



Strategic Response

Refuting recent libellous allegations
against the MCA

“A good word is like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in the sky, yielding its fruit in every season with the permission of its Lord.”

Surah Ibrahim, V:24-25



Introduction

Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

The Muslim Community Association (MCA) is a broad-based British Muslim organisation that is driven by Islamic faith and its values to build a balanced and all-inclusive organisation serving the needs of the community.

The faith based work we do has spanned over four decades, since our early beginnings, and we continue our mission to this day, to serve our communities by promoting a middle path understanding of Islam and its spiritual teachings, ideals and moral values.

This year has presented us with challenges that have both been reflective but also forced us out of our comfort zones in order for us to really push and go beyond than ever before.

Our community has faced so many trials; families have lost loved ones; people have lost jobs; refugees have crossed unfathomable terrain in search of a better life – and through all this, our faith in Allah (swt) has remained steadfast, our community spirit ignited, and our bonds strengthened. MCA members have raised nearly £50,000 during the pandemic to help struggling families and also assisted in food distribution.

In grief, we have relied on our brothers and sisters for support, we have reached out and found grace and favour and shared the little we have.

As a community organisation, we have had to re-evaluate the way we support and deliver services to our communities. Our challenges, though many, have renewed

our determination and made us think of effective and innovate ways to better serve the community that we hold so dearly.

This strategic response has been drafted following allegations from an anonymised entity that seeks to tarnish our good name and work; we hope to refute and challenge these and clarify our position where it is needed.

We have a duty to address these concerns and ensure that the truth comes to light. Our response has been tailored to address and refute, but also remind the community of the work we do, how it is done and how the community benefits.

Moving forward, we will continue providing the support that the community and our members needs including spiritual and moral guidance; and we will continue to engage our community partners and stakeholders to the best of our abilities.



M. Faradhi

Musleh Faradhi
Central President
Muslim Community Association



MCA Statement

With its roots in the late 1970s, the Muslim Community Association (MCA) (formerly known as the Islamic Forum of Europe) was founded in 1988 by Muslim professionals from various backgrounds who wanted to serve the religious and spiritual needs of the predominantly Bangladeshi diaspora in Britain and in Europe. The MCA has a broad network of branches and supporters throughout the UK and Europe that has grown over the years to meet the needs of its membership, facilitating learning, activities and projects that are aligned with its vision in contributing towards a cohesive and thriving society.

1. Supporting the East London Mosque

Since the 1980s, the MCA leadership was pivotal in supporting the East London Mosque (ELM) through volunteering and fundraising efforts to help build the iconic purpose-built Mosque in Whitechapel today. As the local community grew in number, the MCA worked towards supporting the ELM and it provided volunteers through its membership to help support the Mosque's activities. Over the years, MCA has supported the East London Mosque through a range of projects and initiatives including (but not limited to):

- **Young Muslim Organisation** – providing educational support and mentoring to young Muslims about both Islam and their responsibility as good Muslims.
- **Muslimaat Women's Group** – supporting and empowering women through training, educational programmes and recreational activities.
- **Islam Awareness Initiatives** – these include My Neighbours Project and others, with the aim of supporting and guiding new Muslims in their faith.
- **Muslim Community Radio** – the first of its kind in the UK jointly launched by

the MCA and ELM, which catered for families and young people in various languages, broadcasting in Ramadan.

- **The Big Read** – a joint initiative between the East London Mosque and MCA to encourage reading and literacy in the community which received a Guinness Record in 2010.
- **Confronting the EDL and Islamophobia** – MCA has supported the Mosque from threats from the far-right and other racists elements targeting the mosque and Muslims locally. This involved organising events, conferences, rallies and protests. MCA offered security and volunteers to the mosque working alongside the local authority and the Police.
- **Support following 7/7 London Attacks** – MCA members and volunteers mobilised rapidly to respond to the terrorist attacks of 7/7 by helping victims of the attacks in Aldgate, providing refuge at the mosque as well as offering food and drink to passers-by stranding in the immediate aftermath of the attacks.
- **Cleaning the mosque and its surroundings** – MCA members helped clean the mosque and the neighbourhood as part of the scheme to keep our neighbourhood safe and clean.
- **London East Academy and Al-Mizan School** – both supported projects by MCA to provide a balanced full-time education.

