mahmudul Hassan Khan, President of the Da'watul Islam UK & Eire and Maulana Abdur Rahman Al-Madani, Principal, Jami'atul Ummah and Hasan Mueenuddin, Secretary General of the Da'watul Islam.

## **ISB Meets with Home Office & Foreign Office Representatives**

On Thursday 8 July 2004 in East London, members of the MCB Affiliate the Islamic Society of Britain (ISB) met with Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien and Fiona Mactaggart of the Home Office. The meeting was organised at the behest of the Foreign Office and Home Office as part of a consultation with members of the Muslim community.

The meeting was chaired by Tahmina Saleem who commended the government for its stance in relation to Muslim schools and the promise to extend the law to include Incitement to Religious Hatred, noting however that there remained issues of concern including the invasion of Iraq, no progress in Palestine and at home Muslims bearing the brunt of anti-terror legislation with a three fold increase in young Muslim men being stopped and searched. There followed a lively question and answer session. The meeting was welcomed and attendees resolved to build on such exchanges. Further details of the meeting and other ISB initiatives can be found online at [www.isb.org.uk](http://www.isb.org.uk)



Since its conception in 1991 the Human Relief Foundation has saved lives and relieved suffering amongst hundreds of communities, through aid, education and care. Originally established as a response to the first Gulf War, HRF has become the first point of reference for donors and sister agencies who wish to help the people of Iraq. HRF have conducted projects around the world: in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. HRF offices are now located in London, Birmingham, Rotterdam, Damascus, Peshawar, Baghdad and Basra.

E-Mail: [donate@hrf.co.uk](mailto:donate@hrf.co.uk) website: <http://www.hrf.co.uk>

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## Committees Update

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### Media Committee (MC)

#### Letter to the Observer

On 8 August 2004, Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the Media Committee, wrote to Roger Alton, Editor at the Observer regarding the article which appeared in the Observer of the same date entitled "Jews predict record level of hate attacks" by Jamie Doward. The article omitted to make mention of a number of key facts relayed by the MCB Media Committee, not least the fact that around 60% of the 375 anti-semitic 'attacks' in 2003 recorded by the CST also included verbal abuse.

Additionally Mr Bunglawala noted that Doward's article made no mention of the "high-profile 'anti-semitic' attack on the Paris Metro against a young Jewish mother recently. It got worldwide headlines because the mother said that she had been set upon by a group of North African - Muslim - youths. It later transpired that she had invented the story - but this exposure of a hoax got nowhere near the same level of publicity, so you can imagine the impression that had been left in the minds of many readers."

For the full text of the letter refer to the media section, letters to the editor/producer at [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

#### Letter to the BBC

On 19 July 2004, The Media Committee wrote to Mr Ford at the BBC expressing appreciation for the brave undercover reporting carried out by Jason Gwynne in the BBC1 documentary regarding the activities of the British National Party, stating "The documentary was gripping from start to finish and was an essential contribution to a more informed public debate about the activities of the BNP."

#### Article in the Times

On 12 August 2004, an article by the Secretary of the MCB Media Committee, Inayat Bunglawala, was published in the Times poignantly analysing the systematic dehumanising of British Muslims. "For many years, Muslim immigrant communities in the UK had adopted a 'keep our heads down' mentality but the relentless pressure of the anti-terror raids and the stop and search activities, allied with a steady diet of often virulently hostile commentary - usually from pro-Israeli quarters - in our press denigrating Islam and its followers, is persuading an increasing number of British-born Muslims that it is time to say enough is enough."

For the full article refer to [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk) or [Muslims in Britain are being turned into pariahs](#)

#### "Bad News from Israel"

Inayat Bunglawala, Secretary of the MCB Media committee has reviewed the book "Bad News from Israel" commenting that it is a "a remarkable and scientific study of the manner in which the main UK terrestrial news broadcasters (BBC and ITV) cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Professor Greg Philo and Dr Mike Berry of the Glasgow University Media Group, have detailed how news coverage tends to promote the Israeli perspective while ensuring that viewers remain ignorant of the actual

causes that lie behind that long-running tragedy."

