

Mr. Andy Duncan  
Chief Executive  
Channel 4 Television Corporation  
124 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 2TX



24 July 2008

Dear Mr Duncan,

I am writing to voice my concern about your recent documentary on *The Qur'an* which was broadcast on your channel last week, Monday 14 July. We were optimistic that this two-hour long documentary, broadcast at prime-time, showed much promise in creating greater understanding between cultures and faiths. We are hopeful that this was indeed your intention, because at times it managed to do this when the programme passionately spoke of the personal relation Muslims have with the divine text. For this, the programme makers are to be commended.

The Muslim Council of Britain is a diverse body that proudly has the many traditions of Islam represented amongst its affiliates and its office-bearers. It is this diversity that makes Britain's Muslim community so dynamic and vibrant. In this vein, it is important that I clarify that there are a number of issues on the direction of the programme and specific misrepresentations that can damage the social cohesion that exists within Muslim communities.

The programme unfairly maligns Muslims following the Shia tradition by accusing them of heresy based on a collection of age-old polemics and misinformation. With respect, this is an irresponsible portrayal which plays into the hands of those who wish to seek discord amongst Muslims, which we hope you did not intend.

The Muslim Council of Britain has in the past spoken out against misrepresentations of certain traditions within Islam, as was voiced in our opposition to *Undercover Mosque* when we said it was a "risible attempt at promoting sectarianism among British Muslims". Sadly the recent documentary foments the very same sectarianism.

We hope that this mistake was an oversight and I trust this letter will serve as a lesson for the future. We would like to believe that the misrepresentation was caused by inadequate research as well as failure to have structured consultation with representative bodies, which given the nature of the programme and being the first of its kind, should have been an imperative.

We value greatly value and appreciate bona fide attempts at making good programmes on Islam and that the MCB and its affiliates, individually as well as collectively are willing to be consulted to make the programmes accurate.

Yours sincerely

Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari MBE  
Secretary General