



House of Commons  
Foreign Affairs Committee

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# **‘Political Islam’, and the Muslim Brotherhood Review**

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**Sixth Report of Session 2016–17**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
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# Contents

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<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
'Political Islam' and UK policy	3
The Muslim Brotherhood Review	4
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
Evidence to the inquiry	5
Geographic scope of the inquiry	5
Political parties discussed in the inquiry	6
<b>1 Defining 'political Islam'</b>	<b>8</b>
The definition used by the FCO	8
The FCO's engagement with 'political Islam'	9
The definitions provided by our witnesses	10
Our definition of 'political Islam'	11
<b>2 Democracy and political Islam</b>	<b>12</b>
Democracy and elections: Winning elections	12
Democracy and elections: A 'majoritarian' understanding?	13
Democratic culture: sharing power	16
Democracy and checking power	18
<b>3 Transparency and political Islam</b>	<b>20</b>
Transparency of organisation, and internal structures	20
Introduction	20
Membership and funding of the Muslim Brotherhood	20
National structure of the Muslim Brotherhood	21
International structure of the Muslim Brotherhood	22
Transparency of messaging: Arabic and English	23
Varied messaging	23
Arabic and English: Contradictory messages	24
Ambiguity in English	25
<b>4 The policies of political Islam</b>	<b>26</b>
Illiberal ideologies	26
Pragmatic policies	27
Emphasis on welfare policies	27
'Shari'a' and the constitution	28
An evolving policy debate	30

<b>5</b>	<b>Violence and political Islam</b>	<b>32</b>
	Involvement in violence and terrorism	32
	Association with terrorists	33
	The Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas	34
	EnNahda and Jihadist Salafists in Tunisia	35
	'Conveyor belt' to extremism	35
	Ambiguities in the Muslim Brotherhood's rejections of violence	37
	'Firewall' against extremism	38
	Victims of violence	40
<b>6</b>	<b>The Muslim Brotherhood Review</b>	<b>42</b>
	Background	42
	Reactions to the Main Findings	43
	Agreement with the Main Findings	43
	Alleged misrepresentation of the Muslim Brotherhood	43
	Undermining the UK's image abroad	44
	Perceived pressure from Gulf allies	45
	<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>Formal Minutes</b>	<b>53</b>
	<b>Witnesses</b>	<b>54</b>
	<b>Published written evidence</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>Unpublished written evidence</b>	<b>57</b>
	<b>List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament</b>	<b>58</b>

## Summary

### 'Political Islam' and UK policy

'Political Islam' is not a clearly defined phrase, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) uses it to describe a broad array of groups. These range from groups that the FCO describes as embracing "democratic principles and liberal values", to those that it says hold "intolerant and extremist views". The UK's opposition to the latter is clear, but its commitment to the former must be clarified. The FCO should publish a clear set of standards for the political philosophies that the UK is committed to engaging with, and we suggest three criteria:

- i) Participation in, and preservation of, democracy. Support for democratic culture, including a commitment to give up power after an election defeat.
- ii) An interpretation of faith that protects the rights, freedoms, and social policies that are broadly congruent with UK values.
- iii) Non-violence, as a fundamental and unambiguous commitment.

We used these three criteria to assess political Islamists, and to assess the policies of the FCO towards these groups. We found that:

- Some political Islamists have embraced elections. Electoral processes that prevent these groups from taking part cannot be called 'free'. But democracy in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)—where we focused our inquiry—must not be reduced to 'winners' and 'losers', and the FCO must encourage both political Islamists and their opponents to accept broader cultures of democracy.
- The Muslim Brotherhood is a secretive group, with an ambiguous international structure. But this is understandable given the repression it now experiences.
- Some communications, particularly from the Brotherhood, have given contradictory messages in Arabic and English. And some of the responses that the group offered to our questions gave the impression of reluctance to offer a straight answer. The FCO is right to judge political Islamists by both their words and their actions.
- Some political Islamists have been very pragmatic in power. Others have been more dogmatic. But fears over the introduction of a restrictive interpretation of 'Islamic law' by the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in Egypt were partly based on speculation rather than experience.
- The UK has not designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation. We agree with this stance. Some political-Islamist groups have broadly been a firewall against extremism and violence.