The review goes on to add "In an area where there is so much disinformation and even calculated attempts to prevent the truth being given an airing, this is a vitally important book that will help remove the scales from a lot of peoples' eyes. Indeed, in an added bonus, the first ninety pages of this book are devoted to a superb concise history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the perspective of both Israeli and Palestinian sources. It is a gripping and frequently shocking read." One of the co-authors, Greg Philo, will be speaking at the upcoming Media Seminar to be held at the London Muslim Centre on 25 September 2004. For further details refer to [www.mcb.org.uk/mediatraining.html](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mediatraining.html)

"Bad News from Israel" by Greg Philo & Mike Berry, 2004, Pluto Press, pp315, ISBN 0-7453-2061-9

### **Letter to Evening Standard**

On 29 June 2004, the Secretary of the Media Committee wrote to Ms Veronica Wadley, Editor at the Evening Standard regarding the feature article "How I Escaped A Brutal Honour Killing" published on Monday 28 June 2004. The article contained a number of major inaccuracies that would serve to reinforce some very negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. The writer did not clarify that "forced" marriages are regarded as unIslamic by mainstream Muslim scholars. The man and woman concerned must each individually grant their consent to their marriage. If consent is withheld then these "marriages" are regarded as null and void under Islamic law. Furthermore no clarity was provided on the fact that the 117 murders classified as "Honour" Killings were carried out by a range of people of different faiths including Christians, Sikhs and Hindus as well as Muslims. Mr Bunglawala wrote with the hope that the pages of the Evening Standard "were not used to incite hatred of the Islamic faith."

For the full text of the letter refer to the media section, letters to the editor/producer at [www.mcb.org.uk](http://www.mcb.org.uk)

## **Research & Documentation Committee (ReDoc)**

### **Issue 8 of ReDoc Research E-Newsletter**

Shabana Khan and Shadi Bashir have produced Issue 8 of the ReDoc Research E-newsletter which has been published and is available from the MCBDirect webpage. ([www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect))

### **Congenital Disorders in Children**

Prof Aziz Sheikh, Chair of ReDoc, held an initial meeting with Well Child Charity in Birmingham on 1 July 2004 to discuss collaboration between this leading charity and the MCB on mounting a large Birmingham-based multi-ethnic cohort study to investigate the genetic basis of congenital disorders in children.

### **Muslim Heritage Meeting**

Prof Aziz Sheikh attended the Advisory Board meeting of the internationally-acclaimed website MuslimHeritage.com on 18 June in London.

### **Islamic Medical Ethics Course**

Prof Aziz Sheikh gave the keynote address to the Islamic Medical Ethics Course held at the Islamic Foundation, Leciester on 13 June

For further details of the course refer

to [http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/feature\\_print.php?ann\\_id=239](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/feature_print.php?ann_id=239)

### **Migration and Community**

Prof Aziz Sheikh spoke at the 'Migration and Community: Opportunities and Challenges' Conference exploring this issue with respect to Islam and Muslims on 17 June at St George's West Church, Edinburgh. In the chair was the distinguished Scottish cultural critic Joyce MacMillan.

### **Legal Affairs Committee (LAC)**

#### **CPS Meeting**

The Crown Prosecution Service held a meeting with Muslim community organisations and representatives on 29 June 2004. The MCB was represented by Sadiq Khan, Chair, Legal Affairs Committee (LAC). The meeting was chaired by the DPP, who had called the meeting, with an interest to develop rapport with diverse communities early in his tenure. The meeting was also attended by Khalid Sofi, LAC Vice Chair and senior officers from the CPS.

