

NETWORK MCB

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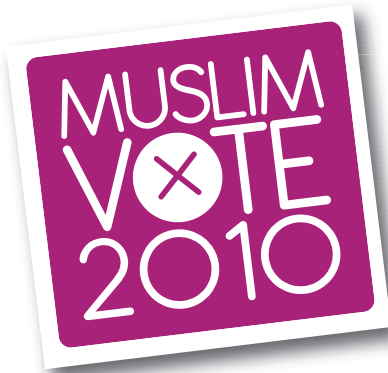
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DISCLAIMER

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Every Vote Counts on 6 May



During the General Election, the MCB has initiated a series of campaign under its Muslim Vote 2010 initiative. These elections are the most historic in a generation, and we are put forward one simple message: every vote counts.

United Action

It has kicked off its campaign by initiating an unprecedented show of unity from our ulema. Leading Imams and scholars from all the Islamic schools of thought have issued a joint-statement urging all Muslim brothers and sisters to vote in the upcoming General Elections on 6 May.

They said that "Muslims should use the opportunity to vote for trustworthy candidates" who you believe will represent your needs better than others. Not only do you have an obligation to join hands with others and "elect those who will seek the common good in a spirit of public service", but it is vital that we all play our part in opposing the rise of racist and Islamophobic parties which have made considerable gains in recent years.

While maintaining its non-partisan stand on politics, the Muslim Council of Britain urges mosques to convey this message to Muslim congregations at Friday prayers until polling day on 6 May. The MCB will also be carrying out a programme of activities ahead of the General Election and highlighting those public policy issues that will affect Muslims in the next few years.

Meanwhile organisations from across all of British society, including those of diverse religious affiliations and political persuasions are united in their opposition to the politics of hate and have signed up to the flowing pledge: "With the approach of the General Election we are all too aware of those political forces who would seek to divide our country by promoting ideologies of racism and prejudice. We are immensely proud of the fundamentally British characteristics of equality, respect and fairness and of British society's uncompromising rejection of the demonization of any group, whether religious, ethnic or otherwise. We therefore urge every British citizen to use their vote to support any party of their choice which stands opposed to the destructive politics of hatred, to vote for freedom not fear, partnerships not prejudice, and hope not hate."

This pledge is pertinent now when there is a very real prospect that far-right parties – emboldened by their hatred of Muslims and others – may make significant electoral gains at the General Elections.

Grassroots Engagement

The General Election is unprecedented for another reason too. Up and down the country Muslims are taking a very keen interest in scrutinising and challenging their candidates. MCB's affiliates are reporting successful turnouts at popular debates with party candidates. All are sending a single message to our political class: the Muslim vote, though diverse, cannot be taken for granted.

Through the Muslim Vote 2010 initiative, the MCB has also launched online tools to help the Muslim community. www.muslimvote.org.uk allows people to find out who their candidates are and asks them to send a pledge. We are also raising issues that are pertinent to Muslims. People are also engaging and debating through Facebook and Twitter.

The campaign does not stop on 6 May, we hope www.muslimvote.org.uk will be just the start in real and active civic engagement in the Muslim community.

For further information about all these, visit www.muslimvote.org.uk

Muslim Leadership Dinner helps set future agenda

More than 500 guests from all areas of British Muslim civil society, together with distinguished personalities across political, media, business and interfaith arenas attended the Muslim Council of Britain's first Muslim Leadership Dinner on 22 February at the London Marriot Hotel in Central London. The occasion focused on inspiring Muslim individuals and groups, community organisers and business leaders from diverse backgrounds to come together to revitalise community cooperation and solidarity for the good of all.

In his opening speech, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the MCB, spoke about the future of the Muslim community. He said: "At a time when many are struggling to see how justice and fairness can be re-introduced to public life - those who hold power under the public trust must strive to regain the trust of the public. Our faith, which places the harmony of the community as the greatest good, and is underpinned by the belief that a just society can and will be achieved, should give us the strength and direction needed to bring about lasting change."

He also outlined plans to initiate the renewal of the MCB, to ensure that it serves better Britain's diverse Muslim community to help build a better Britain. He said "It is important that we all give support for an enduring, British institution."

The evening saw the launch of the Muslim Community Development Fund, with a target to raise £1 million this year. The Fund will enable the MCB to undertake its strategic programmes for unity, capacity building, protection and support of the community.

Addressing the audience, Labour candidate Jack Straw, acknowledged "the vital and valued role Muslims and the Islamic faith play in our society."