## The Muslim Brotherhood Review

Our scrutiny of the Muslim Brotherhood Review was hindered by the Government. Its published Main Findings had significant shortcomings that have damaged the UK's reputation:

- The Review aimed to understand the Brotherhood, but its Main Findings neglected to mention the most significant event in the Brotherhood's history: its removal from power in Egypt in 2013, the year after being democratically elected, through a military intervention. Another omission is the FCO's assessment that understanding the Brotherhood "did not require" an examination of events following this removal from power, including the killing in August 2013 of large numbers of protesters who sympathised with the Brotherhood, and the continuing repression of the group in Egypt and elsewhere.
- Sir John Jenkins's appointment to lead the Review, while he served as UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia, was misguided. It created the perception that Saudi Arabia, an interested party that had designated the Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation the month before the Review was announced, might have undue influence over the Review's report.
- The Government should immediately publish as much as possible of the evidence given to the Muslim Brotherhood Review.

# Introduction

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## Evidence to the inquiry

1. In March 2016, we announced an inquiry into 'political Islam', its characteristics, and how well the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has understood and engaged with 'political-Islamist' groups. Our inquiry heard oral evidence in four sessions, and we thank those who attended:

- a) Dr Omar Ashour, Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter; Dr Courtney Freer, Research Officer at the Middle East Centre, London School of Economics; and Ziya Meral, Resident Fellow at the Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research.
- b) Ibrahim Mounir, Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood; Dr Anas Altikriti, Chief Executive Officer and founder of the Cordoba Foundation; Dr Radwan Masmoudi, adviser to Rached Ghannouchi, the President of the EnNahda party, Tunisia; and Sondos Asem, formerly Foreign Media Coordinator at the office of President Mohamed Morsi, Egypt.
- c) Mokhtar Awad, Research Fellow at the Program on Extremism, George Washington University; Ed Husain, Senior Adviser at the Centre on Religion & Geopolitics; and Dr Machteld Zee, Research Fellow at the Henry Jackson Society.
- d) Mr Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; and Neil Crompton, Director, Middle East and North Africa, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

2. We appreciate the strong interest that the public have taken in our inquiry, as shown by the wide range of written evidence that we received. We have published 47 written evidence submissions on our website, and we thank all who contributed. References in this report to documents starting with the code 'ISL', for example ISL0047 or similar, are references to submissions that we have published on the website of this inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

3. Our witnesses have broadly emphasised the importance of 'political Islam' for international affairs. But the phrase itself is contentious.<sup>2</sup> We have therefore dedicated Chapter 1 to discussing its definition, and offering Conclusions and Recommendations in that respect. We have chosen to focus our inquiry on specific locations, and specific groups, as an additional aid to clarity.

## Geographic scope of the inquiry

4. This inquiry focuses on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, although the relevance of 'political Islam' is not confined to this area and we have received a number

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1 Foreign Affairs Committee, [Political Islam inquiry—publications](#)

2 Throughout this report, we have used inverted commas around phrases such as 'political Islam' when their definition is contested. We omit the inverted commas when we give, or have previously given, a definition.

of written submissions relating to other locations.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the experience of the 'Arab Spring' revolutions in 2011, the ensuing five years, and the on-going instability in much of the region, has led to historically unprecedented evidence for how 'political Islamists' have behaved in power and in opposition.