The meeting discussed the role of the CPS and its vision for the future; prosecution of terrorist cases; prosecution of racially and religiously aggravated crimes (including incitement to racial hatred); a new offence of incitement to religious hatred; charging patterns against Muslims; and employment patterns for Muslims in the CPS. Muslim participants also emphasised the need for the CPS to de-couple Islam and Muslims from terrorism in its language and approach, and for the CPS to develop better monitoring categorisations and systems to capture the experiences of Muslims.

#### **Home Affairs Committee Evidence**

On 8 July 2004, The Home Affairs Committee looking at the powers of police for Stop and Search under Section 41 and arrest powers and procedures under Section 44 met in the House of Commons. Sadiq Khan and Khalid Sofi, Chair and Vice Chair of LAC respectively gave evidence on issues concerning Stop and Search. Members were very positive towards the concerns raised by MCB representatives. Other witnesses included Trevor Philips, Chair of CRE; Sir John Quentin, Chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority and Tim Rees, MPA.

#### **CSA Survey**

In the light of the Government's review of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and invitation that all concerned parties submit their responses, the MCB Legal Affairs Committee made an urgent appeal to complete the CSA survey, which was made available on the MCB website, in order to ensure that the views of the Muslim Community were represented and duly considered. The LAC underlined the discriminatory implementation of Section 44: powers of stop and search, alongside the facts that all 17 Belmarsh detainees held without trial or charge are Muslim and that every high profile

arrest, the vast majority of which have turned out to be wrongful, were of Muslims.

## **Women & Family Affairs Committee (WFA)**

### **Cumberland Lodge Conference**

The annual Cumberland Lodge Conference was held this year from 4 to 6 June 2004 on the subject of Keeping Crime out of the Family. The three day conference was attended by Shiban Akbar, former Chair of SAC and Jasmine Ansari, Secretary of WFA on Saturday and Reefat Drabu, Chair of WFA on Sunday.

Among the many issues discussed was that of domestic violence for which there is no simple solution. It exists in all sections of our society and current support mechanisms have proved inadequate and inefficient. The mechanisms are generic and not faith based as they should be. To combat domestic violence multi-skill multi-agency co-operation is urgently needed. Suggestions for future conferences made by the attendees included "the effect of anti-terrorism laws on the Muslim community".

### **WFA Seminar**

The Women & Family Affairs Committee (WFA) is organising a seminar to be held on Saturday 11 December in co-operation with the Mayor's Office. The seminar will provide an opportunity for Muslims living in the Capital to hear and debate their views on marriage, conflict in marriage, fostering and adoption in Islam. For further details please contact [admin@mcb.org.uk](mailto:admin@mcb.org.uk)

### **Muslim Women Network**

The quarterly meeting with the Muslim Women Network took place on 15 July 2004 in London. The network has recently been set up and includes members from different backgrounds and regions of the UK. Reefat Drabu attended, representing the MCB. The first meeting of the Network in April was attended by Nahid Majid and Reefat Drabu.

The meeting discussed the White Paper "Fairness for All and Strength in Diversity" and the network will shortly be responding to these papers. Dr Reefat Drabu noted that "the term BME is illogical ..as Muslims we see no reason or justification for adding Black to the term minority ethnic. In racial terms the MCB would like the term BME to be replaced with Ethnic Minorities or Minorities ethnic. This term accommodates all races and colours including Black."

Recommendations included the need for a law to be amended to include prohibition of religious discrimination in all areas. Additionally the CEHR must be given the legal powers as well as financial resources to take on individual cases of discrimination as well as breach of human rights cases.

### **NASUWT Conference**

On 30 June 2004 the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) met at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, Westminster, to discuss the issues relating to "Schools and Social Cohesion: An agenda for change".