Professor Tariq Ramadan requested for "Muslims to unite and voice their opinions on all issues affecting British life." He emphasised that Muslims too have many diverse viewpoints, and made clear that government should not pick and choose which background was the most appropriate to speak to.

Nick Clegg, Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, spoke about "the common values we all shared" as British citizens and said he felt "a sense of renewal and optimism" at the dinner.

John Denham paid tribute to Muslims and fellow Britons who "together had shaped British society." He added that: "Your rich history is going to be crucial in years to come." The Secretary of State praised the contribution of British Muslims and stated that Britain has indeed changed unrecognisably – for the better.

HRH the Prince of Wales also sent a message of support for the evening. All the speakers and guests acknowledged the immense contribution made by the MCB and Muslim leaders, and agreed that Muslims in Britain should continue to work together with the wider society, as integral members to build a cohesive, just and prosperous Britain.



MCB at the World Islamic Economic Forum



The Business and Economics Committee (BEC) of the Muslim Council of Britain has organised its largest ever delegation of 65 leading professionals, thought leaders and community representatives to attend the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 18 to 20 May 2010.

Launched in 2003, at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Business Forum, the WIEF is an annual global conference that acts as an international business platform. Business sectors of the Muslim world meet for business opportunities and, together with government leaders, entrepreneurs, policy makers and academics they draw up policy proposals on economic development.

This year's theme is 'Gearing for Economic Resurgence'. As part of the BEC's outreach programme, over half of the delegation comes from Europe and North America. The MCB has sent a delegation to the WIEF every year. The commitment of the delegates is shown by the fact that they pay their own travel and accommodation costs and many take time off from work to attend. Based upon previous experience, the MCB expects this will be the largest delegation from any non-Muslim majority country. We will be presenting a brochure containing a number of thought leadership articles as well as a profile of each delegate for distributing at the Forum.

Around the main programme of the WIEF, the MCB has organised a series of workshops on Islamic finance and thought leadership in Malaysia, and will be sharing delegates' experiences and technical expertise. The delegation also expects to hold a number of meetings with senior Malaysian politicians and business people. For example female members of the delegation will be meeting the Governor of the Malaysian Central Bank.

The MCB has also prepared a publication called 'Nurturing the Future', which features the latest thinking in Islamic finance and thought leadership.

Last year's WIEF was held in Jakarta, Indonesia in March 2009. It attracted more than 1,700 delegates who took part in discussions around 'Food and Energy Security' and 'Stemming the Tide of the Global Financial Crisis'.

More information on the 6th World Islamic Economic Forum is available at www.wief.org.my

More details regarding the past achievements and future objectives of the MCB's delegation are available from the MCB's website at: www.mcb.org.uk/WIEF

Leadership Development Programme

The Muslim Council of Britain's annual Leadership Development Programme has been going from strength to strength since it was started in 2003.

As an umbrella body for British Muslims, the MCB aims to enable the Muslim community to realise its full potential by participating in and contributing to mainstream society. The primary aim of this programme is to develop leadership capacity across the British Muslim community. Programme participants have come from all walks of life and backgrounds to learn about emotional and political intelligence and deploy techniques taught by expert facilitators.

Comments from the participants have reflected on the quality of teaching, opportunities for networking and above all, the opportunities for personal growth. Those who took part in January's course this year also gave positive feedback such as: "very professional, well organised", "intense – in a very positive way" and "universal principles that can be applied to any community".

To find out more about the programme email: admin@mcb.org.uk



All-Party Parliamentary Group considered to tackle Islamophobia

The MCB hosted a special meeting on 3 March at the House of Commons to discuss the growing spate of attacks in all its forms against British Muslims.

The event called 'Tackling Islamophobia: Reducing street violence against British Muslims', brought together distinguished parliamentarians, academics, journalists, public servants, police and community representatives. They all endorsed calls for the establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Islamophobia with a view to holding a parliamentary inquiry on Islamophobia in the UK. The meeting took contributions from experts, responses from parliamentarians and questions from the audience of individuals from over 80 organisations.

Internationally-renowned journalist and political commentator Peter Osborne said "If the UK is to live up to its tradition of tolerance, this needs to be taken seriously. Islamophobia needs to be abolished." He added that the Parliamentary Committee had a 'big job to do'. Mr Osborne described how the demonisation of Muslims has become widespread in British media and politics in a Channel 4 Dispatches programme called 'It shouldn't happen to a Muslim' that he presented in 2008.

