



**THE CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL COHESION**

# ANWAR AL-AWLAKI

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## THE UK CONNECTION

ALEXANDER MELEAGROU-HITCHENS

11 November 2009

Anwar al-Awlaki is a pro al-Qaeda preacher based in Yemen with extensive connections to a number of terrorist plots, including 9/11. Until 11 November 2009, he ran a regularly updated blog which disseminated his extremist Islamist ideology.<sup>1</sup>

In the UK, Awlaki has been invited to speak (often via video link-up) and promoted by a large number of organisations and individuals. Some of these are private Muslim organisations and university Islamic societies while others are registered charities which have benefitted from government funding. This pamphlet is intended to provide a comprehensive list of all the organisations and individuals who have defended, praised and showcased Awlaki in the UK since 9/11.

## Terror Links

US Army Major Nidal Hassan, the gunman suspected of carrying out the 5 November 2009 attack on Fort Hood, Texas, was later revealed as having attended the Dar al-Hijrah mosque in Virginia Falls during the time that Awlaki was its main preacher.<sup>2</sup> On 9 November, four days after the attack, Awlaki wrote an article on his blog praising Major Hassan as a 'hero'.<sup>3</sup> On 10 November, it was revealed by the *Times* that Major Hassan was in direct correspondence with Awlaki and because of this was the subject of a previous FBI investigation.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the Fort Hood attack, Awlaki had connections to a number of terrorist organisations and plots including:

### **9/11**

According to Charles E. Allen, the US Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis and Chief Intelligence Officer, Awlaki is the former spiritual leader to three of the 9/11 hijackers:

Another example of al-Qa'ida reach into the Homeland is U.S. citizen, al-Qa'ida supporter, and former spiritual leader to three of the September 11th hijackers Anwar al-Awlaki—who targets U.S. Muslims with radical online lectures encouraging terrorist attacks from his new home in Yemen.<sup>5</sup>

He was also identified by the 9/11 Commission report as having provided advice to two of the 9/11 hijackers, Khalid Almihdar and Nawaf Alhazmi.<sup>6</sup>

Awlaki was also the subject of an FBI investigation in the 1990s because of his alleged links to associates of Omar Abdul Rehman, who was convicted for his role in the 1993 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Since revelations about his possible connections to the 5 November Fort Hood attack, Awlaki's blog has been taken offline

<sup>2</sup> 'Fort Hood shooting: Texas army killer linked to September 11 terrorists', *Telegraph*, 7 November, 2009, available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/6521758/Fort-Hood-shooting-Texas-army-killer-linked-to-September-11-terrorists.html> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.anwar-alawlaki.com/?p=228> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>4</sup> 'Spy agencies knew that Fort Hood gunman tried to contact al-Qaeda', *Times*, 10 November, 2009

<sup>5</sup> Keynote Address at GEOINT Conference by Charles E. Allen, Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis /Chief Intelligence Officer, 28 October 2008, available at: [http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/speeches/sp\\_1225377634961.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/speeches/sp_1225377634961.shtm)

<sup>6</sup> '9/11 Commission Report', available at: <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>7</sup> 'The Imam's very curious story', *USNews*, 13 June, 2004, available at: <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/040621/21plot.htm> [accessed 9/11/2009]

## ***Al Shabaab Militia***

In December 2008, Awlaki praised the US designated Somali terrorist group, al-Shabaab, on his official website:

We are following your recent news and it fills our hearts with immense joy. We would like to congratulate you for your victories and achievements. Al-Shabab not only have succeeded in expanding the areas that fall under their rule but they have succeeded in implementing the sharia and giving us a living example of how we as Muslims should proceed to change our situation.

Al-Shabaab is widely acknowledged as having strong links with al-Qaeda. Osama Bin Laden has described al-Shabaab as “one of the most important armies in the Mujahid [holy warrior] Islamic battalion.”<sup>8</sup>

In the same blog, Awlaki also states that violence is a more effective means to gain power than democracy:

The ballot has failed us but the bullet has not.<sup>9</sup>

On 11 July 2009, the *New York Times* reported that Awlaki’s sermons had played a significant role in recruiting young American Muslims to travel to Somalia in order to fight with the al-Shabaab.<sup>10</sup>

## ***Toronto 18 Terror Plot***

A report in the Canadian *Star* newspaper identified Awlaki as the inspiration to a number of individuals who later became part of the Toronto 18 cell. Before their arrests in 2006, the Toronto cell were planning attacks on civilian targets in the city as well as other Canadian military installations.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Translation of Bin Laden speech ‘Fight on Champions of Somalia’,

<http://worldanalysis.net/modules/news/article.php?storyid=390>

<sup>9</sup> <http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:80EqfG1H9xcJ:www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D60+http://www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D60&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>10</sup> ‘A Call to Jihad: Answered in America’. *New York Times*, 11 July, 2009, available at:

