



# ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

2014 - 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



*“And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men and the women and the children, (and of) those who say: ‘O Lord! Cause us to go forth from this town, whose people are oppressors, and give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper’.”*

***Holy Qur’an: Chapter 4, Verse 75***



**The Islamic Human Rights Commission is an NGO  
with Special Consultative Status at the Economic and  
Social Council of the United Nations.**

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## Chairman's Foreword

**T**his year has seen many new challenges for IHRC resulting in a tremendous demand for services across all our departments.

Our research department has produced numerous reports and briefings, addressing both geographical and thematic issues, such as the removal of citizenship as a political tool, and also Muslim hate crime projects and subsequent reports in the USA, Canada and some parts of Europe. These reports have been utilised as resources for the community, civil society, the United Nations and governments.

The advocacy department has again seen great demand with requests for support against escalating levels of Islamophobia.

IHRC is the only Muslim organisation with a national and international advocacy division. This means it has to provide more and more support to the ever in-



creasing number of victims of discrimination, many of whom have nowhere else to turn.

I am very glad to announce that this year saw the launch of IHRC Legal. It was evident that with cuts to Legal Aid there would be a need in our communities for employment and immigration services. IHRC Legal was set up anticipating this need and the professional legal support it offers has already benefited many in our community.

**"we should not just expose acts of Islamophobia but be prepared to tackle the institutionalised nature of it too"**

Our campaigns department has been busy on a variety of issues including political prisoners in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain.

Our consultation work with the British government included representations and analysis of the workings of anti-terrorism legislation and Schedule 7 (stop and search at ports and airports).

It is also important to mention IHRC's work on challenging Islamophobia and hate crime against Muslims.

As you may know, over the last 18 years, IHRC has developed a recognised expertise in challenging racism, Islamophobia and hate crime. Our first statistical report on Islamophobia was launched at the House of Lords in 2000. This year we were involved in a European-wide conference on institutional Islamophobia. We believe that if we are going to be in a position to address the issue and find solutions for it, we should not just expose acts of Islamophobia but be prepared to tackle the structural and institutionalised nature of it too.

We also have to recognise

what Professor Ameli addressed in the hate crime reports previously published by IHRC: the issue of Islamoromia. This entails the changing of Islam to fit the European/Western framework, i.e. engineering a new form of Islam to benefit the social and political needs of others.

We are in a very critical position. Institutional Islamophobia has become so prevalent that politicians of all stripes are playing the Islamophobia card with impunity at every opportunity in the same prolific way that the race card was employed in years gone by.

We have also seen the introduction of more and more oppressive legislation under the banner of War on Terror and further escalation of the PREVENT Strategy, both of which amount to a witch-hunt against the whole Muslim community in response to the criminal acts of a few. We have also seen the government and its agencies increasingly excluding the Muslim community from its direct/indirect consultations and investing further in creating and promoting its own individuals and organisations to represent Muslims.

The signal being sent to Muslims is that they are wholly the problem and cannot be part of the solution. It is increasingly the case that the authorities take decisions first on issues and policies which affect the Muslim community, then consult after. This was the reason why this year we pulled out of the consultation process over anti-terrorism. The outcome of the proposals vindicated our stance as it became very clear that the consultation process was nothing but a fig leaf for the government's assault on Muslims.

The circumstances present huge challenges for the coming year. How can we address all these issues and create an environment where we can all come together, analyse and find solutions for producing a better and just society – not just for ourselves but for future generations? The responsibility weighs heavily on all our shoulders. We at IHRC believe we have the enthusiasm, experience and expertise to be part of the solution and hope you will continue to help us in our endeavours.

**Massoud Shadjareh**



# Introduction

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) is an independent, non-profit, campaigns, research and advocacy organisation based in London, UK.

Our aims are manifold, but are in all cases inspired by the Qur'anic injunctions that command believers to rise up in defence of the oppressed. IHRC volunteers and campaigners come from many different parts of the world and many different backgrounds, but share a common commitment to the struggle against injustice and oppression, wherever and in whatever forms they may be found.

IHRC's work ranges from assisting individuals in need of support, to monitoring the media for incidents of bias, discrimination or incitement; highlighting abuses through briefings, press releases and publications; advising governments and international organisations; researching human rights issues; and highlighting issues and priorities to shape the future agendas of both the IHRC and wider human rights discourse.



IHRC was set up in 1997 by a group of activists whose vision was to translate their experience in human rights work into an effective organisation that would advocate and defend the rights of people worldwide.

Founded at a time when Islam and Muslims were continually berated for violating human rights, IHRC took up the standard of faith to argue that in fact the opposite was true. We believe that Islam afforded every individual with fundamental rights, regardless of their background, and in the modern world, it is Muslims who bear the brunt of

human rights abuses.

From humble beginnings we have grown to become a leading and highly respected human rights organisation enjoying consultancy status at the United Nations and frequently contributing to government and NGO consultations on issues affecting Muslims in the expectation that this can be reflected in policy outcomes. We work with local, national and regional organisations to promote shared aims.

IHRC also plays an active role within communities by organising educational seminars, and providing advice and support to local groups wishing to establish their own

**We believe that  
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individual with  
fundamental rights**

projects in this field. We have a particular interest in encouraging the disenfranchised to participate within society as a whole.

Through intensive campaigning, innovative initiatives, and the dedicated hard work of our staff, interns, volunteers and supporters, IHRC has earned a global reputation as a trusted and reliable partner in all types of human rights projects. Our research, alerts and publications have made us a trusted source of information and insights, guiding struggles for justice all over the world. Data and materials produced by the IHRC have been widely utilised by governmental and other organisations.

The IHRC website covers many aspects of our work and provides general information and materials for the media, students, policy makers, lawyers and activists, as well as serving as a portal for participation in our ongoing research projects.

In the 18 years since IHRC's establishment, we have built a network of committed supporters and campaigners across the world. The year 2014-2015 has been another productive one. With your help, we are determined to continue this good work for many years to come, insha-Allah.



# Islamophobia and Racism



Professor Hatem Bazian speaks at the Institutional Islamophobia Conference in December 2014

**A**s Islamophobia rises alarmingly to unprecedented levels IHRC's work to document the extent and nature of what we call a 'culture of hate' directed against Muslims, and to posit solutions, becomes ever more necessary. Since our inception a lot of our energy has been channelled into tackling Islamophobia at academic, political, media, popular and legal levels with the result that we are widely acknowledged as one of the leading authorities in this field.

## Hate Crime Project - Canada

Following on from our research into the UK, USA and France the Hate Crime Project published a disturbing report into the experiences of the Muslim minority in Canada which showed them to be the increasingly fearful subjects of a growing anti-Islamic antipathy.

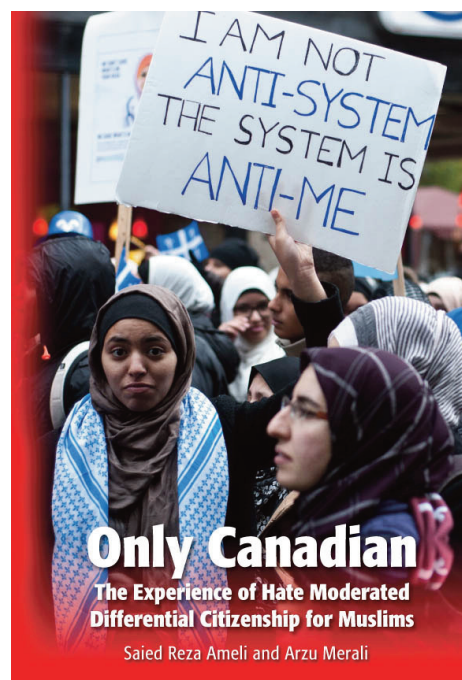
The research found that over 9 out of 10 respondents had seen some form of negative or insulting stereotypes of Muslims in the media and nearly three-quarters had seen policies that negatively impacted their community.

Islamophobia and racism were found to be structurally rooted and pervasive in Canada affecting everything from everyday social interaction to education and employment. Over a third of respondents said they had experienced job discrimination

based on religion. A further 67% said they believed that Canadian politicians condone discriminatory acts against Muslims and almost as many (62%) have heard Islamophobic comments made by politicians/high-ranking officials.

The results were all the more surprising given that Canada likes to see itself and is often perceived to be a model multicultural nation. However, with its hate policies and negative representations of Muslims, Canada has created a hate environment for the country's Muslims.

The report also finds that since the events



## Only Canadian

The Experience of Hate Moderated Differential Citizenship for Muslims

Saied Reza Ameli and Arzu Merali



A well-entertained crowd applauds at the Islamophobia Awards 2015

of 9/11 Muslims in Canada have been subjected to an increasingly security-driven discourse and made the often innocent targets of draconian anti-terrorism legislation. Despite various avenues of legal redress being available to them, Muslims have found that the legislation that is designed to protect their rights does not work for them and is in fact often used to victimise them.

### **Documentary Screening & Directors' Q&A of 'Travelling While Muslim' - 25 March 2014**

Directed by Roshan Muhammad Salih, 'Travelling While Muslim' explores the Islamophobic workings of Schedule 7, an anti-terrorism law that gives the police the right to stop and search people at airports, to fingerprint them and take their DNA, and to hold them for up to nine hours without legal representation. More than 70,000 people were stopped and questioned under the Schedule 7 law last year and although most of them were white, a hugely disproportionate number were ethnic minorities or Muslims. The most intrusive and humiliating searches were conducted on those of "Muslim

appearance." The film screening was held at the IHRC Bookshop and Gallery.

### **The Rise of the Extreme Right in Europe - 16 May 2014**

Across the continent the far right is gathering momentum at an alarming rate. This conference, held in Amsterdam by the International Institute for Scientific Research, brought together Arzu Merali, Sandrew Hira and Houria Bouteldja to discuss the reasons for its increasing popularity and suggest ways to combat its supremacist message of intolerance and hate.

### **UN panel discussion on Islamophobia**

In September 2014, IHRC led a side panel discussion at the United Nations in Geneva to examine the pervasiveness of Islamophobia in western culture.

Head of IHRC Research Arzu Merali and renowned academic and specialist on Islamophobia from the University of Leeds, Dr Salman Sayyid, presided over a lively

exploration of the extent to which hatred of Muslims has permeated everyday discourse and impacted on the formulation of public policy in western countries. Public policy towards Muslims is increasingly being driven by a security discourse that sees them through Islamophobic tropes as terrorists or terrorist sympathisers, legitimising shocking levels of discrimination and bias.

IHRC has been at the leading edge of research into Islamophobia in the West while Dr Sayyid's extensive works on Islamophobia, including the co-edited volume 'Thinking Through Islamophobia', have made him a much-consulted authority on the subject.

## Conference on Institutional Islamophobia – December 2014

IHRC brought together some of the issue's leading luminaries for a conference in London in December to explore and suggest responses to the alarming rise of Islamophobia in the UK. After threats from the far right and a last-minute withdrawal of permission by the original host, the conference finally went ahead.

The conference was prompted by the unprecedented increase in Islamophobic discourse that perpetuates bigotry towards Muslims and has resulted in their marginalisation. Its aim was to analyse

institutional and structural forms of prejudice and hatred with some focus on recent events, particularly in education, political activism, the criminalisation of dissent, the role of the media and the UK government's Prevent agenda.

Islamophobia was presented as an institutional phenomenon that must be dealt with by addressing the state whose structures oppress and marginalise Muslims. Dr. Salman Sayyid attacked the hypocrisy of the West which pretends to be so concerned with implementing democracy abroad while neglecting it at home especially in respect of Muslim minorities.