Robin Richardson, former director of the Runnymede Trust and editor of the groundbreaking report 'Islamophobia: a challenge for us all', published in 1997, highlighted the various forms of "discourse, violent behaviour, discrimination and social exclusion" that encompass Islamophobia.

Many MPs spoke in support of the initiative saying it was 'an excellent way forward'. They emphasised the importance of focusing on 'respect' as opposed to 'tolerance' and warned that 'media and politicians need to refrain from inflammatory reporting and that freedom of expression must be exercised with responsibility.'

A host of academics such as Dr. Jonathan Githens-Mazer from the European Muslim Research Centre who published the report

'Islamophobia and Anti Muslim Hate Crimes: a London case study' in January 2010, added to the discussion. Co-director Dr. Robert Lambert MBE said that 'the far right's position of describing Muslims as the enemy is being rationalised by what is portrayed by the media'. He added that recommendations from the community would provide a "clear driver" on this issue.

Questioning why Islamophobia is still not taken seriously enough despite being a "real experience", Dr. Chris Allen from Birmingham University said, "For the past 15 years we have had a number of reports, from a

number of sources of the 'hardening of attitudes and perceptions' and there is still a lack lustre response". He welcomed the call for a Parliamentary Committee, saying it was "long overdue".

In his keynote address, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the MCB said: "At a time when Muslim communities are being exhorted to do more to tackle violence by a handful of extremists who purport to be Muslims, it is vitally important that our government and police are equally pro-active in seeking to tackle extremist violence against British Muslims and the Islamophobic climate that gives rise to it."

He also talked of the 'urgent need to restore Muslim community confidence to tackle the problem of under-reporting of violent crime in much the same way as has been achieved with other minorities in the recent past.'

The event was supported by the Muslim Safety Forum, the Cordoba Foundation and the European Muslim Research Centre.

UK Muslims proud to be British

Muslims in the UK top the table for being the most patriotic and in identifying themselves as British, according to a report produced by the Open Society Institute.

The report called 'Muslims in Europe: A Report on 11 EU Cities', studied the needs and aspirations of Muslims across Europe, and emphasised the need to tackle rising discrimination and prejudice that exists against Muslims. It highlighted that more work needs to be carried out to ensure equality for Muslims, particularly the 'discrimination and unfair treatment' faced by young Muslim men at the hands of the authorities and the unequal treatment of Muslim women within the workplace.

Contrary to usual media stereotypes of Muslims living 'parallel or segregated lives', the report's findings clearly highlight that Muslims have a strong sense of belonging to a city or a nation.

The MCB supports the recommendations made in the report for achieving common goals for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. We encourage individuals, groups and leaders, whether local or

national, to take an active role in promoting and delivering programmes that work towards bringing communities closer together.

Speaking out against anti-Muslim violence

Imams and religious scholars from hundreds of Muslim organisations gathered in Birmingham in January 2010 at the invitation of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) to discuss the rise in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attacks in the UK and across Europe. They were joined by Wes Streeting, President of the National Union of Students and Councillor Salma Yaqoob from Birmingham City Council.

In 2009 alone, scores of Muslim individuals, institutions and centres have been targeted in violent attacks and there has been a rise in hate-mongering by far-right extremists, such as the English Defence League (EDL), which demonstrated against Muslims in Birmingham, Bolton and Manchester among others.

The meeting called on all political parties to openly and effectively condemn this scourge with a clear policy direction, especially as many people feel this hatred has been fed by a failure by political leaders, who have been considerably muted and on occasion even found peddling the malicious rhetoric of the far-right. Politicians and the media alike were asked to recognise that the issue of anti-Muslim hatred doesn't affect the British Muslim community alone. Rather, traditional British values of celebrating differences while seeking common cause was being eroded by those who wish to stigmatise Muslims.

The MCB urges Muslims, mosques and community organisations to build strong alliances with other faith groups and civil liberty bodies to seek law enforcement measures against those who indulge in violence and intimidation and in spreading the poison of hatred on faith or racial ground. The community is also encouraged to challenge the media on unfair reporting and give praise where praise is due.

Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the MCB wrote to the Home Secretary expressing serious concerns over growing anti-Muslim hatred and violence. He mentioned the "growing disenchantment of British Muslims at the lacklustre response of political leaders to speak out against anti-Muslim hatred" whether "through the actions of far-right groups", or through "hysterical headlines in the media".

Urging the government for a clear policy, the MCB are expressing the concerns of the British Muslim community that should anti-Muslim hatred remain unchecked and unchallenged by our politicians, media and the police - it has the real potential to lead towards civil unrest akin to the infamous events of Oldham and Bradford in 2001. By not confronting these issues, it will inevitably lead to a breakdown in community relations at a time when there should be direct partnership to combat the rise of the far right with long term consequences on community cohesion.