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/12/us/12somalis.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=4&em](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/12/us/12somalis.html?_r=1&pagewanted=4&em) [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>11</sup> ‘The powerful online voice of jihad’, *The Star*, 18 October, 2009, available at:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/711964--the-powerful-online-voice-of-jihad> [accessed 8/11/2009]

## Ideology

### **Support for Armed Jihad**

In a pamphlet entitled '44 Ways to Support Jihad', Awlaki encourages Muslims to participate in jihad (armed fighting), either in person, by funding the *mujahideen* (fighters), or by jihad of the word. He also states that Muslims are obliged to participate in arms training.<sup>12</sup>

The Arabic term 'jihad' (struggle) has been interpreted by some Muslims scholars to mean a metaphorical inner struggle of the soul. However it is also used by terrorist groups like al-Qaeda as a word which refers to a violent confrontation with non-Muslims.

Upon reading Awlaki's '44 Ways to Support Jihad', it is clear that he defines jihad in the same way as al-Qaeda.

Examples include:

### **Section 22 – Physical Fitness**

Physical fitness is part of the preparation for Jihad. What Jihad needs is not body builders. What Jihad needs is mujahideen [Islamic warrior] who have the ability to walk for long hours, to run for long distances (important for guerrilla warfare), to sprint (important for urban warfare), and to climb mountains. The mujahid needs to be able to perform all of the aforementioned while carrying a weight. In Jihad lands such as Bosnia and Chechnya unfit brothers represented a burden on the mujahideen because they would slow down the whole group. Also the unfit can more easily fall in the hands of the enemy. So endurance exercises should take precedence over exercise for strength and flexibility. Even if a Muslim is not going to fight, physical fitness is still important. For example, a fit person can withstand prison and torture more than a person who is not. The early Muslims were fit since they led a military lifestyle.

### **Section 23 - Arms Training**

Preparing for Jihad is obligatory since Jihad today is obligatory and the sharia rule states that: "Whatever is needed for an obligatory act becomes obligatory"

Arms training is an essential part of preparation for Jihad. Allah says: "And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you don't know but Allah knows" (8:60) The Messenger of Allah (saaws) said regarding this verse: "Power is marksmanship, power is marksmanship"(Related by Muslim) The issue is so critical that if arms training is not possible in your country then it is worth the time and money to travel to another country to train if you can.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefaawlaki44wayssupportjihad.pdf> [accessed 10/11/2009]

## Section 27

The hatred of kuffar [non-Muslims] is a central element of our military creed. We need to realize that Allah will not grant us victory as long as we still have some love towards his enemies in our hearts. The spiritual condition of total loyalty towards Allah and total animosity towards his enemies was a necessary precursor to the judgment of Allah between His prophets and their disbelieving nations. Never was victory attained by the Prophets of Allah and their people until their loyalty towards Allah was complete and their disassociation with the kuffar was complete.

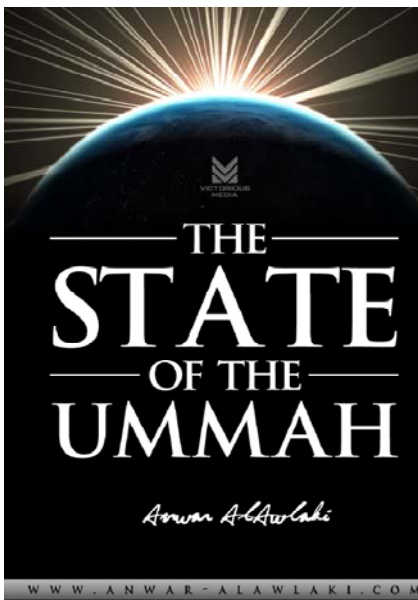
It is clear from references to the need for physical fitness, military creed and arms training, that Awlaki's interpretation of jihad is that of a violent struggle against non-Muslims. He tells Muslims that it is their Islamic duty to partake in such activity.

### **Encouragement to Kill British and American Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan**

In March 2009, Awlaki delivered a lecture to students in Pakistan entitled 'The State of the Ummah', which is also available as a PDF.<sup>13</sup> In the speech he calls on Muslims to take part in the fight against troops in Afghanistan and Iraq:

My recommendation would be, for my brothers who are Pakistan [sic] to give support physically and financially for their brothers in Afghanistan. Two of the most important battles that the ummah [Muslim community] is fighting today is the battle in Afghanistan, which is spilling over into Pakistan, and the battle of Iraq. Whoever is capable and able to participate with them physically, then that should happen, and whoever is not able to participate physically should participate in all the other ways that are possible. We are talking about a stage where this support is obligatory and not recommended or voluntary, and when something is an obligation it becomes a sin and a shortcoming by not being a part of it

Not only does Awlaki tell his audience that they should take part in violence against US and British troops, he also states that a Muslim who refuses this call to violence is a sinner.