Professor Marie Breen-Smyth from the University of Surrey argued that Muslims have become part of the 'suspect community,' a concept devised by Paddy Hillyard in relation to the treatment of Catholics in Ireland following the introduction of the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act. Other speakers described how state policies towards Muslims that now involved professionals from all walks of life and cover them from cradle to grave – nursery teachers, school teachers, doctors, university lecturers, police and border officials - represented a form of social engineering designed to produce an officially acceptable breed of Muslim. Activist Les Levidow focussed more narrowly on the government's PREVENT strategy, ostensibly designed to combat 'radicalisation' but in reality a snooping charter to spy on and co-opt Britain's Muslims.



## Public meeting - What now for Europe? The instrumentalisation of the Paris attacks – January 2015

In response to a tidal wave of Islamophobia unleashed by attacks by gunmen in Paris, IHRC hastily convened a public meeting to discuss the immediate aftermath and examine the official and popular responses.

The panel of six, chaired by IHRC's Abed Choudhury, featured amongst others Professor Ramon Grosfoguel from University of California at Berkeley. He discussed the effects of French colonialism and how this rhetoric plays out in society today. Prof. Grosfoguel stated that there is a struggle in which Islamophobia is voiced more loudly and which calls for extreme right wing solutions, so much so that now in France, even the left and anti-Fascists are speaking in the same way as the right. France has also clarified the meaning of laïcité in the last 20 years to fit its colonial obsession with Muslims. The French have never respected the freedom of speech of colonial subjects and it is this hypocrisy that pushes fragile youth into destructive mode.

Ramon Grosfoguel, professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, discussed the effects of French colonialism and how this rhetoric plays out in society today. There is a struggle in which Islamophobia is voiced more loudly which calls for extreme right wing solutions, so much so that now in

France, even the left and anti-Fascists are speaking in the same way as the right.

Sounding a cautious note of optimism, Arzu Merali saw hope in the large number of demonstrators who turned out to protest against the anti-Islamic Pediga movement in Germany, describing it as a small victory in a bigger battle.

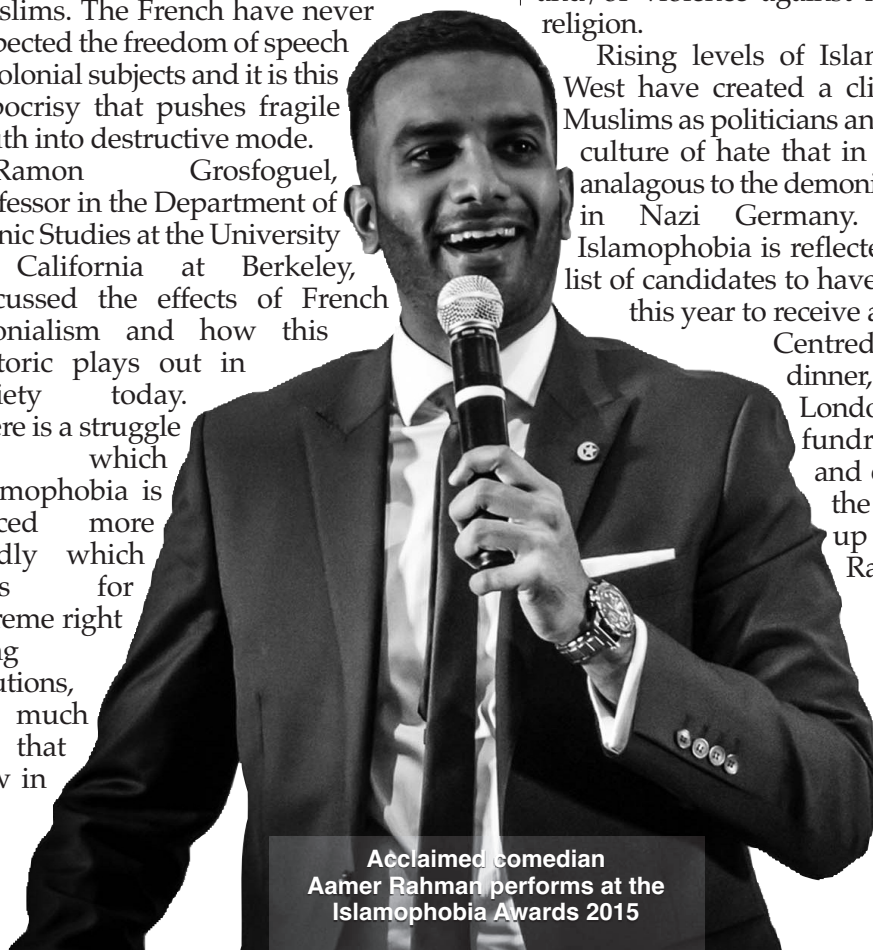
## Islamophobia Awards – March 2015

The Islamophobia Awards are the highlight of IHRC's social calendar and our main annual fundraising event. Inaugurated in 2003, they provide an opportunity to our supporters to meet the unsung heroes and heroines who make the organisation tick and also to learn more about what goes on behind the scenes in Britain's busiest Islamic human rights organisation.

At the same time they allow us to enjoy ourselves by taking a light-hearted swipe at public figures and organisations whose actions have generated or perpetuated hatred and/or violence against Muslims or their religion.

Rising levels of Islamophobia in the West have created a climate of fear for Muslims as politicians and media peddle a culture of hate that in some respects is analagous to the demonisation of the Jews in Nazi Germany. This rise in Islamophobia is reflected in the lengthy list of candidates to have been nominated this year to receive an award.

Centred round a gala dinner, the event, held in London, also featured a fundraising auction and entertainment by the renowned stand-up comedian Aamer Rahman.



Acclaimed comedian  
Aamer Rahman performs at the  
Islamophobia Awards 2015

**A**s an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations IHRC regularly reports to the UN and organises events around key UN meetings to raise awareness about issues that we believe deserve attention.

## Reports and Briefings

### Statement to UN Forum on Minority Issues

The United Nations Forum on Minority Issues in November 2014 gave IHRC an opportunity to highlight our concerns about discrimination against minorities in Canada, France, UK, USA and Netherlands.

We drew on our Hate Crime Project research in Canada to argue that Muslims, as residents from or with heritage from the Middle East and South Asia, suffer doubly from racial and religious discrimination with the latter increasingly overtaking the former.

Our submission also maintained that while perceptions of the US as a model of religious freedom and tolerance attract many to its shores, the reality for Muslims is often very different. Large numbers of Muslims remain subject to hate-motivated social and political attitudes created by the media and politicians which impact adversely on their everyday lives. Following the attacks of 9/11 Muslim profiling has become legitimised through legislation such as the Patriot Act and NDAA making suspicion the main prism through which Muslims are perceived.

In France, the land of *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité*, we argued that anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination are alarmingly rife despite the fact that it is home to the largest Muslim population in western Europe. Muslims are routinely victims of hate and discrimination at every level of society, from hearing Islamophobic

comments being made by politicians to the implementation of Islamophobic policies. In a widening of the scope of its hijab ban in state schools and public service posts France also banned the public wearing of the face veil, a decision that was upheld this year by the European Court of Human Rights.

Physical and verbal assaults, oppressive legislation, media misrepresentation and discrimination in employment also affect Britain's approximately three million Muslims. Physical attacks against Islamic places of worship and members of the Muslim community, some of them fatal, have continued to occur, their incidence usually spiking after headline events such as the killing by Muslim men of British soldier Lee Rigby in London in the summer of 2014. The British government continues to treat the Muslim community as a security problem continuing to apply anti-terrorism measures disproportionately against Muslims. Social cohesion has increasingly been used by politicians as a fig leaf for attacks on multiculturalism and within that the non-assimilation of the Muslim minority.

In relation to the Netherlands we argued that the popular annual Sinterklaas Festival, centred round the racist fictional figure of 'Black Pete' symbolises the colonial subjugation of black Africans which was underpinned by a dominant biological discourse of racism that translated into stereotypical images and representations of black people as stupid, ugly, childlike, ruled by base desires and impulses who were closer to apes than humans. Those stereotypes became engrained in Dutch popular culture. The racist aspects of the commemoration of Sinterklaas are offensive and an affront to the memory of those who suffered from European colonialism and continue to undergird racism against minorities today.

IHRC urged the UN Human Rights Council to ensure that minority protection concerns extend to minorities in all countries and not just non-Western jurisdictions. Otherisation of out-groups in these settings is not just a domestic issue. Recent years have provided ample evidence that demonisation and exclusion by western governments also helps them to legitimise external illegal interventions including war.

**Islamic Human Rights Commission**

## Nigeria: The Zaria Massacres and the Role of the Military

**Confirmed Speakers:**  
**Sheikh Ibraheem El-Zakzaky**  
 El-Zakzaky is the leader of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria. He has been a fierce critic of corruption and political misjudgment, and has been imprisoned and attacked as a result over the course of several decades. The recent killings have also targeted his family and he will be discussing the events of those days.

**Massoud Shadjarah**  
 Chair, Islamic Human Rights Commission  
 Shadjarah led the fact-finding mission to Zaria and will present the report's findings.

**Dr. Musa Shuaibu**  
 Shuaibu is a medical doctor in Zaria and was one of the doctors treating those wounded in the attacks.

Sheikh El-Zakzaky and Dr. Musa Shuaibu will be joining the panel live by video connection.

Refreshments will be served during the event.

Friday 25 July was a fateful day in Nigeria this year. One of the 30 plus nationwide annual demonstrations in support of the Palestinians was brutally attacked by the Nigerian military. Some 33 people were killed, with some dying in custody. At least two more were killed the next day in a similar attack on the funeral preparations.

This panel presents the report of IHRC's fact-finding mission to Zaria, and presents eye-witness testimony and analysis from key people involved.

As the report finds, there are serious systemic issues regarding the role of the military in Nigeria and the curtailment of basic rights.

**Venue: Room XXIV, UN Palais des Nations**  
**Time: 15:00 to 16:30**  
**Date: 18 September 2014**

For more information or media enquiries please contact [jsw@ihrc.org](mailto:jsw@ihrc.org) or call +4176 443 7865

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**Islamic Human Rights Commission**

## Islamophobia, Diversity and the Crisis of Democracy

**Confirmed Speakers:**  
**Arzu Merali**  
 Director of Research, Islamic Human Rights Commission  
 Merali is the co-author of many works on Islamophobia and will present the findings and the context of the Anti-Muslim Hostility and Hatred project that conducted empirical research in the UK, France, USA and Canada.

**Dr. Salim Sayyid**  
 University of Leeds  
 Sayyid is based at the University of Leeds, and has written widely on Islamophobia, including a co-edited volume 'Thinking Through Islamophobia'. His latest book 'Recalling the Caliphate' has just been published.

As anti-Muslim hatred rises in Europe and North America as well as other satellite states, this panel presents compelling theoretical and empirical work on the phenomenon. The crisis unfolding as a result of this one can be mapped in many ways, but the overall impact bodes ill for democracy and democratic values. Islamophobia does not just affect Muslims, it strikes at the heart of what it means to be democratic.

**Venue: Room XXIV, UN Palais des Nations**  
**Time: 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM**  
**Date: 17 September 2014**

For more information or media enquiries please contact [jsw@ihrc.org](mailto:jsw@ihrc.org) or call +4176 443 7865

Refreshments will be served during the event.

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## Side Panel Meeting at the 28th Session of the Human Rights Council at the UN, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

**Confirmed Speakers:**  
**Ramon Grosfoguel**  
 Professor at the Department of Philosophy at Berkeley and a research associate of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris.

**Houria Bouteflika**  
 A French-Algerian political activist and blogger. She is also the spokesperson of the Party of the Indignants of the Republic (PIR).

**Sandrine Mira**  
 is an independent scholar and activist. She is the director of the International Institute for Scientific Research.

**Arzu Merali**  
 Head of Research at the Islamic Human Rights Commission.

**Topic:**  
**Human Rights and Racism: After The Paris Attacks**

**Wednesday 18 March 2015**  
**from 15:00-17:00 at room XII**

For more information or media enquiries please contact [jsw@ihrc.org](mailto:jsw@ihrc.org) or call +4176 443 7865

Light refreshments and English-French will be provided.

