

## Press release – For immediate release

*All praises belong to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. And peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah*

### **Over 400 UK Imams and scholars reject Gove's new extremism definition and call on Muslims to support MEND, CAGE and The Muslim Association of Britain**

*“O you who believe, be upholders of justice - witnesses for Allah, even though against (the interest of) yourselves or the parents, and the kinsmen.” (4:135)*

**London, UK - 22 March 2024** - In response to the recent announcement by Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, regarding an expanded definition of extremism targeting groups such as MEND, CAGE, and The Muslim Association of Britain, we, the undersigned Imams and Scholars of the UK, issue this statement to underscore the concerning implications of such actions and to reaffirm our commitment combating injustice.

We note that the discourse of “extremism” relies on the faulty and academically baseless neoconservative notion that ideology is a cause of political violence.<sup>1</sup>

We observe that Mr Gove has a history of targeting Islam and Muslims under the label of “Islamism.”<sup>2</sup>

We further observe that Mr Gove has deep connections with pro-Israel lobbies that propagate Islamophobia and anti-Muslim conspiracy theories.<sup>3</sup>

Given the above, it appears the underlying motivation behind this announcement is the dissatisfaction among neoconservative, pro-Israeli figures within the Government towards legitimate activism opposing Israeli and Zionist aggression against Palestine, notably, Gaza.

It is evident to us that individuals who prioritise the Israeli-Zionist agenda above Britain’s interests aim to stifle the political engagement of Muslims. The hypocrisy of Mr Gove et al, who coercively apply “British values,” which includes democracy, whilst simultaneously suppressing democratic participation that opposes their agenda, is glaringly obvious.

Despite the Prime Minister's purported commitment to bridging gaps with the Muslim community, his government's actions suggest a preference for divisive tactics over genuine dialogue and engagement.

The ability of a select few to influence government decisions, including the alteration of laws and definitions to suit their agenda, raises serious concerns about the integrity and independence of our political system.

The targeting of Muslim organisations also demonstrates how the politicised discourse of “extremism” undermines the rule of law, often at the expense of minorities.

It is imperative that we, as Muslims, unite against such abuses of power and reject this new definition of extremism and its ideological assumptions.

***The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “No (Muslim) man will desert a man who is a Muslim in a place where his respect may be violated and his honour aspersed without Allah deserting him in a place where he wishes his help; and no (Muslim) man who will help a Muslim in a place where his honour may be aspersed and his respect violated without Allah helping him in a place where he wishes his help.” (Abu Dawud)***

We call upon the Muslim community and supporters of political integrity and accountability to support organisations like MEND, CAGE and The Muslim Association of Britain for a fairer society.

We also stand in solidarity with Imam Shakeel Begg, recognising his selfless service to his community, while firmly rejecting the ideological, legally flawed, and unscholarly characterisation of him as an "extremist".

As Imams and scholars, we reaffirm our dedication to working towards a better, more just United Kingdom, free from corruption and injustice. The government's focus on extremism is a distraction for their failure to address pressing social issues, such as the living expenses crisis, housing crisis, and escalating incidents of violence and anti-Muslim hatred.

We urge the public to remain vigilant in safeguarding against this Orwellian drift and holding our elected officials accountable.

Signed:

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Imam Mohmed Tahir, London  
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Imam Muhammad Anas, London  
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Imam Abu Muhammad, London  
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Imam Sajid Patel, London  
Imam Hishaam, London  
Imam Zubair Mangera, Blackburn  
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Imam Huzaifah, Edinburgh  
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Imam Anas Khan, London  
Imam Husain Patel, Bolton  
Imam Mohammed Abubakar, Huddersfield  
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Ustadha Fatima Patel, Blackburn