<sup>13</sup> PDF in possession of the Centre for Social Cohesion

## **Support for Nidal Hassan Attack on Fort Hood**

On 5 November 2009, Major Nidal Hassan carried out an attack on Fort Hood, Texas, killing 12 soldiers and one civilian. Four days after the attack, Awlaki praised Major Hassan's actions on his blog:

Nidal Hassan is a hero. He is a man of conscience who could not bear living the contradiction of being a Muslim and serving in an army that is fighting against his own people. This is a contradiction that many Muslims brush aside and just pretend that it doesn't exist. Any decent Muslim cannot live, understanding properly his duties towards his Creator and his fellow Muslims, and yet serve as a US soldier. The US is leading the war against terrorism which in reality is a war against Islam. Its army is directly invading two Muslim countries and indirectly occupying the rest through its stooges.<sup>14</sup>

For Awlaki, the US army is currently engaged in a 'war on Islam', thus rendering all service personnel as legitimate targets.

## **The Destruction of Israel and Deliberate Killing of Civilians**

In another blog, Awlaki calls for the destruction of the state of Israel and supports the deliberate killing of women and children:

[...] the illegal state of Israel needs to be eradicated. Just like Rasulallah drove them out of the Arabian peninsula the Jews of Palestine need to be driven out to the sea. There are no Israeli civilians unless they are Muslim. When the enemy targets our women and children we should target theirs.<sup>15</sup>

In an article on his official website, Awlaki argues that Muslims who target and kill non-Muslim civilians must not be condemned:

If a Muslim kills each and every civilian disbeliever on the face of the earth he is still a Muslim and we cannot side with the disbelievers against him.<sup>16</sup>

Awlaki's above quote illustrates his belief in the rigid Wahhabi teaching of *al wala' wa al-bara'*, or loyalty to all Muslims and enmity to all 'unbelievers'. This idea forms a crucial part of the highly sectarian jihadist ideology.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.anwar-alawlaki.com/?p=228> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>15</sup> [http://209.85.129.132/search?q=cache:BdJ\\_v4urDFkJ:www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D64+http://www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D64+site:anwar-alawlaki.com&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk](http://209.85.129.132/search?q=cache:BdJ_v4urDFkJ:www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D64+http://www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D64+site:anwar-alawlaki.com&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk) [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>16</sup> [http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:rbH\\_SYPR2wJ:www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D75+http://www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D75&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk](http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:rbH_SYPR2wJ:www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D75+http://www.anwar-alawlaki.com/%3Fp%3D75&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk) [accessed 10/11/2009]

## The UK Connection

### Universities

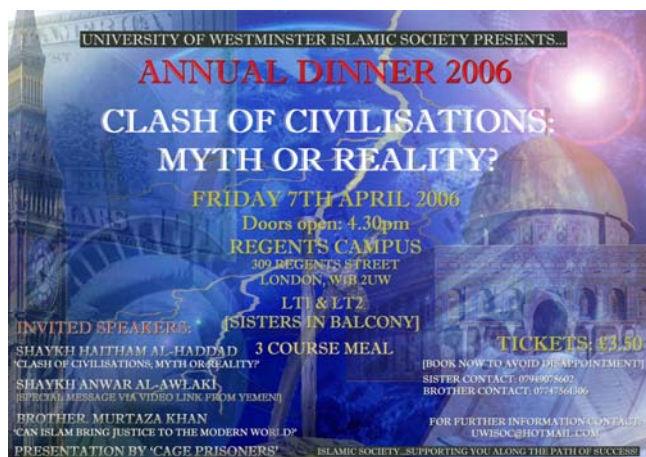
#### City University

On 1 April 2009, the City University Islamic Society held its annual dinner, 'The Beginning of a New Chapter'. Sponsored by the Tayyibun Institute (see p.18), the event was to feature a video message from Awlaki. Although the event went ahead, Awlaki was prevented from speaking after pressure was exerted by the Centre for Social Cohesion (CSC) on university authorities, despite protests from the City Islamic Society.<sup>17</sup>



#### Westminster University

On 7 April 2006, the Westminster University Islamic Society held their annual dinner entitled 'Clash of Civilisations: Myth or Reality?'. The event schedule included a video link up with Awlaki.



<sup>17</sup> The Centre for Social Cohesion repeatedly informed City University authorities about the nature of Awlaki, but were initially ignored. Action was only taken at the last minute after leading newspapers began to make enquiries.