MCB Elections

As election fever grips the nation, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is also preparing for its own leadership elections, which will take place at its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Sunday 20 June at the London Muslim Centre in Whitechapel, east London.

Although the elections are held every two years, the process of elections begins long before the actual meeting. The MCB Constitution provides that a person who has no aspiration to hold any of the offices through election is eligible to be appointed as an Election Commissioner by the MCB Central Working Committee. Judge Khurshid Drabu who agreed to continue in his role as Election Commissioner for the MCB explains the background, process and timetable of the MCB elections and sends a message to all affiliates and candidates.

Background and process

As part of its adherence to democratic principles, MCB affiliates are required to choose the leadership of the MCB in accordance with an open and transparent procedure every two years. The democratic process which underpins the structure of the MCB is guaranteed by its Constitution. It is also clearly laid out in its Standing Orders (SO) the governing documents of the MCB which, in turn have been adopted and shaped by the expressed will and consent of its affiliates.

The work of the MCB is carried out by volunteers who are elected to hold offices or who offer themselves for membership of various specialist and functional Committees.

Under the present MCB Constitution individuals cannot become 'affiliates' of the MCB. Affiliation is limited to Muslim organisations. Affiliates have to name individuals (called appointed delegates) to represent them at the AGM, which on the day forms the MCB General Assembly. National bodies are entitled to appoint three delegates, regional bodies can appoint two and local bodies one delegate.

Thirty seven individuals are elected to the Central Working Committee in two stages – 25 through national elections and 12 through zonal elections, which are held on the same day as the AGM. The appointed delegates can put themselves forward or elect up to 25 individuals to the Central Working Committee (CWC). It is individuals that are elected and not affiliate organisations. Proxy voting is not allowed and block voting is discouraged at the MCB General Assembly.

The CWC consists of elected, directly nominated and co-opted members. The Constitution makes it mandatory that the number of elected members to the CWC must never exceed the total number of directly nominated and co-opted members.

All duly appointed delegates are assigned to 'zones'. The UK is divided into 12 zones. Three zones namely Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are mandatory. England is divided into nine zones (in accordance with the formula set out in Standing Order 4.3.3). From each of the 12 zones one representative is elected to sit on the CWC.

Once this aspect of the elections is completed, each 'national body' and 'regional body' (as defined in SO2.1 of the Standing Orders) is asked at the AGM to directly nominate their representatives to the CWC (in accordance with Article 4.2.1 of the MCB Constitution). The number of directly nominated representatives of the national and regional bodies has a proportionate effect on the number of individuals who can be co-opted to the CWC as the total number of the two cannot exceed 37.

The CWC consisting of these 37 elected and directly nominated individuals by the national and regional bodies meets on the same day under the chairmanship of the Election Commissioner. All are administered the oath of office and given a copy of the Good Governance Protocols of the MCB.

The Election Commissioner then conducts elections for the posts of three main Office Bearers of the MCB – the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General and the Treasurer. Members are asked to make nominations and those nominated are asked if they consent to being nominated. Self-nomination is permitted. If there is more than one candidate for a post, election by ballot box is held for each post. At the end of the counting process for each post, the Election Commissioner announces the result and seeks nomination for the next of the three posts.

The Election Commissioner re-convenes the General Assembly to announce the results of the elections of the three main office bearers and invites the new Secretary General to address the delegates.

The Central Working Committee is required to meet again within two weeks to appoint three Assistant Secretary Generals, an Assistant Treasurer and any individuals recommended by the Secretary General as co-opted members. The CWC holds the power of co-option and is facilitated by recommendations made by the Secretary General.

The recommendations have to be guided by the principle that the MCB should reflect its broad based representative character, accommodating the variety of social, cultural backgrounds and outlooks of the community as well as fair representation of each gender.

The CWC at its duly convened meetings then appoints those from amongst its membership as Chairs of its five Specialist Committees – Finance and General Purpose Committee, which is chaired by the Treasurer, Membership Committee, Research and Documentation Committee, Media Committee and the Legal Affairs Committee. Chairs of other Committees do not have to be appointed by or be members of the CWC.

An important note for affiliates and candidates:

- MCB affiliates have a major responsibility in making appropriate choices in appointing delegates to the MCB General Council. They must ensure that the delegates are aware of the heavy schedule and workload and understand the commitment they are making, which verges on almost full time. If elected to any of the offices including the membership of the CWC, persons will need to attend all its meetings – minimum 4 in a year, each lasting a day. Absences are allowed only for compelling reasons.