We will continue supporting the ELM where possible, and also serving the needs of the communities across the UK where our branch members continue to lead on various initiatives that add value.

2. Fundraising for the East London Mosque

The MCA plays a significant role in supporting the ELM, raising millions of pounds in the last four decades through the generous support of its membership and networks. Indeed, the Mosque relies heavily on the MCA to fundraise every year especially during Ramadan so that it can work towards paying off its capital debts and also cover its on-going running costs. During the construction of the London Muslim Centre in the early 2000s, it required significant funds (£10.5m) to deliver the project; likewise, the ELM's flagship Maryam Centre development required millions of pounds. Both these projects received admirable support from the MCA, especially raising funds and providing other logistical support. These efforts helped deliver and make one of the most iconic British Muslim institutions in the country.

3. Addressing recent malicious allegations

It has come to our attention that a number of blogs have resorted to defaming our leadership with libellous statements without evidence. The authors of these blogs hide behind anonymity and do not offer evidence to back their claims. They rely on insinuation or implied guilt by association by merely having a nexus to the MCA. While the MCA's leadership, past and present, are stakeholders in the ELM given the long-standing history, and there is some overlap in membership, however, they have never over-exerted their influence, nor have they used their positions of trust for any personal benefit – these claims are wholly libellous – and explicitly untrue. Furthermore, any external businesses set

up by our members were subject to appropriate scrutiny with any conflicts being declared to the appropriate authorities at the time.

It is no secret that some MCA members did independently establish successful projects via the London Muslim Centre, which were aligned to the Mosque and Centre's own vision and mission. This is primarily due to the fact these individuals have had a connection and understanding of the ELM which they learned through serving as volunteers over the course of many years. The projects were of mutual interest.

4. London East Academy and Al-Mizan Primary School

On occasions, there have been projects established by the ELM, such as the London East Academy and Al-Mizan Primary School that the MCA did believe in as fundamentally good endeavours for the community.

It is vital to provide future generations with a well-balanced education to equip them for the needs of our communities. Our members and leadership supported the schools by ensuring that their own children would attend – at no point were their children favoured – or given any preferential treatment such as discounted fees.

Our current president, Musleh Faradhi, did preside as the first Headteacher for the schools during its early years. However, contrary to the allegations made in recent defamatory blogs (including untrue statements about his salary), he reluctantly



took the post after the schools failed to successfully recruit a candidate with the relevant skill set, experience and qualities. During his tenure students excelled in their academic studies, making them amongst some of the brightest pupils in the borough.

5. Our continued endeavours

We continue to work in various regions in the UK with mosques and Islamic centres, developing and supporting institutions and projects to help the community.

During the pandemic, our members have contributed significant funds to help people that have fallen on tough times be they Muslim or non-Muslim. This included providing and supporting local food banks, clothes to charities and digging deep in their pockets with financial contributions. We continue to act in the most altruistic manner possible, to serve communities in accordance with our Islamic principles of charity, kindness and humanity as well as part of our civic responsibility.

In these divisive times, our work against the far-right is well known throughout anti-racism networks and BAME communities, and we seek to continue these campaigns to strive for a fairer and equal society that ends discrimination and Islamophobia.

We urge the community not to be swayed by unproven claims and statements but to look at the facts and positive contributions. We will continue to be transparent and committed to supporting the community that we love and serve especially through these difficult times.

[ENDS]



“Those who constantly turn to Allah in repentance, who constantly worship Him, who celebrate His praise, who go about the world to serve His cause, who bow down to Him, who prostrate themselves before Him, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits set by Allah. Announce glad tidings to such believers.”

Surah At-Tawbah, V:112