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Imam Imran Patel, London  
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Ustadha Ayesha, Blackburn  
Imam Mo Ahmed, Kidderminster  
Ustadha Anisa Mayat, Blackburn  
Imam Mohammed Hussain, London  
Imam Mohammed Rahman, Birmingham  
Imam Shah Hamzah Ahmed, London  
Imam Ahmed Zaman, Birmingham  
Imam Liaquat Zaman, Birmingham  
Imam Bodrul Hussain, London  
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Imam Shah Musa, London  
Imam Emad Uddin Ahmed, London  
Imam Zeeshan Qayum, London  
Imam Shah Yahya Ahmed, London  
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Imam Mawlāna Ayaaz Chikhalia, London  
Imam Abdus Sattar, London  
Imam Mohammed Patel, Leicester  
Imam Muhammed Patel, Leicester  
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Imam Serajul Islam, Kidderminster  
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Ustadha Aneesa, Manchester  
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Imam Mohammed Yahya, Manchester  
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Ustadha Zakiyya, Leicester  
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Imam Syed Faisal Ahmad, Sunderland  
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Imam Mohammed, London  
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Imam Tauseef, Bradford  
Ustadha Tasnim Patel, London  
Imam Khalid Sharif, Keighley  
Imam Saif, Todmorden  
Imam Farheen Sheikh, Preston  
Imam Muhammad Mamaniat, Batley  
Imam Uvais Ismail, Blackburn  
Imam Mohamed Seedat, Batley  
Imam Mehnass Tariq, Oldham  
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Imam Zaria Nadeem, Greater Manchester  
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Imam Khaleel, Rochdale  
Ustadha Samina Kausar, Blackburn  
Ustadha Aisha Khan, Stockport  
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Ustadha Adilah, Leicester  
Imam Irfan Patel, Blackburn  
Imam Adnan, Leicester  
Imam Ahmed Patas, Leicester  
Imam Hassan Natha, Blackburn  
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Ustadha Samira Patel, Leicester  
Imam Jamila Umarji, Preston  
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Ustadha Rubina Sattar, Leicester  
Imam Ahaed Zhulfikar, Wolverhampton  
Imam Adnaan Yaqoob, Bradford  
Imam Umran Amin, Bradford  
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Imam Afraz Aslam, London  
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Imam Amin Buxto, Edinburgh  
Imam Arif Master, London  
Imam Amro Abdallatif, London  
Imam Yahya Govalia, Birmingham  
Imam AMJED HUSSAIN, EDINBURGH  
Imam Muhammad Umar Draz, Newport  
Imam Mr. Zubier Ismail, Blackburn  
Imam Hussain Ahmad Rabbani, Cardiff  
Ustadha Siddiqa, Oldham  
Imam Nasir Hussain, London  
Imam Khalid Karim, Treforest Pontypridd  
Ustadha Sonia Malick, Manchester  
Ustadha Roswana Mann, Solihull  
Imam Riaz, London

Imam Yaseera Adam, Coventry  
Imam Shamsul Islam, Colchester  
Ustadha Raeesa, London  
Imam Tariq Rehman, Bradford  
Imam Asad Khan, Manchester  
Imam Syed Shah, Leicester  
Imam Raffick Chamurally, Maidenhead  
Ustadha Siama Azhar, Manchester  
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Imam Sharafat Ali, Huddersfield  
Imam Sajid, Manchester  
Imam Nasser SATTAR, Leicester  
Imam Mohammed Imran, Birmingham  
Imam Muhammad Gora, Batley  
Imam Sirin Begum, Birmingham  
Imam Imam Nizamul Islam, London  
Imam Saduf Chaudhri, Manchester  
Imam Ayub Patel, Falkirk  
Imam Faiza Ali, London  
Imam Ebrahim Bhikha, Birmingham  
Imam Habib Khan, Sheffield  
Imam Muhammad Kaysar Hussain, St  
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Imam Mufti Yousaf Baig, Batley  
Imam Subhi Abduljalil, Cardiff  
Imam Adnan, Cardiff  
Ustadha Rehana Baig, Middlesex  
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Imam Ibrahim Hassan, Manchester  
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Imam Khurshid Qureshi, Ilford  
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Imam L Karim, Reading  
Imam Rehaz Abdoolla, Cardiff  
Ustadha Zeenat Karim, Leicester  
Imam Anis B, Romford  
Imam Mohammed Sarki, Birmingham  
Imam Zubair, Luton  
Imam Asif, Bristol  
Imam SHAFQAT ALI, Cardiff  
Imam Tarek Issa, Harrogate  
Imam Arshad Ahmed, Birmingham  
Imam Shaz khan, Romford  
Imam Shahid Rasheed, Ripon  
Ustadha Shahida Lambat, Coventry  
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Ustadha Asma Khan, London  
Imam Cerie Kaleem Bullivant, London  
Imam Shazad, Bradford  
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### Notes to Editors

<sup>1</sup> <https://peoplesreviewofprevent.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/response-to-shawcross-1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Mr Gove conflates “Islamism” (i.e., extremism) with orthodox Islamic beliefs including following Islamic law. Gove, M., Celsius 7/7, 2006, p.92. The Trojan Horse fiasco, which occurred under Mr Gove’s ministerial responsibility, targeted Muslim teachers in Muslim majority areas without evidence: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/feb/04/michael-gove-acted-on-bogus-allegations-of-islamist-plot-to-take-over-birmingham-schools>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bylinetimes.com/2024/03/14/michael-gove-the-extremist/>

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