## **University of London**

In June 2003, the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) organised a series of talks which advertised speeches by Awlaki (see p.14). One of these, entitled 'A Day To Remember: Muslim Students...The Remaking of A Great Nation', took place on 18 June 2003 and was in conjunction with colleges within the University of London. These colleges included the School of Oriental and African Studies, Imperial College, King's College and the London School of Economics.<sup>18</sup>

## **Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS)**

FOSIS is an umbrella group of university Islamic societies which claims to represent Muslim students in the UK and Ireland. In 2003, their annual conference included Awlaki as a 'distinguished' guest.<sup>19</sup> He was presented to the audience as a respected Islamic scholar.

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<sup>18</sup><http://web.archive.org/web/20030605155801/www.mabonline.net/branches/events/2bamuslim2003conf/campus2003conf.htm> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>19</sup>[http://web.archive.org/web/20030801182249/http://www.fosis.org.uk/events/articles/annualconf\\_jun2003.htm](http://web.archive.org/web/20030801182249/http://www.fosis.org.uk/events/articles/annualconf_jun2003.htm) [accessed 10/11/2009]

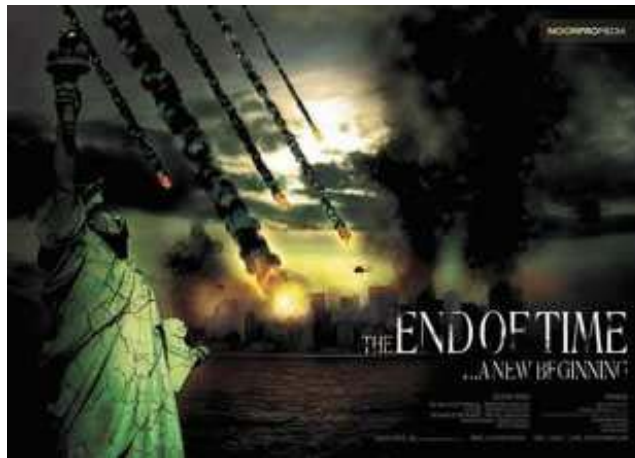


## UK Government Funded and Supported Groups

### East London Mosque (ELM)

The ELM is registered as a charity and a limited company. According to the Charity Commission, its trustees are Muhammad Siddique, Muhammad Abdul Bari (also the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain), Sirajul Islam, Musaddiq Ahmed, Ayub Khan and Sati Aminur Rahman.<sup>20</sup>

Awlaki has spoken at the ELM on at least 2 occasions.<sup>21</sup> In his most recent appearance, he delivered a video message in January 2009 at an event entitled 'The End of Time', which was revealed by the CSC in the *Daily Telegraph*.



Both the *East London Advertiser* and the *Daily Telegraph* newspapers reported on Awlaki's impending message at the 'End of Time' event at the ELM before the event took place. Despite this the ELM was still unwilling to cancel Awlaki's appearance, or condemn his beliefs. Interviewed in the *Daily Telegraph* about the appearance of Awlaki, Shadow Justice Minister Dominic Grieve said: "I would be extremely concerned if the East London Mosque, which has said it is committed to peace, diversity and interfaith dialogue, is giving a platform to such individuals." When asked to comment on the allegations surrounding Awlaki, the ELM stated that "Mr Awlaki has not been proven guilty in a court of law. Everyone is entitled to their point of view...The subject matter is about judgement and the afterlife, a common theme in many religions."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> East London Mosque Contact and Trustees, Charity Commission, available at: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/ShowCharity/RegisterOfCharities/ContactAndTrustees.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1122613&SubsidiaryNumber=0&TID=1316309> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>21</sup> December 26, 2003 - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfQYG5Mbj6s&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfQYG5Mbj6s&feature=player_embedded) [accessed 10/11/2009]; January 1 2009 – 'Councillor slams Muslim lecture 'New York in flames' poster', *East London Advertiser*, 31 December, 2008, available at: <http://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk/content/towerhamlets/advertiser/news/story.aspx?brand=elaonline&category=news&tBrand=northlondon24&tCategory=news&itemid=WeED31%20Dec%202008%2015%3A15%3A58%3A703> [accessed 10/11/2009]; 'Muslim groups 'linked to September 11 hijackers spark fury over conference', *Telegraph*, 27 December, 2008, available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/3966501/Muslim-groups-linked-to-September-11-hijackers-spark-fury-over-conference.html> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>22</sup> 'Councillor slams Muslim lecture 'New York in flames' poster', *East London Advertiser*, 31 December, 2008

At a December 2003 event at the ELM entitled 'Stop Police Terror', on the subject of terrorism arrests in the UK, Awlaki urged Muslims to never report on or turn over their fellow Muslims, under any circumstances:

A Muslim is a brother of a Muslim, he does not oppress him, he does not betray him and he does not hand him over...You don't hand over a Muslim to the enemies...<sup>23</sup>