Dr Reefat Drabu, Chair of Wafa was invited to be on the panel to debate the role of education in a modern cohesive society. The panel was chaired by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and other members included Gargi Bhattacharyya, Micheline Mason, Peter Nathan and Bob Purkiss. The debate centred on cohesion, inclusiveness and faith schools. Dr Reefat Drabu conveyed the MCB's position on faith schools stating that there is a need for faith schools in that education in all schools must reflect the needs of the community it serves. All schools should provide for the spiritual needs of children which at present most schools are failing to do.

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## **New on the MCBDirect Website**

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MCB*Direct* is the Muslim Council of Britain's community information service. The Internet plays a central role in the provision of the service - visit the project's redesigned website at [www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect](http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect). MCB*Direct*'s objectives are to widen the sharing of information and expertise within the community, increase awareness of best practice initiatives and services, and promote a more informed understanding of Muslims and Islam throughout our society. The project is an initiative of the MCB's Research & Documentation Committee.

### **MCBDirect Helpline**

MCBDirect's helpline number is 0845 1 23 23 63.

**MCBDirect has posted many exciting features on the website. These include reviews of books, events, individuals etc.**

[Tijara Pages - A Yellow pages for the Muslim Community](#)

[Al Ansar Education and Welfare Trust - Working to Make a Difference](#)

[Festive Cuisine Day at Edinburgh's Central Mosque](#)

[MCB Seminar: A Guide To The British Media](#)

[A Man for All Seasons- emel's inspirational interview with Iqbal Sacranie](#)

[Welcome to the Community Newswire](#)

[Diary of a Muslim GP: Type 2 Diabetes - Why is it important?](#)

[Books for Schools-Manchester SACRE hosts conference](#)

[Hilmy The Hippo Learns About Vanity](#)

[HOST: Could you welcome a student into your home?](#)

[Triumph of community spirit - Inauguration of Western Europe's largest Muslim centre](#)

[Research and Documentation Committee E-Newsletter, Issue 8](#)

[Islamia School Family Fun Day](#)

[Reflections of Islam on Glass - The 'Road to Heathrow'](#)

[I like climbing the Hills](#)

[Assembly for the Protection of Hijab](#)

**To advertise community new and events please**

contact [mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk](mailto:mcbdirect@mcb.org.uk)

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## Events

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<b>Event:</b>	<b>MCB Media Committee Seminar</b>
<b>Date:</b>	25 September 2004
<b>Time:</b>	9.00 am to 5.00 pm
<b>Held By:</b>	The Muslim Council of Britain
<b>Venue:</b>	London Muslim Centre, Whitechapel Road, London
<b>Contact:</b>	For more information about the seminar please contact <a href="mailto:media@mcb.org.uk">media@mcb.org.uk</a> or refer to <a href="http://www.mcb.org.uk/mediatraining.html">www.mcb.org.uk/mediatraining.html</a>
<b>Information:</b>	The line up of speakers includes Professor Greg Philo (co-author of 'Bad News From Israel'), senior journalists from The Times, The Guardian and theIndependent on Sunday; a senior editor of BBC News Online; representatives from OFCOM and the Press Complaints Commission and editors of the main UK Muslim publications. The cost of the seminar is £50 per person (including lunch and refreshments). Creche facilities will also be available at an additional cost.

<b>Event:</b>	<b>Women &amp; Family Affairs Committee Seminar</b>
<b>Date:</b>	11 December 2004
<b>Time:</b>	10.00am – 6.00pm
<b>Held By:</b>	The Muslim Council of Britain in cooperation with the Mayor of London's Office
<b>Venue:</b>	City Hall, Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
<b>Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@mcb.org.uk">admin@mcb.org.uk</a>
<b>Information:</b>	The seminar will provide an opportunity for Muslims living in the Capital to hear and debate their views on marriage, conflict in marriage, fostering and adoption in Islam.



**INTERPAL is a non-political, non-profit making British charity that focuses solely on the provision of relief and development aid to the poor and needy of Palestine the world over, primarily in Palestine and the refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon.**

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**The Muslim Council of Britain**

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