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## Events held at UN

### Side Panel Meeting on Nigeria Quds Day massacre

On 19 September 2014, IHRC presented its findings into the massacre by soldiers of 35 people in the Nigerian city of Zaria during and after the annual "Al-Quds day" demonstrations in support of the Palestinians. The report, "Nigeria: The Zaria Massacres and the Role of the Military", was presented at a side panel meeting during the 27th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

Eyewitness Sheikh Ibraheem El-Zakzaky recounted how Nigerian armed forces indiscriminately and without provocation opened fire on unarmed civilian demonstrators and bystanders. Some of those who died were killed later whilst in custody. Sheikh El-Zakzaky himself lost three of his sons in the massacre, Mahmud, Ahmad and Hamid. A fourth son, Ali, was shot in the leg.

Another eyewitness, Dr. Musa Shuaibu gave testimony as a medical doctor who treated the injured in hospital that day. His descriptions of the injuries corroborate reports from other parties that the demonstrators were fired at indiscriminately and some victims were not allowed to reach hospital for treatment.

The report details how the Nigerian military started firing without warning, people taken alive in detention were later

found dead, other victims were not allowed to seek medical assistance for hours and were brutalised.

### Failings of the Bangladesh Judiciary in the War Crimes Trials - 12 March 2014

Chaired by Arzu Merali, this side panel meeting at the 25th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva examined the controversial war crimes trials in Bangladesh which have divided the country. Human rights organisations and opposition groups have condemned the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) set up in 2010 by the ruling Awami League to investigate atrocities carried out during the 1971 war for failing to meet international standards of justice. They have accused the ruling Awami League of using the ICT as a tool with which to weaken its political rivals, particularly the Jamaat-e-Islami.

### Malaysia : Security laws and sectarianism under discussion - 19 March 2014

The impact of draconian anti-terrorism legislation and rising sectarianism in the majority Muslim country featured in this side panel meeting at the Geneva headquarters of the UN hosted by the IHRC.

In 2012 Malaysia replaced its much criticised Internal Security Act with the

Security Offences (Special Measures) Act. Although the new legislation (colloquially known as SOSMA) did away with the power of authorities to detain individuals indefinitely without trial, the new limit of 28 days is still far longer than the 14 days maximum for other, non-security related, offences. The power to detain suspects for 28 days is given to the police, without judicial oversight; persons arrested under Sosma need not be produced before a magistrate.

Malaysia is also experiencing an unprecedented rise in sectarianism, particularly against its small but growing Shia Muslim community. Shia Muslims found in possession of religious literature have been arrested while some firebrand preachers have made it their mission to attack the community and put pressure on political leaders to do likewise.

## **Islamophobia, Diversity and the Crisis of Democracy – 17 September 2014**

As anti-Muslim hatred rises in Europe and North America as well as other satellite states, this panel discussion at the UN in Geneva comprising Arzu Merali and Dr Salman Sayyid presented compelling theoretical and empirical work on the phenomenon. The crisis unfolding as a result of this rise can be mapped in many ways, but the overall impact bodes ill for democracy and democratic values - Islamophobia does not just affect Muslims, it strikes at the heart of what it means to be democratic.

## **Protest against Saudi scholar death sentence**

IHRC, in conjunction with Fondation Islamique & Culturelle d'Ahl-El-Beit(s) (FICA), held a demonstration outside the UN regional headquarters in Geneva on Thursday 13 November in protest at the death penalty handed down to Saudi religious leader Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr.

Sheikh Al-Nimr is a leading Shia scholar

who was convicted for his outspoken criticism of the Saudi monarchy and his calls for equality and reform on trumped up charges of apostasy and terrorism. During his sentencing prosecutors reportedly asked for the death penalty to take the form of crucifixion where the decapitated body is publicly displayed.

Sheikh Nimr was arrested in 2012 against the backdrop of rising public unrest and dissension in Saudi Arabia inspired in large part by the Arab Spring. All the protests demanded more liberty, constitutional changes and an end to anti-Shia discrimination.

The Specialised Criminal Court, Saudi Arabia's terrorism tribunal, which handed down the death sentence has been widely criticised for flagrant due process violations, including broadly framed charges that do not resemble recognisable crimes, and denial of access to lawyers at arrest and during pre-trial detention, making it almost impossible to prepare cases for trial. The court has also been criticised for dismissing without investigation allegations of torture and admitting as evidence confessions that defendants said were coerced.

The protestors also drew attention to the wider problem of political prisoners in Saudi Arabia. According to a 2011 report compiled by IHRC, there are an estimated 30,000 political prisoners in Saudi Arabia out of a population of approximately 18 million Saudi nationals.

## Submissions and briefings for UN

During 2014 IHRC made several submissions to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism. This is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States. It provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. It also allows NGOs to submit information which can be considered during the review.

### Myanmar

In our oral statement we drew attention to the continuing persecution of Rohingya Muslims in particular and Muslims in general in Myanmar.

At the heart of the Rohingyas' persecution is the continuing denial of citizenship and their concomitant status as illegal aliens under the law. The Rohingyas continue, as a matter of official policy, to be subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment including rape, punitive taxation and extortion, restrictions on movement, ownership of property, and access to essentials such as water, sanitation, food, medical care, education and employment. Uniquely in Myanmar, the Rohingyas are also subject to a discriminatory two child per family procreation limit.

The government's hostile attitude is a source of encouragement for Burmese citizens engaging in horrific violence against Rohingya communities with the aim of driving them out of their homeland. Thousands of Rohingyas have been murdered and 250,000 displaced. Myanmar police and armed forces have acquiesced and even participated in the violence. Violence against other Muslims has also ensued.

### Malaysia

IHRC, in its capacity as chair of the Universal Justice Network (UJN), made an oral statement to the UN on sectarian discrimination in Malaysia as part of the UPR of that country.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural country with a good record of race relations. However, in the last few years, the Shia Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia, who have been living in harmony with their Sunni brothers and sisters for centuries, have come under persecution from certain state authorities responsible for Islamic affairs. They have been aided by a media that has become increasingly hostile to Shias. IHRC believes that the demonisation of Shias and their persecution is largely driven by political interests.

### Saudi Arabia

Islamic Human Rights Commission's oral statement focussed on ongoing human rights abuses in the kingdom.

Over the course of the past three decades Saudi authorities have detained tens of thousands of individuals for expressing dissent against the ruling monarchy. Many of those arrested have never been charged with committing a crime and their treatment, in which stories of torture and degrading treatment feature prominently, demonstrates a complete absence of due process. Political and civil society activism continues to be subject to official sanction with the default position of the Saudi regime being to imprison and thereby silence any form of criticism of its legitimacy and/or policies. The regime in Riyadh also systematically discriminates against and persecutes the country's Shia minority.

### Egypt

In a written submission to the UPR, IHRC expressed its concerns over the military coup d'état in Egypt of 3 July 2013 and the subsequent massacre of political



demonstrators at two protest sites in Cairo on 14 August 2013.

Our statement outlined political developments that took place in Egypt since the ousting of its first democratically elected leader, Mohammed Morsi, in a military coup in July 2013, which practically destroyed any possibility that the country could continue down the road of political reform ushered in by the arrival of the Arab Spring in the country in 2011. Despite promising early signs from the country's military leadership that it would relinquish power to a civilian government after six decades of authoritarian rule, Egypt slid back into military rule that was once again characterised by routine abuses of human and civil rights. Both in the process of and since returning to power in July 2013 the armed forces, through their proxies in an army-installed interim government, abolished the free press, arrested, detained and tortured political opponents, crushed political dissent and sought to legitimise the restoration of military rule through the legal and political process.

## **Iraq**

In an oral statement to the UN Human Rights Committee during a special session on Iraq in September 2014, IHRC drew attention to human rights abuses being committed by the so-called Islamic State (IS) group in Iraq and the underlying causes of its rapid rise to power.

We submitted that the root cause of the rise of IS must be laid at the door of the United States and its allies' foreign policy in the region including the invasion and occupation of Iraq on 19 March 2003 by US, UK and other coalition forces, and their supporting and often training and funding armed opposition groups in Syria including ISIL/ISIS/IS. The occupation of Iraq perpetrated and fuelled ethnic and sectarian division policies by various administrations, that allowed a small group supported by the US to control policy and marginalise minority communities including religious and ethnic groups.

We said that support and advice from the US and its allies to this group gave succour to a sense of grievance across the country that

has resulted inter alia in a breakdown of social order, and the ability for sectarian and racist groups to infiltrate and gain support in wider society and perpetrate terrorist acts of increasing barbarity since the 2003 invasion. Further the military, moral and financial support of the US and its allies' - including some of the Gulf countries - to the rebels in Syria including those Salafi/Takfiri rebel groups that now form IS and its support base, needs to be critically examined.

## **Discrimination against minorities in UK, USA, France and Canada**

In a statement to the UN Forum on Minority Issues, IHRC urged the UN Human Rights Council to ensure that minority protection concerns extend to minorities in all countries and not just non-Western jurisdictions. Otherisation of out-groups in these settings is not just a domestic issue, resulting in hate crimes and other acts of hatred. We maintained that demonisation and exclusion of minorities by western governments also helps them to legitimise external illegal interventions including war, war crimes and other atrocity crimes.

## **Submission to the UN Committee Against Torture on Bahrain**

In February 2015 IHRC submitted a memorandum about Bahrain's compliance with the International Convention against Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The submission contained information on Bahrain's continuing use of torture against persons in detention, particularly of political detainees and civil rights protestors that is inconsistent with its treaty obligations and suggested issues that the Committee may wish to raise with the government.

# Campaigns

**O**ur campaigns remain wide and varied. In recent years we have campaigned for the release of Babar Ahmad and Talha Ahsan, and latterly ex-Guantanamo detainee Moazzam Beg who was arrested in 2014 but later released without charge. Abroad, we have campaigned for the release of activists and scholars arrested for pursuing the path to freedom in places such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and demanded accountability for officials alleged to have committed human rights abuses. We also campaign on issues such as for example the tide of anti-terror laws being implemented by the UK government, abuses against the Rohingya Muslim minority in Burma (Myanmar) and ongoing rights violations arising out of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

## Palestine - Fly a Flag campaign, Summer 2014

To show solidarity with the Palestinians during Israel's brutal onslaught on Gaza in the summer of 2014 IHRC initiated a "Fly the Flag" campaign urging people to put up the Palestinian colours in their homes and businesses or on their cars.

With mainstream media coverage being unbalanced or non-existent, the aim was to make a public and visible stance in support of the Palestinians.

## Government kowtowing to Islamophobia - February 2015

IHRC wrote an open letter to the Dept for Communities and Local Government responding to the apparent endorsement of Islamophobic views expressed by journalist Andrew Gilligan in an article published in the Sunday Telegraph.

The article by Gilligan, who is a known Islamophobe, accused Baroness Warsi, a co-founder of the Cross-Government Working

Group on anti-Muslim Hatred, of presiding over the infiltration of Muslim 'radicals' into the committee.

It went on to quote the DCLG defending itself against the allegations saying: "We are very clear that we will not fund or engage with groups which promote violent or non-violent extremism. All individuals represented on the cross-government working group on anti-Muslim hatred are committed to the peaceful integration of all communities."

In IHRC's open letter we sought clarification of the government's position, not least because the statement attributed to it implies that it is kowtowing to demands by Islamophobes to remove or exclude Muslims from policymaking.

We reminded the government that the article's charge of "entryism" or loading committees and parties with one's own supporters is a tactic that is often used by bigots to attack minority groups and prevent them from exercising their fundamental rights in society. For the government to accept it as gospel instead of swiftly condemning it suggests that the government too is using the pretext of extremism to exclude Muslims from policymaking.

## Scottish Council anti-Palestine worksheet - March 2014

IHRC wrote to North Lanarkshire Council requesting it withdraw a school worksheet it put out for pupils describing Palestinians as terrorists and suggesting they are pursuing some kind of vendetta against Israel.

