

Response to Daily Mail Journalist Questions and Insinuations

We received an email from a Daily Mail journalist asking us to respond to a number of allegations before he publishes an article at the weekend. Here is our response.

Dear Mr Keogh,

Thank you for your email dated 9-July-2018.

I welcome your effort to approach us before writing a story that refers our organisation, although I am sure you will understand my low expectations of an objective piece of journalism about our party published in the Daily Mail for several reasons!

Firstly, in an article on 7 July 2018, the MailOnline published unsubstantiated lies about Hizb ut Tahrir without having followed a basic journalistic professional standard by approaching us for comment before publication.

Secondly, that story contained absurd and unfounded allegations about Hizb ut Tahrir encouraging 'entryism', trying to "get into those (secular) systems and structures to effectively damage them from within, or take them over from within." We completely reject this notion. Hizb ut Tahrir's method of work is well known as political and cultural work, with no involvement in material actions. We have no interest in undermining the secular systems in such a manner, as this was not the work of the Prophet (peace be upon him) whom we emulate, nor could it ever achieve anything beneficial or lasting. Our only interest is to expose the falsity of the secular thought, and the harm that it is causing the world today.

However, there has been no worse 'entryism' than that of the colonial interference in the Muslim world by various Western states; no hostility and nothing more inflammatory than the treatment of Islam and Muslims by the foreign policy of those states, often echoed by the corporate media – which sadly includes your organisation. To suggest anything that our organisation does is even remotely equivalent to that, demonstrates a thoroughly distorted viewpoint of reality.

Thirdly, the Daily Mail website still has an article which contained baseless lies about Hizb ut Tahrir, despite our exposing of its inaccuracy. Please read our Press Release on the matter: <http://www.hizb.org.uk/media/press-releases/daily-mail-publishes-baseless-lies-about-hizb-ut-tahrir/>.

Fourthly, your email makes pejorative accusations of 'hostile and inflammatory' language, indicating that you are less concerned in reporting the facts about Hizb ut Tahrir's work in the UK, and more interested in making sweeping accusations to serve a harmful agenda.

All of that being said, I am happy to respond to the points raised in your email.

I cannot affirm the accuracy of much of what you allege was said, but nonetheless respond to the information that you have conveyed to us, bearing in mind that neither I nor your readers are aware of the full context of the discussions that took place.

1. Regarding your concern that the content may be viewed as 'hostile', 'inflammatory', 'extreme' and 'at odds with conventional western culture', and that it has the potential to 'radicalise' people

Hizb ut Tahrir is a political party dealing only with thoughts and ideas. In doing that we expose fallacious ideas, regardless of whether they are popular or conventional and express our views regardless of whether they are unconventional or unpopular.

It has become commonplace to describe anything that contradicts secular liberal norms, or indeed political views that diverge from the policies of the British state, with labels such as 'extreme', 'hostile' etc – which effectively shuts down any discussion, rather than responding to the substantive points.

It is our view that such labeling and shutting down discussion on Islam's political thoughts and rules – which is what current counter-‘extremism’ policy does – is a very real driver of the destructive actions of some individuals, because it leaves people who have questions without a direction – and leaves them to answer those questions through those who might misguide them.

In contrast to the attempts to police thoughts and beliefs, we welcome discussion and debate, particularly about the secular ideology that is currently imposed upon the people of the world. Secular Capitalism, with its support for democracies and dictatorships overseas, is arguably the most hostile and inflammatory ideology mankind has ever experienced. It alone is responsible for the tremendous suffering in the world today, both here in Britain and overseas. Surely an ideology with such an impact on the world deserves proper discussion and debate?!

2. Regarding Hizb ut Tahrir's work in Britain

As you acknowledge in your email, Hizb ut Tahrir has taken the Muslim world as the field of its work to re-establish the Caliphate (Khilafah). The work of the party in Western countries is restricted to responding intellectually to the falsifications spread in the media about Islam, promoting Islamic values and ideas as a cure for the secular liberal mischief that the world currently endures, and exposing the colonial plots against the ordinary peoples of the world.

A press release from Hizb ut Tahrir in Germany responding to Austria's recent closure of some mosques summarised our position well saying: “Instead of tearing the society apart by creating false narratives about the possibility of an enemy taking power, Hizb ut Tahrir demands an acceptable solution that makes the relationship between Muslims and the majority in society based on a clear and universally accepted basis: namely, the inviolability of public security. The key to that is the effective acceptance of multiple views of life and the associated preservation of Islamic identity and the practice of the Islamic way of life in the personal sphere without any harassment. Thus, preserving peace in society and preventing socio-political disintegration.”

3. Related to this, regarding your suggestion that a passage in the book ‘Stand for Islam’ justifies ‘terror’

To suggest this either reveals an inability to understand plain English or a desire to deliberately distort the intended meaning, when the very quote you put forward starts by stating that ‘Islam is categorical in the prohibition of committing suicide and taking innocent life’!

Any suggestion that Hizb ut Tahrir encourages any form of violence against ordinary British citizens, at home or overseas, or poses any kind of physical threat to their persons or property is a baseless lie, smacking of desperation.