## **Islamic Forum of Europe (IFE)**

The IFE operates out of the ELM and shares many of the same trustees and senior management. In October 2003, IFE invited Awlaki to speak at its 'expoislamiam' event.<sup>24</sup>



## **The Cordoba Foundation**

The Cordoba Foundation is a registered limited company and its director is Anas Altikriti.<sup>25</sup> In a speech last year, Conservative Party leader David Cameron identified the Cordoba Foundation as "a front for the Muslim Brotherhood."<sup>26</sup>

According to the Tax Payer's Alliance, between 2007-2008 Cordoba received £38,000 of tax payer money as part of the government's Prevent agenda, £4,000 of which they were ordered to repay due to their providing a platform to Islamist revolutionary group, Hizb ut-Tahrir.<sup>27</sup>

In August 2009, Cordoba sponsored an event in the Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall called 'Beyond Guantanamo' that was to feature a video address from Awlaki. The video was cancelled at the last minute after pressure from the local council. The CSC and other

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfQYG5Mbj6s&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfQYG5Mbj6s&feature=player_embedded) [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.islamicforumeurope.com/live/conference/speakers5.htm> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>25</sup> Companies House Certificate of Incorporation of a Private Limited Company, The Cordoba Foundation UK, 6/2/2009

<sup>26</sup> David Cameron speech delivered to the Community Security Trust, 4 March, 2008, [http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2008/03/David\\_Cameron\\_Speech\\_to\\_the\\_Community\\_Security\\_Trust.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2008/03/David_Cameron_Speech_to_the_Community_Security_Trust.aspx) [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>27</sup> 'Council Spending Uncovered II, No.5: The Prevent Strategy', Tax Payer's Alliance, 8/9/2009, available at: <http://www.taxpayersalliance.com/Prevent.pdf> [accessed 10/11/2009]

concerned groups had previously informed the council of Awlaki's extremist nature, urging them to take action.



As of 11 November 2009, the Cordoba Foundation website still carries a PDF of the flyer for this event.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.thecordobafoundation.com/attach/23769\\_cpdinner.pdf](http://www.thecordobafoundation.com/attach/23769_cpdinner.pdf) [accessed 9/11/2009]

## UK Government Affiliated Individuals

### Azad Ali

Azad Ali is a civil servant within Her Majesty's Treasury. He was also revealed in the *Sunday Times* to be an advisor on Islamic extremism to a Whitehall counterterrorism panel that provides advice to Keir Starmer, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), and Britain's most senior prosecutor.<sup>29</sup>

Mr. Ali regularly contributed to the IFE's blog, 'Between the Lines', until his extreme Islamist views were revealed by the *Mail on Sunday* in January 2009.

In a blog about Muslim political participation which he wrote on 5 November 2008, Mr. Ali praised Awlaki:

Imam Suhaib Webb for example has a banner on his website declaring his voting intentions, not that there is anything wrong with that. But I do wonder how we have done in winning the argument put forward by those who profess that participation in the American elections is of no benefit for Muslims.

This has been articulated by one of my favourite speakers and scholars Imam Anwar Awlaki – of course those of you who know me will know that I disagree with the Shaykh on this matter – however I really do love him for the sake of Allah, he has an uncanny way of explaining things to people which is endearing.

His blog on the American elections had kicked up such a stir that he had to write a second part to the initial blog to respond to comments. Feel free to read what he has to say, but the one thing that caught my eye in his second response is "I would add here the following: Even if you would follow the opinion of those who allow the voting in a disbelieving system when there is a clear lesser evil, in the situation we are facing there is no such clarity. In fact on most of the issues that concern Muslims there is very little difference".

I cannot help but agree with this – we have seen how Obama made his pledge of allegiance to the "dark-side" at the AIPAC meeting – where most of us would have noticed how he not only cowered to their demands – but the man actually prostrated!<sup>30</sup>

On 19 November 2008, Mr. Ali again wrote favourably about Awlaki's blog:

You may take Shaykh Anwar Awlaki as an example. Reading his blogs, one cannot help but feel his frustration at the constant denial of legitimate Islamic principles. Worse is the complete incompetence of some Muslims to distinguish between Jihad and acts of murder.<sup>31</sup>

It is notable that Mr. Ali refers to Awlaki as 'Imam' and Shaykh': both terms convey religious respect and confer legitimacy to his edicts. He also links to Awlaki's blog, which contains numerous examples of support for jihadist violence.