- MCB is committed to represent and reflect the diversity of Muslims in the UK and a balance of ethnicity, gender and schools of thought in its decision-making bodies is important. It expects its affiliates to name men and women of ideas and action, of commitment and dedication to represent them on the General Assembly and from there on, if elected or directly nominated, to serve on the Central Working Committee of the MCB. They are required to be guided by the common good of all and not just the interests of the organisation that they represent.

- The quality – skills and abilities – of those engaged in the work of the MCB determine the profile and strength of the MCB. As the most representative and the largest Muslim umbrella organisation in the UK, the MCB is, what those individuals who have committed themselves to be part of the MCB, make it.

- The reward for work with and commitment to the MCB is in the akhirah. Never before have British Muslims needed a stronger, more vibrant, diverse and fully engaged MCB. The Muslims in the UK are going through very difficult times and unless we, the Muslims understand our responsibilities and take with both hands the opportunities to make a positive difference in our society, we may not make the progress that we are capable of making.

- To those who are interested in serving the MCB, please feel enthused and excited as you will be joining a truly and genuinely committed group of people who will be your fellow passengers in the worthwhile journey of making Britain great for our communities in every sense.

AGM: Sunday 20th June at London Muslim Centre, Whitechapel, London

January 2010 – six months before AGM	The Central Working Committee (CWC) appoints an independent Election Commissioner	At the CWC meeting of 23rd January 2010, Birmingham, the CWC requested Judge Drabu to be the Election Commissioner and he accepted	SO4.1
	The Election Commissioner from then on takes responsibility to conduct the elections fairly in accordance with the procedure set out in the Standing Orders	On all matters associated with elections the decision of the Election Commissioner is final and binding	
Prior to Financial year end 31st March 2010	Affiliates receive their affiliation fee invoices from the MCB office and the first notice of the AGM	Despatched 12th Jan 2010	
February – March 2010	Affiliates receive second notice of AGM with venue details, delegate forms, affiliation fee copy invoice and reminder that only paid-up affiliates are eligible to send delegates with voting rights to the AGM	Despatched 18th March 2010 – keeping within Constitutional guidelines that affiliates should be given at least 8 weeks notice of AGM	SO7.1
By 9th May 2010 – at least 6 weeks prior to AGM	Affiliates send in their responses and returns for the election and notify the Election Commissioner of their appointed delegate(s)		SO4.2 (a)
By 9th May 2010 – at least 6 weeks prior to AGM	Notice of any constitutional amendments submitted to the Secretary General	For non-election AGMs due to time constraints	C 4.1.3 (h)
10-17th May 2010	MCB Office - data entry of appointed delegates details & preparation of List of Appointed Delegates & nomination forms for national and zonal elections	Only paid-up affiliates have delegates with voting rights	
By 20th May 2010 – at least 4 weeks prior to AGM	Affiliates receive AGM programme, List of Appointed Delegates and nomination forms from the Election Commissioner		SO4.2 (b); SO4.3.3 (a)
By 1st June 2010 – at least 2 weeks prior to AGM	Appointed delegates return their nomination forms to the Election Commissioner		SO4.2.2 (a); SO4.3.3 (b)
2nd – 8th June 2010	The Election Commissioner requests nominated candidates to submit written statements setting out particulars, experience etc	The existing office bearers have no role in the election process and no power to interfere in any decision made by the Election Commissioner	SO4 (d)
9th - 18th June 2010	MCB Election Team collates candidate profiles; prepares voting sheets for national and zonal elections and assembles delegate packs	On all matters related to the election, the MCB office runs under the exclusive direction of the Election Commissioner	
20th June 2010	AGM – election of 37 members of the Central Working Committee (15 national, 12 zonal) and direct nominations of one member from each of the national and regional affiliates); election of SG, DSG and Treasurer from the elected members of the CWC (both elected and directly nominated CWC members have voting rights)	Those who are not duly appointed delegates of affiliates may attend the meeting of the General Assembly as Observers. At the sole discretion of the Election Commissioner those who are not members of the CWC may be allowed to attend its meeting (as Observers) where office bearers are elected and representatives of the media may be granted permission to attend such parts or whole of the General Assembly meeting and the meeting of the CWC.	

Platform for Youth Debate

The Muslim Council of Britain's Youth Committee is running a dynamic youth-led blog called The Platform.