## Political parties discussed in the inquiry

5. One of the parties discussed in this report is the Justice and Development Party (the AK Party, or AKP), which has been the governing party in Turkey since first winning elections in 2003. The AK Party characterises itself as a 'conservative democrat' party.<sup>4</sup> But some researchers have argued that the party has drawn on 'Islamist' principles, and has been an inspiration to 'political-Islamist' parties in the MENA region.<sup>5</sup> The core themes of this inquiry—the values of non-violence, democracy, and an acceptance of certain fundamental rights and freedoms—are deeply relevant to Turkey. Given the attempted coup attempt on 15 July 2016, we have published Terms of Reference for a separate inquiry into the UK's Relations with Turkey.<sup>6</sup> We will use that inquiry, rather than this report,<sup>7</sup> to assess the implications for UK foreign policy of the role of the AK Party.

6. We also discuss the Justice and Development Party (PJD) from Morocco, a 'political-Islamist' party that led a coalition government after it was the best-performing party in Moroccan parliamentary elections in 2011. Morocco's next parliamentary elections are due in October 2016. Most of our case studies and comparisons are, however, between two particular 'political-Islamist' parties: the EnNahda party in Tunisia (also spelt in some of our evidence as AnNahda and Al-Nahda), and the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) which was established by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

7. The EnNahda party was the best-performing party in the Constituent Assembly elections in Tunisia in 2011, held power during 2012 and 2013, and lost parliamentary elections in 2014. It has formed coalition governments with secular parties, and remains a significant aspect of Tunisia's political environment. The FJP in Egypt was the best-performing party in parliamentary and presidential elections in 2012 but was deposed from power by the Egyptian military on 3 July 2013 following prolonged and massive street protests by millions. It was thereafter proscribed and repressed in Egypt. We have assessed the implications of these two different outcomes to 'political-Islamist' rule, in Egypt and Tunisia, for the concept of 'political Islam' in general.

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3 See the submissions from Dr Matthew Nelson, a Reader in Politics at the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS), discussing South Asia in [ISL0013](#); Mohd Daud Mat Din, from Bait Al Amanah, discussing Malaysia in [ISL0014](#); Abdur Razzaq, Assistant Secretary General of the Jamaat e-Islami party, Bangladesh, discussing Bangladesh in [ISL0024](#); and Ehsan Siddiq, Imran Siddiq, and Mir Ahmad BinQuasem discussing Bangladesh in [ISL0034](#).

4 AK Party website, [Political Vision](#), accessed 27 July 2016

5 Tarek Osman, for example, makes this argument in Chapter 8 of his 2016 book, 'Islamism'.

6 Foreign Affairs Committee, [UK's relations with Turkey inquiry](#)

7 We received two written submissions specifically relating to Turkey from Ziya Meral, Resident Fellow, Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research ([ISL0042](#)) and Guney Yildiz, a Turkish and Kurdish affairs analyst ([ISL0044](#)).

8. Much of the analysis in this report has focused on the Muslim Brotherhood. It is the oldest and largest 'political-Islamist' group in the MENA region, and was the subject of the UK's Muslim Brotherhood Review. We have primarily assessed, in Chapter 6, the process through which the Muslim Brotherhood Review was conducted. The other Chapters of this report have, however, addressed some of the subjects explored in the Review's Main Findings.

# 1 Defining 'political Islam'

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## The definition used by the FCO

9. There is no universally-accepted definition of 'political-Islam', and much of the sensitivity around the phrase is rooted in disputes over its meaning. As Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), told us, along with other witnesses,<sup>8</sup> it is not a phrase that individuals or groups within the world's diverse Muslim communities tend to use to identify themselves. Dr Radwan Masmoudi, an advisor to the President of Tunisia's EnNahda party, Rached Ghannouchi, said that 'political Islam' was "probably the most misunderstood and vague term used in politics today around the world".<sup>9</sup> We therefore focus at the outset on the issue of definition.