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<sup>29</sup> 'Chief prosecutor Keir Starmer advised by radical Muslim', *Sunday Times*, 1 November, 2009 available at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/politics/article6898145.ece> [accessed 11/11/2009]

<sup>30</sup> <http://blog.islamicforumeurope.com/?p=94> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>31</sup> <http://blog.islamicforumeurope.com/?p=98> [accessed 10/11/2009]

## **Osama Saeed**

Osama Saeed is a Scottish National Party (SNP) Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Glasgow Central. He is also the chief executive of the Scottish Islamic Foundation (SIF). The Scottish Executive recently awarded the SIF £200,000, although they were later ordered to repay £130,000.<sup>32</sup> Mr. Saeed runs a blog called 'Rolled Up Trousers', and in a post relating to the 2006 arrest of Awlaki he wrote:

If you wanted further evidence of what a crock the war on terror is, or motivation to do something about it, this should galvanise you - before you have your own picture over at CagePrisoners.com.

Imam Anwar Al-Awlaki was originally hounded in the US because two of the 9/11 bombers happened to pray at his mosque. Many of my Muslim readers will either know him personally or have heard his lectures. He preached nothing but peace, and I pray he will be able to do so again.<sup>33</sup>

Like Azad Ali, Mr. Saeed also confers legitimacy to Awlaki by referring to him as 'Imam'.

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<sup>32</sup> 'Money returned by Islamic group', *BBC News*, 30 October, 2009, available at: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow\\_and\\_west/8333137.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/glasgow_and_west/8333137.stm) [accessed 11/11/2009]

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.osamasaeed.org/osama/2006/11/imam\\_anwar\\_arre.html](http://www.osamasaeed.org/osama/2006/11/imam_anwar_arre.html) [accessed 9/11/2009]

## **Private Companies, Charities and Campaign Groups**

### **Muslim Association of Britain**

A registered limited company, the MAB is often referred to as the official arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK. Its current directors are Mohamed Kozbar, Ahmed Sheikh Mohamed and Belgacem Kahlalech. In 2002, the MAB's newspaper, *Inspire*, ran an advert for their 'Winter Camp' which included Awlaki as an invited speaker. According to the promotional literature:

Once again, when it appeared that the flame of Islam would be extinguished for good, the process of revival is underway. Already thousands have joined this struggle in the lands under oppression and tyranny. You have now a choice to become part of this struggle.<sup>34</sup>

It was later announced that Awlaki cancelled at short notice.

In 2003, Louise Ellman MP told Parliament that the MAB were organizing a number of events with Awlaki:

It is time that the spotlight fell on the Muslim Association of Britain, particularly the key figures, such as Azzam Tamimi, Kamal el Helbawy, Anas Al-Tikriti and Mohammed Sawalha. All of them are connected to the terrorist organisation Hamas. The Muslim Association of Britain itself is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood—an extremist fundamentalist organisation founded in Egypt in 1928, and the spiritual ideologue of all Islamic terror organisations. It is militantly anti-Semitic and always has been.

[...]In June 2003, the Muslim Association of Britain organised a series of meetings with an American imam, Anwar Al Awlaki, as guest speaker. That gentleman is reportedly wanted for questioning by the FBI in connection with the 9/11 al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.<sup>35</sup>

At the time, the MAB website advertised eight separate events they had organised which featured Awlaki.<sup>36</sup> These events were advertised as taking place between 18-29 June 2003.

During the time that the MAB winter camp was organized, and Louise Ellman MP identified the MAB's links with Awlaki, one of the MAB's directors was Anas Altikriti, who is also cited above as the current director of the Cordoba Foundation.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Inspire*, 28 September, 2002

<sup>35</sup> Parliamentary Business, Hansard, 18 December, 2003, available at <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200304/cmhansrd/vo031218/debtext/31218-18.htm> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>36</sup> <http://web.archive.org/web/20030601075509/http://www.mabonline.net/branches/events/2bamuslim2003conf/2bamuslim2003conf.htm> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>37</sup> Companies House, 363s Annual Return, Muslim Association of Britain LTD

## **Cage Prisoners (CP)**

CP is a registered limited company. Its directors are former Guantanamo Bay inmate, Moazzam Begg and Adnan Rasheed Siddique.<sup>38</sup>

The relationship between CP and Awlaki dates back to 2006, when they organised campaigns appealing for Awlaki to be released from custody by Yemeni authorities.<sup>39</sup> Among other things, the campaign asked CP supporters to “Write to the Yemeni Ambassador to UK, Mohamed Taha Mustafa and urge him to work for the immediate release of Imam Anwar al-Awlaki,” and “Write to the Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett to make representations to her Yemeni counterparts to work for Imam Anwar al-Awlaki’s immediate release.”<sup>40</sup> In the ‘sample letter’ provided by CP, Awlaki is referred to as a “prominent Muslim scholar.”