The worksheet, which was given to primary seven pupils, presented a totally one-sided view of the Palestine-Israel dispute and reduced Palestinian attempts to establish a homeland as the actions of vengeful extremists. It said 'they [the Palestinians] have turned to terrorist methods for over 30 years'. It then gave the example of 'SUICIDE BOMBINGS' as terrorist activity, establishing the connection that all Palestinians are terrorists, and potentially also that all Palestinians are suicide bombers.



The 'Fly a Flag' campaign in action in South Africa

In the detailed letter IHRC reminded the council that Palestinian resistance to occupation, including armed struggle, is legitimate and universally recognised and permitted under international law. It also called on the council to be mindful of its duty to ensure knowledge is disseminated in an honest and measured way and to undertake a thorough investigation into how such material ever came to be drafted and find its way into classrooms.

## UK anti-terror legislation - through 2014/15

IHRC has been actively engaged in opposing the juggernaut of anti-terrorism legislation that continues to steamroll civil rights and discriminate against Muslims under the pretext of enhancing public security.

Our activities on this front continued apace with participation in government consultations and the preparation of press releases, reports and briefings analysing the potential impact of proposed legislation.

In January 2014 we published a briefing into the Counter Terrorism and Security Bill. We saw the proposed laws as part of a long history of using legislation to target and criminalise the Muslim community which would further erode civil liberties and turn the UK into a police state. The Bill was passed

into law in February against the objections of many civil and minority rights groups.

That move prompted IHRC, along with other organisations, to discontinue its long-standing policy of engaging in government anti-terrorism consultations. We also called on the government to repeal all anti-terrorism legislation that had been put on the statute book since the Terrorism Act 2000 on the grounds that recent anti-terrorism legislation is more concerned with protecting the state from dissent than protecting the public from terrorism. To continue to be part of a process that invariably ends in more curbs on fundamental freedoms only bestows legitimacy on the final decision.

In March 2015 we urged Nick Clegg to oppose yet more draconian new anti-terror laws being hurriedly prepared by his Tory coalition partners as part of a "new counter-extremism strategy". In a letter sent to the Deputy Prime Minister we called on him to make good his repeated pledges to restrain the excesses of the Tories by resisting the laws which represent the latest wave in an ongoing assault against Muslims and their way of life.

The proposed laws include a requirement that staff at job centres identify vulnerable claimants who may become targets for radicalisation, reviewing Sharia councils which are used by Muslims to adjudicate on civil matters, and investigating the alleged infiltration of Muslims into positions of authority such as governing boards and local councils.

If enacted they would add to a growing body of highly oppressive laws and policies introduced in recent years that have used the threat of terrorism as a pretext to target Muslims and their values. One of their effects has been to create the popular perception of the Muslim community in the UK as a security risk and potential fifth column.

The letter made it clear that the proposals are highly discriminatory, potentially counter-productive, and an Islamophobic assault on the legitimate right of Muslims to practice their faith and live according to their religious values. They also stand to erode

must introduce stringent checks on all visiting speakers who are invited to address students on campus, and require student unions to give university authorities at least 14 days notice to allow for background checks and cancellation of the event, if necessary.

However, following opposition from academics and human rights groups including IHRC the Lib-Dems agreed that the measures would interfere with universities' duty to promote free speech and debate.

## Saudi Prisoners

IHRC kept up its campaign to release Saudi Arabia's political prisoners using lobbying, protests, briefings and press releases to draw attention to the estimated 30,000 people who remain incarcerated in the country for exercising their right to criticise or agitate against the regime.

In December 2014 and March 2015 IHRC organised the London leg of international days of protest designed to draw attention to their fate. Carried out under the umbrella of Universal Justice Network the protests highlighted the little publicised persecution faced by those who criticise the ultra-conservative monarchy and its policies.

Many of them are political reformists but their number also includes religious leaders who have campaigned for fundamental rights and freedoms.

In February 2015 we criticised Prince Charles for undertaking a state visit to the kingdom. His visit followed comments he made in a BBC radio interview in which he expressed concern over the alarming rate of radicalisation amongst young British Muslims and the failure of some to subscribe to British values.

In the light of these comments, IHRC found it ironic that the Prince was visiting the leaders of a country that has one of the worst human rights records in the region and which has played a massive role in creating the kind of extremism that the Prince said alarms him.



**FREE ALL  
SAUDI  
POLITICAL  
PRISONERS**

**International day of protest  
against Saudi Arabia**

  
www.ujnweb.com

**Venue:** Opposite the Saudi embassy  
30-32 Charles St, London W1J 5DZ  
**Date:** Friday 19th December 2014  
**Time:** 6.30pm to 8.30pm

further the edifice of civil liberties in the UK, already battered by years of authoritarian legislating.

Later in the month we secured a partial victory when the Lib-Dems vetoed proposed anti-terror guidance for universities that would have seen Muslim preachers banned from speaking on campuses.

The guidance stipulated that universities

## Bangladesh war crimes tribunal

IHRC has followed closely the progress of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) in Bangladesh. The last year has been a particularly testing one for the country's political opposition as its leaders have been rounded up and tried for war crimes. The ICT was set up in 2010 by the ruling Awami League to investigate atrocities carried out during the 1971 war of separation from Pakistan. However has been widely

to send Mullah to the gallows after an initial life imprisonment sentence had failed to satisfy popular demands. Several other opposition leaders have been sentenced to death.

IHRC campaigned through the media to draw attention to the plight of the sentenced and urged the international community to take all steps to pressure the Bangladeshi government to halt the executions and to promptly disband the war crimes tribunal as it has proved itself unfit for the purpose of establishing justice and is instead simply an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling Awami League.

**Autumn 2014 Know Your Rights Workshops at IHRC**  
with **Taher Gulamhussein**

**STOP & SEARCH** SAT 20TH SEPTEMBER 4PM - 7PM

**IMMIGRATION CHECKS & RAIDS** TUES 14TH OCTOBER 6.30PM - 9PM

**TERROR STOPS AT AIRPORTS** SAT 8TH NOVEMBER 4PM - 7PM

**PROTEST** TUES 2ND DECEMBER 6.30PM - 9PM

**STOP**

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

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W: [www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk)

Islamic Human Rights Commission

## Know Your Rights Workshops – Through Autumn and Winter 2014-2015

IHRC continued its work in empowering the community to know their rights. We have done this by distributing rights information leaflets and other literature, doing casework and since 2013 by delivering workshops up and down the country. This year we held workshops on Stop and Search laws, Immigration Checks and Raids, Terrorism Stops on Travellers, and Protests.

Know Your Rights workshops are designed for all those whose activities may make them targets of the police and other officials. Often people are treated in quite invasive and humiliating ways even if they are innocent of any crime. The workshops are aimed at ensuring that people not only know their rights but also how to enforce them.

condemned for failing to meet international standards of justice and for being a tool of the ruling Awami League to cripple its political opponents. Almost the entire leadership of the Jamaat-e-Islami has been indicted for committing war crimes.

So far the government has only carried through one execution, hanging Abdul Kader Mullah in December 2013. In that case the government retrospectively changed the law

# Decoloniality Europe

Throughout the year IHRC continued and expanded its involvement in Decoloniality Europe, a network concerned with encouraging communication, discussion, collaboration and common action between activists and intellectuals whose work revolves around decolonising Europe.

Decoloniality Europe (DE) was set up in 2010 to challenge the eurocentric world view and system that has been in place since the



European colonial conquests of the 16th century. This colonial Europe was built upon the negation of the 'other' inside and outside Europe and through violence, epistemicide and genocide against him and her.

Among the activities undertaken by IHRC this year in conjunction with DE was the annual Genocide Memorial Day. Under the aegis of DE, the event has now expanded outside London to take in European cities as well as for the first time this year the occupied city of Jerusalem.

The major Islamophobia Conference in London which took place on 13 December 2014 was also organised under the umbrella of DE.

## Sinterklaas Festival

One of Decoloniality Europe's main campaigns this year was to resist and re-educate people about the popular Sinterklaas festival in the Netherlands. According to the legend every December 5th, St. Nicholas travels to the Netherlands from Spain to reward or punish children. Accompanying him are an army of helpers or "Black Petes", clownish and acrobatic figures dressed in Moorish page suits.

While the legend of Sinterklaas is rooted

**Black Pete symbolised the colonial subjugation of black Africans**

in Middle Age European history the character of Black Pete is a colonial construct dating from the 19th century at the height of the Dutch Empire. At the time the figure of Black Pete was produced the Netherlands was a global colonial power involved in slavery and the slave trade for more than 200 years. From the late sixteenth century to the abolishment of slavery in 1863, the Dutch had traded over half a million African men, women and children across the Atlantic and enslaved millions more.

Black Pete symbolised the colonial subjugation of black Africans which was underpinned by a dominant biological discourse of racism that translated into stereotypical images and representations of black people as stupid, ugly, childlike, ruled by base desires and impulses who were closer to apes than humans. Those stereotypes became engrained in Dutch popular culture.

Since the 1960s campaigners in the Netherlands and elsewhere have applied pressure on the Dutch authorities to reconsider and reconfigure the festival to remove racist references. In July 2015 campaigners won a small victory when a court ordered the mayor of Amsterdam to

reconsider the annual parade through the city.

IHRC continues to provide resource materials and updates about the anti-Sinterklaas campaign as well as supporting fellow campaigners. We believe that some elements of the Sinterklaas festival are an insult to the Netherlands' black inhabitants and an affront to the memory of those who suffered from European colonialism and the country would be better served to reform the annual parade in line with the expectations of a modern multicultural society.

## Charlie Hebdo attacks aftermath

In the days and weeks following the attacks on the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, DE was heavily engaged in combating media and politicians who sought to instrumentalise the incident in order to demonise Muslims and their faith. In a press release DE strongly condemned the

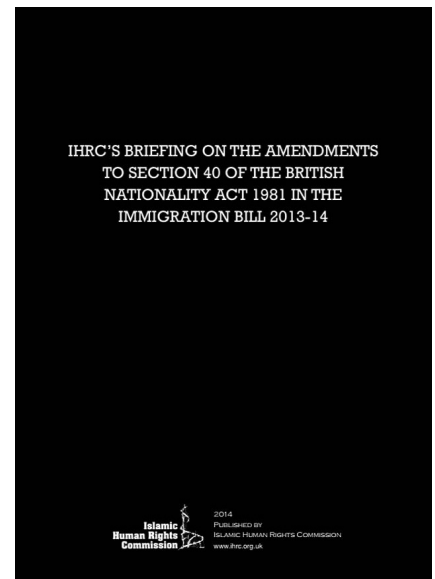
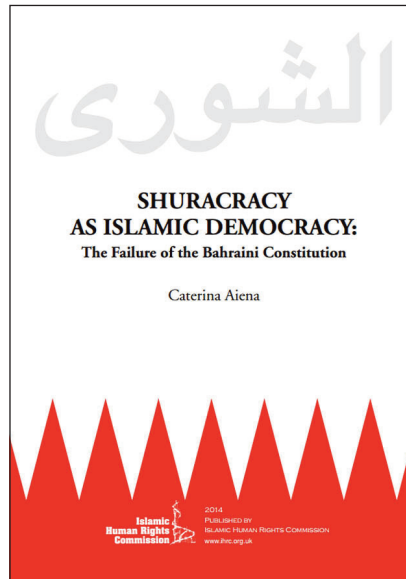
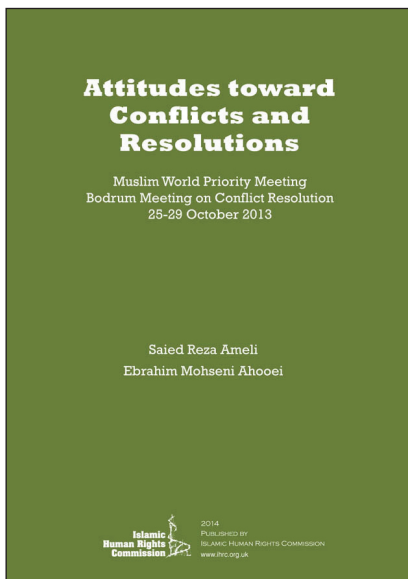
irresponsible declarations made by Jeanette Boughrab, former French right wing UMP minister, accusing the Party of the Indigenous of the Republic (PIR) of being responsible for the killing of the journalists of Charlie Hebdo because of their criticism of the Islamophobic positions taken by this journal.