Focused around a central theme: 'Britain ten years on – envisioning and structuring progress', the blog brings together a diverse range of talented writers (young and mature) to voice their views in a constructive way on current events and topical issues, as well as encourage debate on how young Muslims can help shape the next decade. The project corresponds with the MCB's main goal of working towards the common good.

Launched on 2 January 2010, The Platform spans six structured weeks until 17 June and will encompass five important categories:

- **Universal values**
- **Crime and security**
- **Politics and civic participation**
- **Spirituality**
- **Culture**

MCB Youth Committee Secretary Lubaaba Al-Azami who is coordinating The Platform said: "This is the perfect opportunity for us as young British Muslims to set the agenda and discuss our future. For too long debate about important issues such as politics and culture for example, have only taken place when reacting to events. This is an opportunity for us to be proactive and empower all Muslims to have our say about our vision of Britain in the new decade".

So far each week has seen new, visionary and engaging contributions posted from young writers as well as leading academics, journalists and politicians throughout the UK and abroad. It is helping to encourage and generate an exchange of ideas and thought-provoking views on the relevant issues of the day.

So get involved before it's too late by sending in articles on your reflections and vision for Britain as to 'Where would you like to see the community in ten years time?'

Visit: www.the-platform.org.uk for more details.

Fortieth Anniversary of the Disability Act

The Muslim Council of Britain was represented at a day of events, including a roundtable meeting at the House of Commons in marking the 40th anniversary of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970. The Act was the first piece of legislation, not just in the UK, but across the world, to recognise the rights of disabled people.

The event was organised by the Office for Disability Issues, which published a document last year called 'Roadmap 2025'. The roadmap defines the vision for disability equality by 2025 and identifies 14 themes that cover all aspects of disabled people's lives, based on what disabled people have said equality means to them.

Kawsar Zaman, Vice-Chair of the MCB's Youth Committee was one of 20 delegates at the meeting

that discussed society's attitudes towards disabled people and the difficulties they face in the transition from education into employment.

He said "The 2001 Census showed that the group with the highest disability in the UK is in fact the Muslim community, with almost a quarter of Muslim females (24 per cent) and one in five Muslim males (21 per cent) having a self-declared disability."

"The real figures are probably much higher given that the Census was taken almost nine years ago and many Muslims did not respond to it or failed to acknowledge their disability. The Youth Committee will be running a campaign to increase awareness of disability among the Muslim community and all relevant Muslim charities and organisations."



Young Muslim Beacon Awards 2009

A disability charity, a building development project and a national student body were the three winners of the Muslim Council of Britain's Young Muslim Beacon Awards 2009.

The Awards, first established in 2008, recognise and celebrate the work of grassroots community organisations that inspire excellence in their work with young people.

In his commendation of the winners, one of the judges, Neil Jameson, Executive Director of London Citizens, said: "It is inspirational to see all the outstanding work that is happening. The winners have all carried out exceptional work. Their work is to be highly commended and will hopefully serve as examples to the rest of the country."

The Royal Association for Disability Rights, known as RADAR, ran a successful leadership project, which provided training and development to empower young disabled Muslims (among members of other ethnic minorities) to take part in civic and community activities as well as take up leadership positions in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Build Community Development, based in Leicestershire, work tirelessly in madrassas (community schools) and community centres tackling issues such as crime and substance misuse among young males and females.

The Federation of Students Islamic Societies (FOSIS), the umbrella organisation of student groups in colleges and universities throughout the UK and Ireland won for their sustained work and services over the decades to help more than 90,000 Muslim students in universities.

The MCB's Youth Committee Vice-Chair, Kawsar Zaman, who coordinated this year's awards ceremony at Westminster House said "The awards are about bringing some positive light to the excellent work some organisations across the country are already doing to address some of the most important issues concerning young Muslims, and it's superb to recognise and celebrate that work".

Kawsar gave special thanks to Helping Hands for sponsoring the event and to Invite Media and Raylight Studios for their media services. He also thanked Lord Sheikh of Cornhill, Alistair Burt and Dr. Phyllis Starkey, Chair of the Department for Communities and Local Government Select Committee, for their support.

News in brief

Online Library

The MCB's Research & Documentation Committee is maintaining a new section on the MCB website which provides a sign-posting service to key academic papers and books relating to Muslims in Britain. These are classified under the following categories: Education, Employment, Environment, Family, Gender, Health, History, Housing, Identity, Islamophobia, Legal and Shariah, Media, Mosques, Muslim Consumer, 7/7 and aftermath, Sociology, Statistics, Studies on MCB.