This is a view that is shared by a variety of experts: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/andrew-gilligan/7908262/Hizb-ut-Tahrir-is-not-a-gateway-to-terrorism-claims-Whitehall-report.html>

4. Further related to this series of baseless allegations, is your question about ‘links with the University of Westminster and those who have gone on from there to commit acts of terrorism...’

You do not specify what the alleged links to the University of Westminster are. However, we have previously responded to the Daily Mail and other papers that have published lies alleging links between Hizb ut-Tahrir activities and violent actions of unconnected individuals. Please read: <http://www.hizb.org.uk/media/press-releases/daily-mail-publishes-baseless-lies-about-hizb-ut-tahrir/> and <http://www.hizb.org.uk/media/press-releases/letter-editor-mirror-regarding-lies-hizb-ut-tahrir/>

Recruiting people to engage in political or intellectual work whether on campus or off is not something that should be criticised – and frankly, misinterpreting the meaning of words like ‘recruitment’ really is journalistically scraping the bottom of the barrel.

5. Regarding Hizb ut Tahrir's views on democracy as alleged in your email

We are a party in favour of true representation through elections. Our draft constitution for the Islamic State includes an elected assembly who elect the head of state, the Khalifah. However, we do indeed believe that ‘democracy’ is a false idea, promising choice and accountability to the people, but delivering neither.

Both the dominance of unelected officials in Brussels, who rule over ‘democratic Europe’ and the current failure to deliver on the result of the Brexit referendum in a transparent way should be proof enough of this fact for a Daily Mail journalist!

The democracies of the world today universally permit a tiny elite group with vested interests to enrich themselves at the expense of the ordinary citizens at home and overseas.

Hizb ut Tahrir unashamedly works to expose the reality of democracy, which is exaggeratingly promoted by the Western capitalists and their media, then forced upon the world by their militaries, private militias and their proxies across the world.

We believe that by contrast, Islam stands for real political choice, accountability and justice removing the manipulation and bias which serves the interests of those capitalist elites. Kufr (an adjective meaning un-Islamic) is the Arabic word used in the Qur'an and Islamic culture to describe any idea that is not based upon Islam and contradicts the fundamentals of Islam. The aspect of democracy that makes a small group of people legislators, instead of the Islamic Shari'ah, clearly makes it an un-Islamic idea. The context, which explains the specific language of the book that you quoted from, is the Western attempt to impose democracy upon the Muslim world over the past two centuries, despite its contradiction to the culture, history and beliefs of the people who live there.

6. Regarding Hizb ut Tahrir's views on homosexuality as alleged in your email

The statements you mention appear to be describing the obvious contradictions that arise when taking personal freedom as a criteria for sexual relationships. What you describe as 'western convention' today would seem bizarre to a previous generation or to people in many other parts of the world. Both the criteria for making any relationship acceptable or unacceptable and the huge societal consequences of today's norms, are both legitimate matters for debate and discussion – and we certainly do not intend to stop raising such matters for discussion, highlighting the contradictions in the criteria, despite the political pressures to do so.

7. Regarding your concern that some of the literature addressed the issue of 'Jihad'

People have become used to hearing two contradictory views on the subject of Jihad – one which restricts it to a wholly spiritual struggle of the soul and the other which falsely links it with acts of 'terror' like Manchester or London Bridge.

Moreover, the government's counter-'extremism' strategy makes most Imams reluctant to explain what Jihad really means, for fear of being labelled 'extreme'. This is a disastrous situation, leaving Muslims with questions about this hot topic, but denied access to meaningful answers. Hence, we feel it entirely appropriate to discuss the matter of Jihad within its appropriate context.

The numerous publications of Hizb ut Tahrir, along with 1400 years of Islamic scholarship, explain that Jihad is what you might consider as the foreign and defence policy of the Islamic State. That it addresses defending itself from an aggressor, or removing the physical obstacle in the path of the call to Islam, particularly against tyrants or dictators who oppress their people and prevent them from learning about Islam.

Whilst Britain and America removed Saddam Hussein and Colonel Gaddafi in order to exploit the resources of the region and take the wealth of the land, forcing liberal secularism on the people – the state, in an Islamic context, would not only help remove such dictators, but invest wealth and resources to build those countries, yet leave the people to choose their religion without coercion.

8. Regarding your concerns that there was a thirteen-year-old behind a bookstall

Young people are welcome to participate in our public events, however, it is not our policy to permit this kind of administrative work. Hence, I will be bringing this to the attention of those responsible. Hizb ut Tahrir Britain only permits men and women above the age of sixteen to formally engage in its study and work.

In conclusion, I can but reiterate that professional journalism would demand an attempt to convey all of this truthfully in your article – with full context and after contacting the individuals for clarification. I hope that you will not follow the tradition of some of your colleagues, who have given the Daily Mail the gutter press reputation that it has, when they knowingly present quotations out of context to sensationalise their cherry-picked narrative, in complete disregard for the truth.

With regards,

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