DE also issued a statement condemning official and media reactions to the attacks as being inspired by a new wave of colonial racism. The statement said that colonial racism and its chauvinistic nationalism is threatening to unleash another genocide in Europe. The western colonial projects that were a precursor to the Holocaust - German genocide against the Herero in Namibia in the early 20th century and the United States' genocide against indigenous people in North America in the 19th century - are still very much alive and active today. Satirical images made in the 1920s and 1930s to dehumanise Jews, Roma people, or non/Western colonial subjects, are today normalised when directed towards Muslims and Black people. The refrain "never again" has been distorted and hijacked to mean "never again" just for Jews.



**IHRC's Institutional  
Islamophobia Conference  
in December 2014**

# IHRC Publications



**T**hroughout the year IHRC published many reports and briefings aimed at informing policymakers and the general public alike.

## Attitudes toward Conflicts and Resolutions – April 2014

The report features an analysis of responses gathered from 18 participants at the Muslim World Priority Meeting on Conflict Resolution which took place from 25-29 October 2013 in Bodrum, Turkey. The analysis is modelled on the work of scholar Johan Galtung in which conflict is located within a framework that encompasses different levels from international down to societal (identity groups or individuals).

Conflict resolution processes are then explored. Conflict can end through violence and warfare or can be managed through compromise and the assistance of a third party; the processes are many and varied. Religion has often been viewed as one of the most significant causes of conflict and war across the world. This is despite the fact that the value of peace is emphasised in all religions. Yet this specific view ignores the rise of religious nationalisms - when religion becomes an expression of nation as opposed

to an expression of conscience. The report argues that notions of historicity and race often operate under the guise of religion.

Concluding with an analysis of the correlation between people's views, the report also reveals that almost all participants who agreed that "individual and group conflicts affect social and ummah conflicts" also agreed that "conflict resolution is about understanding and coming to agreement."

## Concerns over the Immigration Bill 2013 - 14 – March 2014

In this briefing IHRC set out its objections to the Immigration Bill as it passed through the House of Lords and suggested several key amendments. Our opposition centred on extensive new powers that were set to be made available to the executive which would have a detrimental impact on civil liberties, particularly for ethnic minorities and Muslims. They included a new power for the Home Secretary to deprive a person of citizenship regardless of whether or not it results in statelessness, in contravention of international law. IHRC argued that the test to be applied by the Home Secretary that her action is "conducive to the public good..."



because the person while having the citizenship status has conducted themselves in a manner which is seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the UK" is too vague and arbitrary. We also expressed our alarm at the lack of prior judicial oversight and a fair appeals process.

## **Shuracracy As Islamic Democracy: The Failure of the Bahraini Constitution – April 2014**

Written by Caterina Aiena this article looks explores the idea of shura or consultation in Islam. It argues that at present the need for a newly tuned idea of consultation is paramount due to its instrumental role in accommodating the crisis of identity of Islamic constitutionalism as a key item in the democratisation agenda. In the Western world, the most prevalent idea is that the democratic deficit in this part of the human community is somehow rooted in Islam for its inherent recalcitrance to democratic values. So, at this point some questions arise: is Islam essentially antithetical to democracy? And if it is not, how and by whom could Islamic democracy be implemented? This paper demonstrates that Islam can not only be the impetus for the initiation of democratisation in the Middle East, but, further, it contains significant concepts in tune with democratic principles.

## **Central African Republic: A Background Briefing to Recent Violence - April 2014**

This report analyses the causes of violence in the Central African Republic in the aftermath of the ousting of President Francois Bozize from power by mainly Muslim Seleka rebels in March 2013. Although, many have described the Seleka as Muslims, when the movement initially started in the North of CAR there were other groups that also joined the Seleka to oust Bozize. He was widely seen

as a corrupt leader and at the time it was not seen as a religious conflict. Seleka literally means "union" in the Sango language.

The rebel leader of the Seleka, Michel Djotodia, was named the transitional head of government. For the first time in the modern history of CAR, a Muslim now ran the country. In the process the Seleka wreaked havoc on the country. They were not accountable to anyone for their actions and were free to loot, kill and rape. Their victims were the majority Christian population of the country. Muslims were spared from the crimes of the Seleka which increased resentment towards them from Christians. Anti-Muslim violence ensued and fears of a genocide resulted in the deployment of external forces.

## **Mercenaries in Bahrain: The cruel crackdown of the uprising - April 2014**

This report analyses the implications of the recruitment of foreign people by Bahrain authorities in order to curb the uprising in the island monarchy. Since at least 2009 the Bahraini royal family has been involved in recruiting security personnel from Sunni-majority countries such as Pakistan, Jordan, Yemen and Saudi Arabia to crush dissent, mainly from Bahrain's Shia majority. Although opposition to the monarchy has been portrayed as sectarian in nature it should be noted that Sunnis, Shias and Salafis are all part of the opposition. Nevertheless some aspects of persecution against opponents has taken a sectarian turn and has played to an anti-Shia Muslim audience in the wider Gulf, and as part of US policy against Iran.

## **The Never-ending Story of Egypt: Al-Sisi and the Military Legacy – July 2014**

Following the removal of President Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, Egypt has experienced the worst wide-scale violence

since the era of President Nasser. Egyptian security forces used excessive force on numerous occasions including six mass killings of Morsi supporters, which peaked with the clearance of the protest camp at Rabaa al-Adawiya – in which at least 637 people died-, and thousands more were arrested, imprisoned and/or tortured. In addition, the judicial authorities have handed down the largest number of capital punishment convictions in the country's recent history.

Such figures are unrivalled in Egypt's recent history and compare unfavourably with those harking back to the darkest days of October 1954, when the government arrested thousands of Brotherhood members alleged to have been involved in the attempted assassination of President Nasser. This paper by Caterina Aiena analyses the unprecedented use of violence providing a lucid illustration of the repressive depths to which Egypt's political conflict has plunged.

## **European Court of Human Rights judgment on French laws banning the niqab and burqa - July 2014**

Lena Mohamed examines the June 2014 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights upholding the French ban on face veils arguing that it has the very specific aim of forced integration and the demonisation of communities that resist attempts to coercively shape their identities.

The attempt to forcibly assimilate Muslims creates a scenario whereby Muslims are positioned in opposition to white populations in the West who enjoy the rights protected by the European Convention on Human Rights. The operative principle appears to be that Muslims are backward and must forcibly be changed or failing that, removed from the community. This attitude is reflected in the judgment of the Court, where the moral and ethical dimension of a Muslim woman's existence is seen as subordinate to the desire to protect western ideals.

It is clear that the decision of the Court fits

neatly within a European nationalist narrative that has at its core the exclusion of minorities from society. The interpolation of an ill-defined right to 'live together', and the loss of the right of individuals' to live and express their religion, highlights a culturally and politically loaded interpretation of the law and the failure of the Convention to protect minority citizens. It is of concern that similar sentiments are being expressed across Europe. As the Court has now established a precedent, the door is open for other states to enact similarly oppressive measures.

## **Proposed Counter Terrorism and Security Bill: An Orwellian Possibility - January 2015**

The Counter Terrorism and Security Bill was placed before parliament in November 2014 and received royal assent in February 2015. It introduced a raft of new measures to deal with terrorism and extremism in the UK. In its submission to the government consultation IHRC maintained that the current proposal was part of a long history of the government's use of legislation to target and criminalise the Muslim community. This new Act is by far and away the most Orwellian to date - it will undoubtedly erode civil liberties and turn the UK into a police state.

In response to government attempts to enact this new legislation and its continuing refusal to take on board human rights concerns, IHRC took the decision not to take part in this or any further consultations with the government on anti-terrorism laws. We published an open letter that was co-signed by several other organisations explaining the reasons for our decision.

# Events

IHRC organised and/or participated in many events throughout the year ranging from seminars and workshops to demonstrations and conferences around issues pertaining to threats to fundamental rights.

## Racism Against The Young: A seminar delivered by Arzu Merali – 2 May 2014

Oxford University's Ruskin College was the venue for this seminar, led by IHRC's research director Arzu Merali. It centred on the 2011 riots in the UK in which a new manifestation of an old racism emerged. The disturbances were initially portrayed as perpetrated by black people with a false sense of grievance but when the demographic of the rioters became clearer the blame shifted to young people acculturated to 'black norms'. Mrs Merali argued that policies designed to tackle the 'problems' of youth can be seen to be part of the problem of racist policy making.

## DANGEROUS SURVEILLANCE: Drones, Data and Deprivation of Citizenship – 5 August 2014

Revelations over mass electronic surveillance by US-UK state agencies have provoked public outrage at this threat to democratic freedoms. State responses have further revealed its assumptions about the public as a potential source of various dangers. Indeed, the state has a long history of targeting political dissent through human surveillance, which continues today alongside mass electronic surveillance of everyone. In the past decade Muslim and migrant communities have been increasingly targeted to become informers. This pressure has been reinforced by blackmail threats linked to anti-terror powers which can

## SEMINARS ON THE WAR ON YOUTH

A SERIES OF LECTURES THAT VISIT THE DIFFERENT FRONTS OF THIS WAR TO EXPLORE THE DETAIL OF THIS ASSAULT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

### 'RACISM AGAINST THE YOUNG: HOW BRITISH YOUTH BECAME BLACK'

A seminar led by Arzu Merali

Date: Wed 7th May 2014 | Time: 2pm – 5pm



The critically acclaimed public intellectual Henry A. Giroux writes that there is a war on youth. An assault against children that is indicative of a deep moral and political crisis in society in which young people are no longer where society reveals its dreams, but a place where it hides its nightmares.

In the wake of the summer of 2011's uprisings in the UK, a new manifestation of an old racism emerged, whereby the riots were portrayed firstly as perpetrated by wrongly aggrieved black people and then (when the demographic of so-called rioters became more clear) as perpetrated by youth acculturated to 'black norms'. In this process, the young became a race subject to the processes of racialisation at the hands of a racist state.

This presentation argues that policies devised to tackle the 'problems' of youth can be seen to be part of the problem of racist policy making that the Covenant of Economic and Social Rights highlights as a barrier to the realisation of rights.

Arzu Merali is a writer, researcher and one of the founders of Islamic Human Rights Commission ([www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk))

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mkhan@ruskin.ac.uk - 01865 759650

impose various punishments without trial. An extreme form has been deprivation of UK citizenship, sometimes followed by drone assassination.

The global expansion of drone attack has been documented by Jeremy Scahill's book and film, Dirty Wars. Co-organised with several other civil liberties campaign groups, this discussion considered how people should oppose the state's dangerous surveillance.

## Demonstration against Israeli invasion of Gaza – 18 July 2014

The Israeli invasion of Gaza in the summer of 2014 galvanised IHRC to respond to the outrage. We called a snap demonstration outside the Israeli embassy in London which was attended by scores of protestors showing their opposition to the killing of hundreds of Palestinians by Israeli armed forces.



## **Al-Quds Day March – 25 July 2014**

As members of the Quds Committee, IHRC helped again this year to arrange this national event. Thousands of people came from all over the country to show their solidarity with the people of Palestine and oppressed people everywhere. The Israeli invasion of Gaza made this year's procession and rally all the more poignant. The march ended in a rally outside the US embassy where speakers addressed the demonstrators. The choice of the US embassy as a rallying point was not coincidental - the US continues to underwrite the Zionist regime and block all attempts at finding a just solution to the Palestinian issue.