Visit www.mcb.org.uk/library/studies.php

Chaplaincy Course

The Muslim Spiritual Care provision in the NHS, a project of the MCB, is running an intensive course on Muslim Healthcare Chaplaincy from 8 to 13 May 2010.

The course is designed to benefit both aspiring and existing chaplains that want to develop healthcare chaplaincy skills. A certificate of attendance issued to all successful participants has been widely accepted by the NHS healthcare chaplaincy trusts.

Participants will have the opportunity to learn the basics of professional healthcare chaplaincy as well as more complex and advanced issues such as Islamic Medical Ethics. They will have the opportunity to practice the new skills, using valuable case studies and exercises. Renowned speakers will deliver lectures.

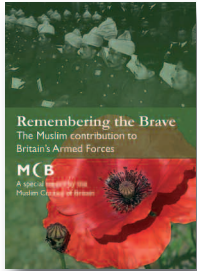
For details contact Chowdhury Mueen Uddin on 020 7492 4983 or email: mueen@mcb.org.uk
Visit: www.mcb.org.uk/article_detail.php?article=features-186 for more information.

School of the year

Noor Ul Islam Primary School in Leytonstone, London, has been awarded the Islamic School of the Year 2010 by the Association of Muslim Schools UK (AMS). The award was announced and presented on 17 April 2010 to the headteacher Rookshana Adam at the AMS annual conference in Leicester.

Round-up of MCB activities

As well as handling daily enquiries from the press and writing about a range of topics to the media, here is a brief highlight of some of the work the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has been carrying out over the last six months:



11 Nov 2009 - Remembrance Day Pamphlet

To mark Remembrance Day, the MCB publishes a pamphlet outlining the long and distinguished history of the Muslims in the Armed Forces

'Remembering the Brave: The Muslim Contribution to Britain's Armed Forces'. The booklet also outlines the current contribution of the British Muslims in the UK Forces.

29 Nov 2009 - Swiss Minaret Ban

The MCB issues press release deploring the tragic results of the referendum on the banning of minarets in Switzerland as a dangerous precedence with a rise in anti-Muslim prejudice.

14 Dec 2009 - Labelling Food from West Bank

The MCB writes to Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Hilary Benn, to congratulate him for issuing clear guidance about how food originating in the Occupied West Bank should be labelled.

14 Dec 2009 - Young Muslim Beacon Awards 2009

The MCB's Youth Committee announces the three inspirational winners at an Awards Reception at Westminster House.

21 Dec 2009 - Historian's Presentation on coverage of Crusades

Dr. Fiona Kisby Littleton presents her research which shows the biased views contained in school text books covering the Crusades at a roundtable discussion organised by the MCB's Research and Documentation Committee.

23 Dec 2009 - Letter to Foreign Secretary

MCB writes to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, David Miliband, about the withdrawal of the warrant which had been lawfully issued by a magistrate for the arrest of the former Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni for suspected war crimes.

1 Jan 2010 - Letter to Telegraph

MCB condemns the attempted bombing of a transatlantic bomber and the suicide attack on the streets of Karachi, and writes about intense and misinformed speculation without the full facts of the investigation becoming known.

4 Jan 2010 - Statement on Wootton Bassett Protest

The MCB condemns the call by the fringe extremist group Islam4UK to stage a highly provocative and disrespectful march through Wootton Bassett town carrying empty coffins as a protest against Britain's military presence in Afghanistan. The MCB's calls followed those from the majority of local Muslims in the Wootton Bassett vicinity, as well as the Wiltshire Islamic Centre.

14 Jan 2010 - Appeal for Haiti

Leading British Muslim charities, a large proportion of whom are long standing affiliate members of the MCB, such as Muslim Aid, Islamic Relief, Muslim Hands, Human Relief International and Human Appeal, launch an emergency relief appeal urging British Muslims to donate generously to the victims of the Haiti earthquake.

22 Jan 2010 - Launch of the Platform

The MCB's Youth Committee launches an innovative online blog at Imperial College London to provide a platform for the wider community to get involved in constructive debate about the future of Britain in the new decade.

23 Jan 2010 - Meeting to discuss growing anti-Muslim violence

On the day of the English Defence League's provocative demonstration in Stoke-on-Trent targeted against Muslims, the MCB organises a meeting in Birmingham inviting Imams and religious scholars from hundreds of Muslim organisations to discuss the rise in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attacks in the UK and across Europe.

