



# Join the Stop the War Muslim Network

**A**s the government's disastrous foreign policy unravels, with chaos and increasing coalition fatalities in Iraq, Blair and his cronies are looking for people to blame.

Islamophobia has increased dramatically, encouraging racist violence and media stereotypes. The right wing press have sought to demonise Islam and whip up fear of 'mad mullah' bogeymen like Abu Hamza.

This has been helped by a racist agenda from the government with the 'clash of civilisations' rhetoric accelerating after the 7/7 bombings. While the governments' own reports blamed the war for increased terrorism, Blair and John Reid blamed Muslim parents and community leaders.

Since then we have seen a race to the bottom in which high profile politicians and political commentators fall over themselves trying to outdo each other in attacking us. As well as the increased attacks on Muslims in this country the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are continuing and the threat to Iran is ever present.

Muslims had a choice to sit at home and although it would have been easy to have done this, many of us have chosen to fight back against this racist agenda by becoming politically active. The anti-war demonstrations have seen thousands of Muslims across the country protest against the imperialist wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

From the outset Muslims have played a very important role in building the anti-war movement but as the attacks on us in this country increase the need for Muslims to fight back will increase further.

The anti-war coalition has shown all of us what uniting and working together can achieve. The coalition in

Britain could not have been so successful if it was not for the conscious decision to reach out to different groups of people by concentrating on what unites us rather than worrying about our differences.

For many Muslims, it is our religion that gives us our inspiration to oppose imperialism and oppression. Much of the support for the anti war movement has been built through local Mosques who were able to mobilize so many people in support of the anti-war cause.

**O**ne of the most important benefits of Stop the War is that we have been able to break many of the stereotypes about Muslims and create a supportive environment for us to discuss and debate the issues we face. As the viciousness of the attacks on Muslims and other countries increases, so does the importance of having this space and an organisational structure that enables us to mobilise large numbers of people in a short period of time.

Although much has already been achieved we must be honest and recognise that there is still a great deal of work to be done within the Muslim community to build an awareness of what individuals can achieve by working together.

In a city the size of Manchester it is still easier to organise a Stop the

War meeting within a church than in a local mosque and I believe this is true for many cities around the country.

Muslims need to find new ways to organise themselves effectively.

This is one of the reasons why we need to build on the idea of having a Stop the War Muslim activist network. A space where we can share ideas, hold an open debate and organise to build on the successes we have already had through the anti-war movement. A network that can enable us to help build the anti-war movement within the Muslim community and that enables Muslims to better build the wider movement.

This is not about working in isolation from non-Muslims but organising so that we are better able to unite ourselves and unite with non-Muslims alike. It is this unity that will make us stronger and more effective campaigners against oppression.

To join the Stop the War Muslim Network email us at [muslimnetwork@stopwar.org.uk](mailto:muslimnetwork@stopwar.org.uk) Please use the form overleaf to sign up your friends and colleagues to the network, then return it to us at the address provided.

**For further information call:**

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## Attend the launch meetings:

### North West

Saturday 3 February at 2pm  
Room 3,  
Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount Street,  
Manchester M2

### London

Sunday 11 February at 3pm  
Attlee Boardroom,  
Toynbee Hall,  
28 Commercial Street,  
London E1  
Nearest Aldgate East