## **Vigil to protest the killing of pro-Palestinian demonstrators in Nigeria - 28 July 2014**

Among the Al-Quds Day processions that took place around the world to show solidarity with the Palestinians, one in particular turned very bloody. Soldiers in Nigeria opened fire on unarmed protestors in the northern city of Zaria killing at least 33. The following day, soldiers drove to the Husainiyah Baqiyyatullah where some of the wounded were being cared for and opened fire on supporters of the Islamic Movement within the precincts of the main building. IHRC organised a vigil outside the Nigeria High Commission in London to protest the actions of the military.

## **Rally welcoming US decision to repatriate Talha Ahsan – 17 August 2014**

Following a plea bargain with US authorities that would allow him to return to the UK, it seemed that the cruel detention of

Talha Ahsan had finally come to an end. IHRC took part in a rally outside the Home Office supported by many campaign groups to celebrate the expected homecoming of Talha and the resilience of his family-led campaign and the ongoing struggle against unjust extradition laws. Talha is a British-born citizen, who suffers from Aspergers syndrome like Gary Mckinnon, was extradited to indefinite solitary confinement in a US Supermax prison housing death row inmate after over 6 years of detention without trial, charge or prima facie evidence in the UK. Although the plea bargain resulted in Talha being transferred into the custody of US immigration officials he still awaits repatriation to the UK.

## **Genocide Memorial Day, 17-18 January 2014**

Hundreds of people in cities across Europe marked 2015 Genocide Memorial Day to commemorate man's inhumanity to man and learn how to identify and help prevent the outbreak of future crises.

The theme again this year was Steps to Genocide, focussing on the political, social and economic processes that precede all genocides and which provide an indicator of looming crises. Key among these signs is the demonisation of communities with the aim of inciting hostility against them, something which is continuing apace across Europe.

Events were held in London and Brussels as GMD continues to grow. More than 100 people attended the London event organised by IHRC featuring a panel of acclaimed speakers. They were joined from Paris by activists who made a live statement to the London conference via video link explaining that their own planned GMD commemoration had been overtaken by the urgent need to make a "counter-attack" against the wave of Islamophobia and racism sweeping France following the Charlie Hebdo attacks. A separate event is planned for Jerusalem later in 2015.

Established in 2010, Genocide Memorial Day is unique in that remembrance is not limited by the background of either the



A panel at Genocide Memorial Day 2015

victims or the perpetrators of any of the genocides. GMD rejects the notion that there is a hierarchy of victims depending on their background. This year's events were made all the more topical by the massive backlash against Muslim communities in the wake of the attacks in Paris. The demonisation of Muslims in the mainstream media has strong parallels to the demonisation of the Jews by the Nazis which laid the ground for their mass extermination in the Holocaust.

## What now for Europe? The instrumentalisation of the Paris attacks – 12 January 2015

### Panel discussion

In the aftermath of the Paris attacks IHRC convened this discussion in central London to examine the fallout. The panel of speakers included Houria Bouteldja, a French-

Algerian political activist and blogger. She is also the spokesperson of the Party of the Indigenous of the Republic (PIR), Kevin Cobham, a criminal defence lawyer and people-centred human rights advocate, and Ramon Grosfoguel, professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley and a research associate of the Maison des Science de l'Homme in Paris.

## Comedy evenings with Aamer Rahman – March 2015

Following his brilliant guest performance at the Islamophobia Awards IHRC retained the services of acclaimed Australian comedian Aamer Rahman for follow-up events in London and Edinburgh. Hundreds of people attended the shows where they were treated to Rahman's hilarious brand of political satire through which he ridicules racism and Islamophobia.

## **IHRC in the Media**

It has been another active year for IHRC's media team. With Islamophobia and racism gaining traction across Europe the organisation has found itself responding to more outbreaks and the media interest they generate. 2014 was probably the busiest and most successful in IHRC's history in terms of the number of issues we covered and the number of times we were called on to pass comment by media organisations across all platforms – TV, radio, online and print

Here is a small selection of the coverage we received:

### **Channel 4 News - 27 April 2014**

In a fiery Channel 4 News debate on an alleged Muslim "plot" to take over Birmingham schools, Labour MP Khalid Mahmood says "you have got to keep education secular" - but what do you think?

The debate followed an exclusive Channel 4 News interview with one of the teachers at the centre of the alleged "Trojan Horse" plot, where it is claimed that a hardline, conservative Islamic group was trying to take control of a number of Birmingham schools in order to influence the education of thousands of children.

In the interview the teacher, who asked to remain anonymous, said that there was a campaign to bring more Muslim teachers and governors into schools in Birmingham - but said this was not a part of an extremist plot, but was to raise standards.

Mr Mahmood argued that religion in schools serves to segregate communities, and that education must stay secular but inform all pupils about the basis of all religions.

Journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown said that all religions in schools are getting "too strong" and that we need a "rethink" about the role of religion in state education.

Massoud Shadjareh from the Islamic Human Rights Commission said that if state schools are all secular then "you are not going

to give a whole section of the community parental choice."

### **Anadolou Agency - 9 May 2014**

A counter-terrorism report produced by MPs from the U.K.'s three main political parties has been criticised for its recommendations on how to deal with U.K. nationals returning from Syria...

The Islamic Human Rights Commission also criticised the policy and said that the focus on the Muslim community is, "disproportionate, inconsistent and discriminatory." The commission's chair Massoud Shadjareh told AA: "The report misses the point, recent attacks against mosques in the UK shows that Muslims are more likely to be victims of terrorism rather than participants in it."

The policy was amended last year to make it easier for the Home Secretary to confiscate passports and has since been used 14 times – in contrast, the committee believes the policy was used only 16 times between 1947 and 1976.

"The number of Muslims fighting in Syria is probably no more or less than the number of Britons who fought in Libya to depose Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, during which time British politicians said little if anything about their alleged exposure to extremist ideology and military training," the Islamic Human Rights Commission said.

### **The Guardian - 1 October 2014**

The prosecution of former Guantánamo inmate Moazzam Begg dramatically collapsed after the police and crown prosecutors were handed secret intelligence material which undermined the terrorism case against him.

Five days before Begg was due to go on trial on a string of terrorism charges, prosecutors announced at the Old Bailey that they had "recently become aware of relevant material" which obliged them to offer no evidence.

The judge entered a formal verdict of not guilty and ordered that Begg be set free immediately from Belmarsh high security prison.....

The Islamic Human Rights Commission chairman, Massoud Shadjareh, added: "As was widely suspected there seems to have been no basis for his arrest and it does seem that as a high-profile member of the Muslim community, Mr Begg was being made an example of in order to silence activists campaigning against draconian anti-terrorism laws."

### **BBC News Online - 11 November 2014**

A prominent Pakistani activist who had received death threats from the Taliban was due to be deported from Britain after exhausting all rights of appeal.

Liaquat Ali Hazara, 36, is a campaigner for persecuted minorities in Pakistan, including the Hazaras, the Shia group to which he belongs.

Lena Mohamed, of the Islamic Human Rights Commission, a group which has been campaigning against the deportation said: "We have assessed the situation and we don't see any way round it, the government cannot dismiss these real human rights concerns. This is a potential loss of life we are talking about."

### **Daily Mail - 27 November 2014**

New anti-terror laws have been published amid criticism by human rights groups and concerns raised by the terrorism legislation watchdog.

A new Counter-terrorism and Security Bill, containing a range of draconian powers including new orders that can block suspected British fighters from returning to the UK, was introduced to Parliament.....

Islamic Human Rights Commission chair Massoud Shadjareh said: "To go down the same route of policies which have failed to address terrorism is just going to alienate Muslims further and increase 'otherisation' of communities, encouraging the kind of

victimisation that has resulted in ever-increasing attacks on places of worship and individuals."

### **Press TV – 8 January 2015**

Massoud Shadjareh, the head of the Islamic Human Rights Commission, said in an interview with Press TV that Western countries, including France, have been supporting Takfiri terrorists in the Middle East in recent years despite being aware of the fact that it might backfire on them.

He said the Takfiri terrorist groups were created not just by the money received from individuals or the smuggling of oil, but also with the financial and military support of Western governments.

Referring to the recent shooting incident in Paris, which led to the death of 12 people, he said, "I think there needs to be a wake-up call across Europe," adding that the terrorists should be stopped.

He said that people need to recognise that Islamophobia and associating Muslims with these terrorists is no more acceptable, adding that societies need to become more cohesive and find ways to stop terrorists.

Shadjareh's remarks came after at least twelve people were killed and five others critically injured when several masked men armed with automatic weapons stormed the offices of French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo in the heart of the French capital, Paris, on Wednesday.

### **Russia Today - 14 January 2015**

One of the UK's biggest Islamic organisations has refused to participate in future government talks on anti-terror legislation, claiming their contributions to policy are being overlooked.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), which describes itself as an "independent, non-profit campaign, research and advocacy organisation," said the British government has been "uncompromising" in its efforts to "legislate away fundamental freedoms in order to tackle terrorism over the



last 18 years.”

In a statement released late Tuesday, an IHRC spokesperson said: “Such input perversely allows the government to claim that it has carefully considered the views of civil society organisations, when in fact the final policies were always a foregone conclusion.”

### **Aljazeera Online – 20 January 2015**

A new row has erupted between the British government and Muslim organisations after the minister responsible for community cohesion wrote to hundreds of imams calling on them to do more to tackle violent extremism and demonstrate “how faith in Islam can be part of British identity”.

The letter, sent by Eric Pickles, the secretary of state for communities and local government, to every mosque in England, provoked an angry response from the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), which accused the government of peddling far-right arguments about integration.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) also condemned the letter.

“Before the government starts preaching to people to subscribe to slogans about British values, let us all sit down and decide what British values actually are. Without this, expecting the Muslim community to conform to an undefined notion of ‘Britishness’ is fanning an Islamophobic agenda,” said Massoud Shadjareh, IHRC’s chair.

### **The Guardian – 10 February 2015**

Massoud Shadjareh, chair of the London-based Islamic Human Rights Commission, criticised Charles’s visit to Saudi Arabia. He said: “It seems highly hypocritical of Prince Charles to be giving such a gesture of support to the Saudi regime at a time when he claims to be worried about the dangers of so-called radicalisation and British values.