26 Jan 2010 - Letter to Home Secretary on growing anti-Muslim hatred

The MCB writes to the Home Secretary John Denham expressing serious concerns over growing anti-Muslim violence in Britain.

28 Jan 2010 - Responding to Yasmin Ali-Bhai Brown

The MCB writes to The Independent newspaper concerning columnist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown's unexplained swipe at the MCB, as she pursues a bizarre attack on women who choose to wear the veil.

29 Jan 2010 - World Economic Forum

Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, the Secretary General of the MCB speaks at the Open Forum of the World Economic Forum at Davos on 'Lessons from the Past and Redesign Future Values'.



22 Feb 2010 - Muslim Leadership Dinner

The MCB hosts its first Muslim Leadership Dinner at the London Marriott, Grosvenor Square bringing together over 500 community organisers, civic activists, business, media, political and future leaders from diverse backgrounds.

3 March 2010 - Discussing Islamophobia

The MCB hosts a special event 'Tackling Islamophobia: Reducing Street Violence Against British Muslims' at the Grand Committee Room of the House of Commons to discuss the growing spate of attacks in all its forms against British Muslims.

30 March 2010 - Inquiry on Prevent

The MCB welcomes the findings of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into the Government's 'Preventing Violent Extremism' programme. The MCB had delivered a memorandum of evidence in 2009 highlighting our affiliates' negative experiences and voicing our concerns that the Prevent programme and policy prescriptions had dangerously linked anti-terrorism strategy with community services delivery.

9 Apr 2010 - Campaign to vote on 6 May

A broad range of leading Muslim scholars (ulema) issue a joint-statement compelling Muslims to vote in the forthcoming General Elections, as part of the MCB's latest initiative 'Muslim Vote 2010' (www.muslimvote.org.uk) encouraging British Muslims to play a full part in the political process and civic life of our country.

22 April 2010 - Faith groups speak against far-right ahead of General Election

Organisations from across all of British society, including those of diverse religious affiliations and political persuasions sign up to a pledge in their united opposition to the politics of hate. They urge every British citizen to use their vote to support any party of their choice which stands opposed to the destructive politics of hatred, to vote for freedom not fear, partnerships not prejudice, and hope not hate.



Message from Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari

Secretary General,
The Muslim Council of Britain

As you read this edition of Network MCB, we are on the eve of two elections; the much anticipated General Election and the MCB's less well-known election for a new Secretary General (SG) and office bearers in the AGM this June 2010. In different ways we are asked to make decisions about the future and vision for our society and organisation. At a national level, commentators are calling the General Election one of the closest in a generation. Never before has it been important for all people to vote and make their voices heard as the country faces important questions about the economy, the nature of politics, the relationship between the state and the individual and Britain's role in the world. Your vote could have a crucial impact.

On 20 June 2010, my term as SG comes to an end. It will be time to hand over the responsibility, burden and honour of leading the MCB to a new candidate. As I and my predecessor

found, the incoming SG will face many challenges and make personal sacrifices to fulfil the role on behalf of the wider Muslim community. Whoever is elected by the affiliates, the new team will require as much support and encouragement as I was lucky enough and grateful to enjoy. I stand ready to support my successor and the MCB in the future in any capacity requested and urge you all to extend your help to the new SG and the MCB as it enters a new era.

But to think that you can make a change by turning up to an election once every few years is a fundamental misunderstanding of the meaning of civic engagement; it is but merely one part, albeit a critical one, of the overall process. Muslims need to fulfil their wider Islamic social responsibilities to their neighbours and wider society at large as active and critical citizens within local institutions, such as the MCB and its affiliates, as well as part of the national debate. Only by framing the questions and shaping the discourse together with like-minded citizens on the basis of a common understanding, can we expect to influence and communicate the universal message of our religion, and truly work for "the common good". This takes personal investment of time and effort over a sustained period rather than just a visit to the ballot box on Election Day. I pray that our humble efforts in attempting to live up to this ideal are accepted and our mistakes forgiven, insha'Allah.

MCB MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

MCB is a representative Muslim umbrella body with over 500 affiliated national, regional and local organisations, mosques, charities and schools. Our aim is to empower the Muslim community towards achieving a cohesive, just and successful British society.

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MCB Donation Details

The Muslim Council of Britain exists only to serve your needs today and tomorrow.

We cannot hope to perform our duties to you without your continued prayers and support. If you do support our efforts, which aim to protect the interests of thousands of Muslim families across Britain, kindly support us with a regular donation of any amount that you can afford. Please visit our website www.mcb.org.uk for more details.