



QUILLIAM

Setting the Record Straight

In light of a number of recent accusations that have been levelled at Quilliam and our track record, we felt it was necessary to set the record straight with regards to our work. The below is a breakdown of common accusations that are directed at us with clear responses beneath.

Accusation - Quilliam produced a McCarthyite secret 'Terror List' that smeared ordinary Muslim groups and individuals as extremist and gave it to the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT).

Response - This accusation repeated [here](#) by the Guardian is simply false. There was no 'Terror List'. We produced a briefing document entitled 'Preventing Terrorism: where next for Britain?', that we sent to all government departments and not just the OSCT. This document set out reforms we felt were necessary to the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. The Government's strategy was eventually reformed almost exactly as we had advised. The document was sent in private so as to not play out the debate about reforming the Government's counter-extremism strategy in the press. However, the copy we sent to the OSCT was eventually leaked by a civil servant.

The main body of the document reviewed Government departments involved in the counter-extremism agenda and made policy suggestions. The document also had an appendix entitled 'The British Muslim Scene', which detailed the affiliations and backgrounds of a number of prominent British Muslim organisations, including their external influences. In no way was it a 'Terror List', nor was any of the categorisation incorrect. Furthermore, Quilliam has never advocated a ban on these organisations (Quilliam has even defended the right to remain legal in the UK for more extreme groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir, see [here](#) where Quilliam's Chairman is quoted by the Prime Minister in Parliament as supportive evidence for why Hizb ut-Tahrir should not be banned), rather we advocated a policy of challenging these groups. We call this our doctrine of legal tolerance coupled

with “*civic intolerance*”, as first argued in our testimony before the US [here](#). Hence the list was the exact opposite of a McCarthyite list, arguing that these groups should remain legal but challenged in civic debate. The full and rather sensible report that generated this false accusation is available to view [here](#).

Accusation – Quilliam is the recipient of huge amounts of “government funding”.

Response – Quilliam is open to a mixture of private and public funding but all its public funding ceased in late 2010, and those funds took until mid -2011 to wind down fully. Quilliam has been independent of public funds ever since. We maintain there is nothing wrong with seeking openly advertised and competitive public grants for community cohesion projects and we will continue to [apply](#) for them as and when opportunities open.

Accusation – Quilliam has a poor record of defending human rights.

Response - Though we challenge extremism, we have always argued for a civil society approach, arguing against the last government's heavily militaristic and draconian approach in favour of civil liberties and civic engagement. We have opposed religious/ethnic profiling at airports against Labour's Khalid Mehmood MP, see [here](#). We have opposed the use of drone strikes to kill suspected terrorists, see [here](#), and challenged Senator Peter King on the use of water boarding, see [here](#). We have spoken out against extraordinary rendition and detention without charge, see [here](#) and [here](#). We have also called for the reform of the last government's removal of the right to silence at ports of entry and exit in the UK, called Schedule 7, see [here](#). Furthermore, we have defended the right of American Muslims to build the erroneously named ‘Ground Zero mosque’, see [here](#), and our Chairman, Maajid Nawaz, has debated ‘Islam is a religion of peace’ against Douglas Murray and Ayaan Hirsi Ali in New York, see [here](#), and supported gay marriage, see [here](#).

As illustrated by the above links, we have a human rights record to be proud of and have consistently promoted and defended liberal values as we have challenged extremism. However, all of the above is often ignored by sections of what we would term the ‘regressive left’ who do not like us challenging the ‘community’ model, along with its internal illiberalism, as well as our external liberalism, as explained [here](#). This is a real shame and in many ways prevents the debate on key issues from moving forward. We hope to continue challenging extremism on all sides whilst standing up for liberal values and democratic culture, regardless of the challenges it may bring.

Accusation – Quilliam advocates mass spying on British Muslims.

Response - Contrary to some spurious media reports, Quilliam has never advocated mass spying on British Muslims. We believe the fight against extremism and terrorism should not infringe upon the human rights of ordinary citizens and Muslims should not be treated as suspect communities en masse, as elaborated [here](#). We also believe counter-terrorism operations should be intelligence-led and actions taken should be based on credible evidence.

Accusation – Quilliam have given ex-EDL leader Tommy Robinson mainstream respectability by teaming up with him.

Response - As a counter-extremism think tank it is our job to help members of extremist groups leave those groups and channel their grievances, whether real or perceived, through mainstream channels and within a secular and liberal framework. We are an action orientated organisation that do so much more than just analyse and comment from the sidelines. In this vein, our work with former members of the EDL involves a combination of addressing misconceptions and finding alternative channels through which grievances can be channelled. Tommy Robinson is not an employee of Quilliam, we have merely facilitated his defection from the EDL and hope to continue working with him in order to help other members of the EDL also defect. We believe in dialogue and the ability of people to change and hope people will support our efforts to bring about meaningful change that can benefit social cohesion in Britain. We stand ready to help other members of extremist groups leave those organisations.