“The prince should know that no country has been more pivotal to the rise of extremism than Saudi Arabia and rubbing shoulders with its leaders is only going to

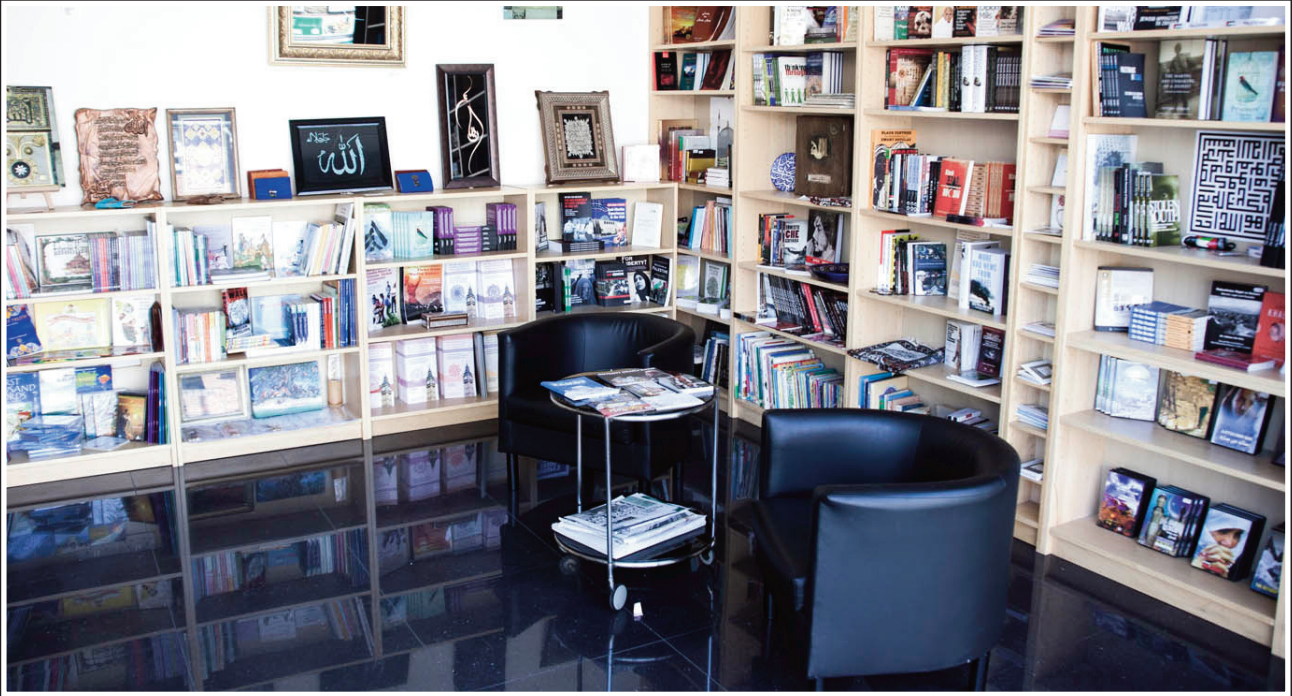
give them more encouragement to continue business as normal.”

### **Newsweek - 11 March 2015**

A joint statement signed by a number of prominent Muslim groups and leaders from all over the UK has condemned the British government for its perceived “criminalisation” of Islam, and accuses it of creating a “Mccarthyite witch-hunt” against the Muslim community....

Another signatory, Arzu Merali, director of research at the Islamic Human Rights Commission, points out that the diverse range of signatories shows that this is a problem that resonates with many Muslims, including many women.

“The Muslim card is being used as a political tool,” she says, adding that the new legal duty imposed on Muslims to report extremists is “terrifying” and “sends out the message that Muslims must be spied upon”.



From top clockwise:  
 IHRC Bookshop, Launch  
 of Mohamed Hamza's  
 'Intifada Street'  
 Exhibition, individual  
 items available from the  
 IHRC Bookshop, artwork  
 by Sara Russell from the  
 'Another Day' Exhibition,  
 'Layers of Paradise'  
 Exhibition launch



# IHRC Bookshop And Gallery

**I**HRC's bookshop is based at the organisation's headquarters in NW London. The bookshop hosts an array of titles from political exposes to fictional works for children. We pride ourselves on carrying books that are not easy to find and source. Our own publications can be found online and in-store and we've produced a spectrum of work exploring human rights issues in many countries. There are also titles by other authors on critical thinking, decoloniality, issues of race and civil rights as well as an array of Islamic books. The shop, which has an online presence, also stocks exclusive gift items, limited edition prints, original artwork and more. The profits from the shop support the work that IHRC does championing human rights around the world.

Along with the Gallery, the bookshop also double ups as a venue for our events. Last year was a busy one with both spaces hosting events ranging from art exhibitions and poetry readings to film screenings and political discussions.

## Intifada Street exhibition – 15 March through 7 June 2014

IHRC was proud to host artist and poet Mohammad Hamza's maiden exhibition featuring contributions from spoken word artists.

'Intifada Street' reflects the cries of the struggling and oppressed around the world. Hamza's personal heroes are also signified through his artwork, and his pro-Palestine stance is clearly shown.

## Film Screening & Directors' Q&A of 'Even the Crows: A Divided Gujarat' – 29 March 2014

Even the Crows explores the ways in which the politics and Hindu nationalist ideology of India's PM Narendra Modi have

polarised Gujarat along religious lines. Since the anti-Muslim riots that exploded in 2002, the Muslim minority population have been denied justice and marginalised to the ghettos. Meanwhile, Narendra Modi, who has been accused of complicity in the riots, has ridden a wave of popularity. Through the intimate stories of American-Gujarati Nishrin, whose father, a prominent Muslim MP, was butchered during the 2002 Gujarat riots, and British-Gujarati Imran, who was the sole survivor when he was attacked along with his two uncles a friend while on holiday in the state, the film explores Modi's link to the violence and the minority community's ongoing struggle for justice.

## Storytelling Sessions

IHRC hosted a children's storytelling session at its bookshop in April 2014 with children's author Zainab Zahra offering children the chance to listen to stories and also to interact with other children and share the joy of books. In the summer holidays we hosted Hajera Memon who narrated her children's story based on the magnificent historical event of Abraha's army of Elephants going to destroy the Kaaba.

## LIBYA 2011: Responsibility to protect? - 23 April 2014

In this discussion held at the IHRC bookshop Libyan academic Kamila Otman, who specialises in the former government's international relations, outlined why in her opinion Libya went through the trauma of 2011, its historical context and the consequences of the Nato war on Libya. She was joined by journalist and filmmaker Roshan Muhammed Salih who reported from Libya in 2011.

## **Decolonising the Mind - 31 May 2014**

Following on from last year's highly successful 'Decolonising the Mind' training, IHRC hosted decolonial scholar and activist Sandew Hira who gave a presentation on challenging one's own ideological, political and cultural colonisation.

Sandew is both an economist and historian. His first book on the struggles of Suriname was published in 1982 and since then he has written many more. He is currently the director of the International Institute for Scientific Research (IISR).

**The series is about the  
legacy of colonialism  
in knowledge  
production and  
distribution**

## **Author evening with Dan Glazebrook - 3 June 2014**

Author Dan Glazebrook's new book, *Divide and Ruin: The West's Imperial Strategy, in an Age of Crisis*, was the focus of a discussion around what he understands to be the development and refinement of 'western' strategy in relation to the Global South.

The book lays bare the connections between capitalism, militarism and economic crisis today, and the devastating impact Western foreign policy has had on the nations of the global South. Glazebrook demonstrates that, above all, the imperialist countries are determined to combat the 'threat of a good example', the possibility that the economic policies pursued by Third World states might be effectively determined by their own citizens in their own interests, and not by Western capitalists and their hangers-on.

## **Palestine Photo Exhibition - 19 June 2014**

IHRC exhibited the works of Sara Russell, a young photographer who travelled to the city of Jenin in the north of Palestine. There she found inspiration in the daily lives of the people and her encounters with them on the streets. Each photograph tells the story of 'another day' of occupation. Sara says: "I wanted to capture the feelings and emotions, the hopes and fears revealed; the evident signs of pressures that continue to test the patience and perseverance of a people that live with relics of the past, struggles of the present and hopes for a better tomorrow."

## **Book Series Launch: Decolonizing The Mind - 11 October 2014**

The International Institute for Scientific Studies - a member organisation of Decoloniality Europe - initiated a new series of books entitled 'Decolonizing The Mind'. The series is about the legacy of colonialism in knowledge production and distribution and topics that are relevant for social movements that struggle against this legacy. IHRC hosted the launch of the series with Sandew Hira, an independent scholar and director of IISR, and Stephen Small, Associate Professor of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

## **Romina Khanom: 'Layers of Paradise' Exhibition - 23 October 2014 onwards**

Installations and sculptures inspired by Arabic calligraphy and sacred text from the Quran formed the subject matter of an exhibition by artist Romina Khanom. Romina's work is typically made using stencils inspired by arabesque design and hand-cut with a precision knife creating pieces that are spiritual in both form and aesthetic.

Live on **IHRC TV**  
www.ihrc.org.uk

# AUTHOR EVENING

with **Salman Sayyid**

Author Salman Sayyid will be in conversation to discuss his latest book **Recalling the Caliphate** - a book that engages critically with the interaction between Islam and the global post-colonial world of politics.

Salman Sayyid is based at the University of Leeds and has written widely on Islamophobia, including a co-edited volume 'Thinking Through Islamophobia'. His numerous publications explore the postcolonial condition and have been translated into a number of languages including Persian, Turkish and Arabic.

**ENTRY IS FREE**  
To book a place please call 020 8904 4222 or email [nadia@ihrc.org](mailto:nadia@ihrc.org) or leave your name and details in store.

www.ihrc.org.uk

Join in the discussion by sending us your questions and comments via [Twitter @ihrc](https://twitter.com/ihrc), email [nadia@ihrc.org](mailto:nadia@ihrc.org) or posting on the [IHRC Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ihrc) page.

**AUTHOR EVENING WITH SALMAN SAYYID**

Date: Saturday 1 November 2014  
Time: 17.30  
Venue: IHRC Bookshop, Gallery and Information Centre  
202 Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8PA  
Tel: 020 8904 4222  
Nearest train / tube: Preston Road (Metropolitan) • South Kenton (Bakerloo and Overground)

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AN EVENING WITH **RAMÓN GROSFOGUEL**

Live on **IHRC TV**  
www.ihrc.org.uk

# Postcolonial or Decolonial?

Join us for a conversation with Ramon Grosfoguel. The esteemed author and academic will be discussing the differences and similarities between postcolonial studies and the decolonial perspective.

Ramon Grosfoguel is a professor in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of California at Berkeley and a research associate of the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* in Paris. He has published extensively in the fields of Political Economy of the World-System, International Migration and Decolonial Studies.

\* Tweet your questions and comments to @IHRC

**AUTHOR EVENING WITH RAMÓN GROSFOGUEL**

Date: Tuesday 16 December 2014  
Time: 6.45pm - 8.45pm (GMT)  
Venue: IHRC Bookshop, Gallery and Information Centre  
202 Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8PA  
Tel: 020 8904 4222  
Nearest train / tube: Preston Road (Metropolitan) • South Kenton (Bakerloo and Overground)

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Live on **IHRC TV**  
www.ihrc.org.uk

**BOOK LAUNCH**

Join us for the launch of **Katy Sian's** new book

# CONVERSATIONS IN POSTCOLONIAL THOUGHT

Discussing topics ranging from Bob Marley to the Black Panthers, Fanon to feminism, anti-apartheid to the academy, Checkpoint Charlie to climate change, and Wittgenstein to the war on terror, this book uncovers a set of thought provoking adventures about intellect, resistance and empowerment.

Join in the discussion by sending us your questions and comments via [Twitter @ihrc](https://twitter.com/ihrc), email [nadia@ihrc.org](mailto:nadia@ihrc.org) or posting on the [IHRC Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ihrc) page.

Dr Katy P. Sian is a Research Fellow at the University of Manchester in the school of social sciences. She is the author of *Unsettling Sikh and Muslim Conflicts: Mistaken Identities, Forged Conversations, and Postcolonial Formations and Negotiations of Racism, Governance, and Public Policy: Beyond Human Rights*

**AUTHOR EVENING WITH KATY SIAN**

Date: Friday 28 November 2014  
Time: 13.45  
Venue: IHRC Bookshop, Gallery and Information Centre  
202 Preston Road, Wembley, HA9 8PA  
Tel: 020 8904 4222  
Nearest train / tube: Preston Road (Metropolitan) • South Kenton (Bakerloo and Overground)

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## Recalling the Caliphate: Decolonization and World Order - 1 November 2014

This author evening with Salman Sayyid focussed on his newly published book 'Recalling the Caliphate.' The book engages critically with the interaction between Islam and the global post-colonial world of politics. Sayyid focuses on how demands for Muslims autonomy are debated in terms such as democracy, secularism, liberalism and even cultural relativism. This allows him to both analyse how decolonization is continually deflected in the Muslim world and evaluate the possible ways in which decolonization can be accelerated within the Ummah.