The relationship between CP and Awlaki appears to have strengthened after this, and in December 2007, CP announced Awlaki’s release, telling readers that any messages of congratulations they had could be passed to Awlaki through them – suggesting that CP were at the time in direct contact with Awlaki.<sup>41</sup>

On 7 September 2008, CP broadcast a live message from Awlaki during a fundraising event called ‘Another Ramadan 2008.’ According to the summary of the event on the CP website:

A big draw was our live lecture from Imam Anwar Awlaki. We had pre-recorded a backup a few days previously in case the live lecture failed, but fortunately it didn't, and our audience were treated to a live lecture from Yemen by Imam Anwar, an exclusive event for the UK, and something everyone was looking forward to.

The quality was not crystal clear but considering it was coming from a mobile phone in Yemen to a mobile phone in London and being played to a hall of 500 people, it was clear and audible.

There was pin drop silence as Imam Anwar reminded us of the favours Allah had bestowed on the prisoners and their position with Allah and the power of du'a [prayer] for the prisoners.<sup>42</sup>

The CP website includes an extensive and friendly interview between Moazzam Begg and Awlaki.<sup>43</sup> In addition, the website reproduces a number of materials from Awlaki’s official website, and currently contains at least 4 book reviews by Awlaki that originate from his site. In reproducing his work in such a way, CP present Awlaki as a religious authority.<sup>44</sup>

In August 2009, CP were the main organisers of the above mentioned ‘Beyond Guantanamo’ event held in the Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall.<sup>45</sup> This event was to feature a video

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<sup>38</sup> Companies House Current Appointments Report for: CagePrisoners LTD, 10/11/2009

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/campaigns.php?id=412> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/campaigns.php?id=423> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/campaigns.php?id=630> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=26116> [accessed 9/11/2009]; for the Awlaki video from the event see <http://www.cageprisoners.com/media.php?id=857> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=22926> [accessed 10/11/2009]. For video of interview see

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROhTRg1I1c4&feature=related>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=25404>; <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=25405>; <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=25406>; <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=25407> [all accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/campaigns.php?id=904> [accessed 9/11/2009]

message from Awlaki. In the weeks before the event, CP were informed by the local council that their event could only go ahead if they cancelled the video address by Awlaki. CP complied with this, although they issued a statement on their site refusing to acknowledge Awlaki's extremist nature:

Cageprisoners (CP) is deeply concerned by the decision by Kensington and Chelsea Council to ban Imam Anwar al-Awlaki from addressing the CP annual Ramadan fundraising dinner on 30 August 2009.

[...]CP cannot comment on any other statements attributed to Imam al-Awlaki or other guests as we are unaware of their accuracy and furthermore, they are of limited importance to the remit of CP which is to focus on civil liberties and human rights.<sup>46</sup>

Although CP claimed in August to be unaware of Awlaki's extremist background, a month earlier their website reproduced an article from the *New York Times* which identifies his sermons as an inspiration for violent jihad.<sup>47</sup>

On 2 October 2009, CP republished on their website a defence of Awlaki by CP member Fahad Ansari that first appeared in *Crescent* magazine. In the piece, Ansari was highly critical of the council's decision and referred to Awlaki as "the inspirational Imam":

One of the highlights of the event was to be a video message from the inspirational Imam Anwar al-Awlaki, who was himself detained without charge in Yemen for two years.<sup>48</sup>

Mr. Ansari is also a researcher and spokesperson for the Islamic Human Right Commission (IHRC) which also supported the CP campaign for Awlaki's release.

### **Stop Political Terror (SPT)**

SPT was a campaign launched in 2003 "by the friends and families of the victims of British Anti-Terrorist Police human rights abuse."<sup>49</sup> Its stated aim was to "say that enough is enough and that Britain's Muslims, as a community, will refuse to cooperate with the law enforcement authorities if this abuse continues."<sup>50</sup> It is now defunct and its website enjoins followers to "contact well known and reputable organisations such as Cage Prisoners."<sup>51</sup>

Awlaki can be found among the list of SPT supporters along with organisations such as the IHRC, the MAB, the ELM, the IFE and the Young Muslim Organisation (YMO).

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=30185> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=29747> [accessed 11/11/2009]

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=30493> [accessed 9/11/2009]

<sup>49</sup> <http://web.archive.org/web/20041021070015/www.stoppoliticalterror.com/aboutus.php> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> <http://web.archive.org/web/20070321015651/http://www.stoppoliticalterror.com/> [accessed 10/11/2009]



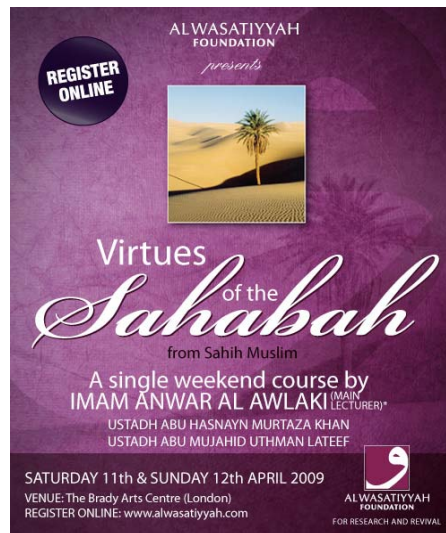
## Islamic Human Rights Commission

The IHRC is registered as a charity and limited company. They are connected to CP through Fahad Ansari, who is a member of both organisations. In November 2006, the IHRC joined the CP campaign for the release of Awlaki by Yemeni authorities:

IHRC calls on all campaigners to contact the Foreign Office and the Yemeni Embassy to urge for the immediate release of Imam Anwar al-Awlaki, a prominent Muslim scholar who has been detained incommunicado for the past two months in Yemen and may face torture or ill treatment in custody.<sup>52</sup>

## Al Wasatiyyah Foundation (AWF)

AWF is a registered limited company, and its director is listed as Adam Khan.<sup>53</sup> On 11 April 2009, AWF ran a weekend course in London called 'Virtues of the Sahaba' which included Awlaki as the main lecturer.<sup>54</sup>



According to the course's promotional material:

This course will be based on the chapter: 'Virtues of the Sahabah' from the Sahih Muslim hadeeth collection and will be delivered by the world renowned orator Imam Anwar al Awlaki (main lecturer amongst other teachers). His commentary will be based on Imam an-Nawawi's explanation of Sahih Muslim.

[...]Imam Anwar's course tuition will be via professional private pre-recordings conducted under his supervision.<sup>55</sup>

The course took place at the Brady Arts Centre, an official building of London's Tower Hamlets council. Although the local council was informed of Awlaki's impending presence prior to the event, they decided to take no action to prevent his appearance.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/show.php?id=2300> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>53</sup> Companies House, Certificate of Incorporation of a Private Limited Company, Al Wasatiyyah Limited, 19/3/2009

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.alwasatiyyah.com/index.php> [accessed 10/11/2009]

## **Tayyibun Institute (TI)**

TI was a registered limited company until it was dissolved on 1 September 2009. AWF's Adam Khan is also TI's director.<sup>56</sup> TI sponsored an event on 1 April 2009 with City University's Islamic Society which featured a video message from Awlaki (see p.7).

## **Young Muslim Organisation UK**

YMO is a registered charity and its stated mission is "to preserve and strengthen Muslim identity in Britain, and contribute to the global Islamic Movement whose aim is to direct the Islamic process of social change."<sup>57</sup> Its current trustees, according to the Charity Commission, are Muhammad Rabbani, Azzam Khan, Azizur Rahman, Muhammad Jinani and Mohammed Shafiul Amin.<sup>58</sup>

In 2003, the Muslim Council of Britain advertised a YMO event called 'Big Link Dinner' in which, according to the MCB website:

[...]attendees were addressed by Imam Anwar Al-Awlaki (USA) who spoke on the topic of 'A Goodly Word A Goodly Tree'...<sup>59</sup>

YMO also co-sponsored the above mentioned IFE 'expoislamia' event, which featured Awlaki.

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<sup>56</sup> Companies House, Current Appointments Report for Tayyibun LTD, 10/11/2009

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.ymouk.org/?page\\_id=2](http://www.ymouk.org/?page_id=2) [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>58</sup> Young Muslim Organisation UK Contact and Trustees, Charity Commission, available at <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/ShowCharity/RegisterOfCharities/ContactAndTrustees.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1000956&SubsidiaryNumber=0> [accessed 10/11/2009]

<sup>59</sup> [http://www.mcb.org.uk/features/features.php?ann\\_id=106](http://www.mcb.org.uk/features/features.php?ann_id=106) [accessed 10/11/2009]

## Conclusion

Since 9/11, Anwar al-Awlaki has been provided with an extensive network of supporters and apologists in the UK who have recommended his scholarship and provided him with unchallenged platforms to promote his views.

Often referring to him in respectful terms such as 'Imam' or 'Sheikh', this support network has helped to legitimise Awlaki's jihadist ideology within some British Muslim communities. Although it is possible that some of the individuals and groups listed above were unaware of Awlaki's violent ideology, a number of groups, such as the ELM, have refused to condemn him after being informed of the nature of many of his sermons.

Anwar al-Awlaki proselytises a violent Islamist ideology and encourages his followers to take part in jihad in order to further the causes of groups such as al-Qaeda. He has proven connections to numerous terror plots and as such, UK based organisations and individuals who continue to provide him with a platform and defend him must be challenged by the government in the strongest possible terms.

Of particular concern is the growing trend of university Islamic societies embracing Awlaki as a respected Islamic scholar. Campus authorities should begin to acknowledge the future consequences of allowing this to continue unchallenged, and not hesitate to provide a robust response to any future attempts to promote Awlaki among UK student audiences.