## Panel Discussion: Creative Agency and Compromise 14 November 2014

What is 'Islamic Art'? Do we refer to it as such just because it has been made by Muslims? How do we push against these categorisations? Who is defining us? The discussion will focus particularly on the compromises Muslim women are forced to make in a space that seeks to pigeonhole, homogenise and often tokenise them. All these and other questions were discussed at this event by artists Romina Khanom, Nasreen Raja and Nasreen Shaikh Jamal al-Lail alongside IHRC advocate Lena Mohamed and Rose Nordin - the co founder

and graphic designer for One of My Kind Zine (OOMK).

## Book Launch: Conversations In Postcolonial Thought by Katy Sian - 28 November 2014

IHRC hosted the launch of Katy Sian's new book 'Conversations In Postcolonial Thought'. Based on original material the book comprises 12 conversational interviews with a diverse set of postcolonial thinkers from across the globe. Discussing topics ranging from Bob Marley to the Black Panthers, Fanon to feminism, Checkpoint Charlie to climate change, and Wittgenstein to the war on terror, this book uncovers a set of thought provoking adventures about intellect, resistance and empowerment.

## An Evening with Ramon Grosfoguel: Postcolonial or Decolonial? - 16 December 2014

The esteemed author and academic and regular visitor to IHRC returned, this time to address the question, Postcolonial or Decolonial?: Differences and Similarities between Postcolonial Studies and the Decolonial Perspective.

## OOMK: 'Visions of the Future' Exhibition - 30 January 2015 onwards

IHRC was proud to host this new exhibition by OOMK (One of My Kind), a small-press publication released biannually. Behind the scenes are two graphic artists and a writer – Sofia Niazi, Rose Nordin and Heiba Lamara - but the zine welcomes contributions from women with a diverse range of backgrounds. Each issue focuses on a particular theme relating to creativity and within that is more content relating to an array of issues such as faith, activism and identity.

## 'Young Muslims, Pedagogy and Islam' - 12 February 2015

This author evening with M.G. Khan discussed his new book which explores the

...content relating to an array of issues such as faith, activism and identity

realpolitik of developing services for young Muslims in the post-9/11 context and moves beyond notions of gendered provision and confessional activity to ask what defines a Muslim pedagogy. The author argues that for most young people religion and religiosity is something latent or private, activated by private events or the passing of years. However, for Muslim young people it can be activated by an incessant Islamophobic discourse that requires fundamental questions of relationships and belonging to be addressed in the public gaze while being positioned as representatives and 'explainers' of their religion and their communities.





# IHRC Legal

This is our newest department, established in 2014 to deal with the high volume of requests we receive for legal advice and representation on a variety of issues. IHRC Legal specialises in employment and UK immigration law. This includes unfair dismissal, breach of contract and wrongful dismissal claims, unlawful deduction of wages, grievances, support during disciplinary and investigatory proceedings and representation at the Employment Tribunal. We also advise on the full range of applications to the Home Office.

Our first major success was in the case of a lecturer at a London university who had complained about racial discrimination and victimisation. The lecturer was given a workload over and above what was acceptable according to the university's own standards for workload management and greater than that given to white colleagues. With IHRC's help the lecturer was given substantial compensation.

In another case concluded in February 2015 IHRC managed to secure a successful outcome for a black university lecturer, employed by a well-known London university on a contract that did not guarantee her any work. She had endured the onerous terms for six years before finally plucking up the courage to bring a claim for racial discrimination.

**IHRC**  
Legal



[www.ihrc.org.uk](http://www.ihrc.org.uk)

Her numerous requests to be moved onto the conventional 'fractional' contract had fallen on deaf ears and her multiple job applications had all been unsuccessful, despite the fact that she was demonstrably more qualified than the successful applicants.

IHRC's legal department won the victim settlement which included a substantial lump sum in compensation for injury to feelings as well as a lucrative contract of employment containing the terms and conditions she was entitled to.

IHRC's expertise in the area of discrimination was also called upon in the courts. In 2014 the legal team presented evidence at the Supreme Court of the discriminatory and disproportionate impact of Schedule 7 terrorism laws on Muslims and minority ethnic communities in an appeal brought by Sylvie Beghal, a French-Algerian woman who was stopped under the powers.





# Universal Justice Network

**A**s chair of the Universal Justice Network, IHRC organised several initiatives and campaigns to promote its aims. It also published a cross-country report on the stripping of citizenship.

Universal Justice Network (UJN) is a global initiative that seeks to bring together different groups with the objective of empowering the Ummah and coordinating efforts to eliminate poverty, dispossession, deprivation and discrimination. It works to establish universal values such as peace, freedom, tolerance and justice. IHRC is a founder member of the UJN.

## Muslim World Priority Meeting – Pakistan 2 August 2014 – Kümbet, Turkey

The plan for this meeting was to build on the progress and developments following the Bodrum 2013 meeting which produced the historic Bodrum Declaration addressing sectarianism in Pakistan. However the necessary participation of many of the intended attendees in large-scale national demonstrations against the government of PM Nawaz Sharif forced a change in the programme.

Following on from Bodrum 2013 the UJN liaison with the Pakistani participants received updates from Pakistan over the course of the following eight months. It was clear that they were meeting more often and behind closed doors, indicative of their relationships not simply being 'for show'. These collaborations developed to a point where five of the eight participants worked together in the run up to and full participation in the demonstrations in Pakistan in condemnation of the corruption of Nawaz Sharif and his government. One of the remaining three participants has been a key figure in the mediation between government and opposition.

In the revised programme Professor Ramon Grosfoguel, Imam Achmet Cassiem, Imam Mohammad al Asi, Ghairunisa Johnstone, Massoud Shadjareh, and

Mohideen Abdul Kader were invited to facilitate workshops. These focused on the role of education in changing the way in which sectarian rhetoric has proliferated in Pakistani society.

One of the key areas of concern highlighted by the majority of those in attendance was how sectarianism was being used by the West to divide and conquer Muslim lands. Additionally, the situation in Palestine and Syria, the role of the United States and its interventions, the Zionist lobby, and the fundamental position of Saudi Arabia in this matrix were of great concern.

One of the main projects initiated in Kümbet was the creation of a resource that

**Sectarianism was being used by the West to divide and conquer Muslim lands.**

identifies ways in which Saudi foreign policy targets Muslims (such as those in Palestine), its domestic policy which enslaves its citizens and residents, and its religious policy that misrepresents the religion. This project is based upon the body of research and knowledge already begun by Imam al Asi, and is supported by IHRC and Citizens International.

Organised in association with the Islamic Human Rights Commission (UK) and Citizens International (Malaysia) the event formed part of the Muslim World Priority Project, one of the major projects to have been initiated by UJN in recent years. This seeks to bring organisations with large Muslim followings into communication with one another in order to establish ways in which to address and try to resolve some of the underlying issues pertaining to increasing sectarianism within their respective countries.



Meeting of 25 community leaders and political parties in Penang, Malaysia

## Stripping Of Nationality As A Weapon Of Political Suppression: The Cases Of Bahrain, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait – October 2014

This report by Caterina Aiena reflects on the legal phenomenon of denationalisation as a political weapon against targeted groups of people who are excluded from the entire state system on the grounds of their political, cultural or religious affiliation. The creation of stateless people by nation states is becoming a widespread phenomenon with global dimensions.

More specifically, in Bahrain, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, the power of the executive to revoke citizenship has been used as part of strategies for managing popular uprisings, while in some Western countries, including the UK, the executive has ramped up a controversial programme to revoke citizenship on national security grounds.

The report expresses deep concerns

about the arbitrary nature of the power to revoke citizenship. Depriving people of citizenship by making them stateless has a devastating impact on their lives.

## UJN Anti-Sectarianism initiative - Malaysia and Indonesia

In May 2014, a Universal Justice Network (UJN) delegation led by IHRC visited Malaysia and Indonesia to address rising sectarianism reportedly promoted by some extreme elements in the region. Its aim was to investigate and address the issue, which appears to be being used as a tactic to divide the Muslim community and to distract it from the more pressing issues the ummah faces both at home and abroad. The delegation, which included scholars and activists from the UK, USA, Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia, identified immediate action programmes as well as long-term solutions to this sectarianism. The scholars signed the Jakarta Declaration committing them to work towards unity and combat sectarian hatred and divisions.

## UJN Meeting, Malaysia - December 2014

Following on from the May delegation to Indonesia and Malaysia and acting on subsequent requests from groups and individuals in Indonesia, UJN convened a meeting in Penang, Malaysia in December 2014 to discuss the increasing threat of sectarianism and to establish ways in which to mitigate such problems in the future.

Guests were invited from Indonesia, all of whom are active in religious and political life in Indonesia, including community leaders, local politicians, activists, and academics within their respective communities across the country. In addition to these figures, facilitators were invited from the Islamic Human Rights Commission (UK), Citizens International (Malaysia), Mazlumder (Turkey) and the Islamic Movement (Nigeria), as well as

independent figures from Malaysia, the USA and Iran.

The three day Muslim World Priority Meeting took place at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur, to discuss the unity of the Muslim Ummah. It was organised into a series of workshops, where participants could present ideas relating to unity within Islam, the agenda of Western and Saudi colonial enterprises, and ways on moving forward within the context of tackling the sectarian menace in Indonesia.

## Saudi Digest - forthcoming

UJN is executing plans to produce a fortnightly digest to provide regular updates about the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia.



# IHRC TV and Social Media

## IHRC TV

**I**HRC TV is the online TV platform for televising our events. Nearly all of the events to have been put on by IHRC this year were streamed live by IHRC TV. Following the live streamings the videos are uploaded to our Youtube page where viewers can access them at their leisure.

The department also produces films and documentaries. The last year has been particularly busy with five documentaries started and still under production. They cover the Bosnia War in the 1990s, the use of foreign mercenaries in Bahrain, sectarianism in Indonesia, the Zaria Massacres in Nigeria and Institutional Islamophobia.

## Social Media

**I**HRC has a social media presence across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The different platforms allow for varying interaction between the organisation and its supporters while also helping to introduce newcomers to the cause.

Updates in the form of campaign and event alerts, press releases and new briefings are all posted on Twitter on a daily basis. As well as IHRC's official Twitter, the IHRC Bookshop & Gallery posts its own updates on a separate profile. Here followers are alerted to new novels, exciting titles and special offers. Twitter allows for users to ask for recommended reading and then be offered

suggestions in return.

As our events are streamed live to a worldwide audience on IHRC.TV – Twitter provides a great platform for those who are not present in person to interact with us. Most events are live-tweeted – from Author Evenings to panel discussions at the United Nations. This means that even if you are unable to attend the event or have no access to IHRC.TV, you'll still experience what is happening through direct quotes from speakers and descriptions of what is being said. If ever our event involves a Q&A, we ensure that those on both Twitter and Facebook have the opportunity to pose their own questions and relay any comments. As a result the dialogue and conversation we are able to form is more varied with input from across the globe.

IHRC has also used social media as a tool to raise awareness. This was recently demonstrated when the venue of the Institutional Islamophobia Conference (held in December 2014) was quickly shifted due to Birkbeck, University of London's last minute cancellation. Many felt aggrieved and this was reflected on both Twitter and Facebook where numerous people mentioned and called out what had happened. The circulation of information saw a dramatic increase in website hits and interest from the press.

Instagram is used predominantly as a tool to promote the IHRC Gallery. Largely visual space, Instagram is the best platform to showcase the work of our exhibiting artists. Less formal than Twitter and Facebook, IHRC Instagram displays the daily workings of our office and is easier to interact with for those who are not fans of text-based information.



- **IHRC TV:** <http://ihrc.org.uk/multimedia> or [ihrc.tv](http://ihrc.tv)
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/ihrc> - <https://twitter.com/ihrcbookshop>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Islamic-Human-Rights-Commission/109724959498>
- **Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/IHRCtv>
- **Flickr:** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ihrc>
- **Instagram:** <https://instagram.com/ihrcgallery/>

**Islamic  
Human Rights  
Commission**



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The Islamic Human Rights Commission is an NGO in Special Consultative Status  
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