10. The FCO provided us with its definition of 'political Islam', as well as an explanation of how it approaches the phenomenon, in its opening written submission to our inquiry.<sup>10</sup> The FCO defined the broader concept of 'Islamism' as promoting "the application of Islamic values to modern government and society".<sup>11</sup> Within Islamism, the FCO defined 'political Islam' in the following way:

Political Islamists pursue their goals through participation in political processes. However, in some cases, such participation is purely tactical and does not reflect a fundamental belief in democratic processes and values. Political Islamism can include overtly extremist views, opposition to democracy, and attitudes that are fundamentally hostile to the West and liberal, progressive societies. The range of views, beliefs and objectives espoused by political Islamists is consequently very broad and, while at one end of the spectrum, there are groups and individuals that demonstrate a genuine commitment to democratic principles and liberal values such as equality and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, at the other end of the spectrum are groups and individuals that do not and hold intolerant, extremist views.<sup>12</sup>

11. The FCO emphasised non-violence, and a broad definition, in its description of 'political Islam'. Tobias Ellwood told us that "the term 'political Islam', as generally understood, covers a broad spectrum of non-violent movements and ideologies".<sup>13</sup> In oral evidence, Mr Ellwood was twice asked whether his definition of 'political Islam' included Al-Qaeda and ISIL, and his answers did not clearly exclude them. But, in a subsequent written answer, he told us that:

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8 See, for example, Katherine Thane, Operations Director at the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, [ISL0023](#), para 3.1.

9 Q41

10 [ISL0047](#)

11 [ISL0047](#), para 1

12 [ISL0047](#), para 1

13 [ISL0057](#), Q1a

You mention Da'esh (ISIL) and al Qaeda in your question. I think we need to be clear that such violent terrorist groups are beyond the pale in terms of UK engagement. Nor would we include them in our definition of *political Islam*.<sup>14</sup> [Emphasis in original]

12. In terms of broadness, Mr Ellwood described 'political Islam' as "a catch-all phrase ... a useful label, if you like, to encompass political parties, groups and organisations that, as I say, have very different contexts and backdrops".<sup>15</sup> The FCO told us that "it is not practical or useful to adopt a single approach in all circumstances"<sup>16</sup> and spoke instead about a "case-by-case basis".<sup>17</sup> The FCO described its case-by-case basis as being a "geographical basis"<sup>18</sup> premised on the different countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Mr Ellwood told us that:

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's engagement with political Islam is part and parcel of its engagement with the countries in the region<sup>19</sup> ... Depending on where we are working, what we are doing in those countries and what is happening in those countries, it will vary from piece to piece.<sup>20</sup>

We asked Mr Ellwood whether it may be appropriate to sub-divide the groups within the FCO's broad definition of 'political Islam' into more specific ideological categories.<sup>21</sup> He told us that: "I think the right approach is not to try to come up with a specific policy approach to each different strand within political Islam."<sup>22</sup>

**13. National circumstances are certainly a relevant factor for assessing political-Islamist groups, but it is also the case that some of the most significant recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region—from the Arab Spring to the spread of ISIL—show the power of ideas that cross national borders. Political Islamist groups in different countries influence one another, and share elements of political ideology and philosophy. *The FCO should supplement its country-specific framework for understanding 'political Islam' with a thematic basis for analysis, which forms policies towards common global, regional, and political ideologies as well as individual countries.***

## The FCO's engagement with 'political Islam'

14. Speaking about the FCO's objectives when it engages with 'political Islam', Mr Ellwood told us that:

We should encourage moves towards more democratic, accountable, pluralistic cultures which respect other faiths and minorities and defend human and civil rights. And we should be prepared to engage with all parties and movements which are prepared to renounce violence and move along the democratic path.

14 [ISL0057](#), Q1a

15 Q159

16 [ISL0047](#), para 4

17 [ISL0047](#), para 4

18 Q160, Q166

19 Q159, Opening Statement by Tobias Ellwood MP.

20 Q161

21 Q160 to 164

22 [ISL0057](#), Q1a

The FCO's written submission likewise emphasised a "commitment to non-violence, inclusive governance, tolerance of other faiths and of minorities and, where relevant, respect for international agreements"<sup>23</sup> as being key criteria for assessing 'political-Islamist' parties. The submission also repeatedly emphasised the importance, within UK policy, of countering 'extremism'.<sup>24</sup>

## The definitions provided by our witnesses

15. The definitions of 'political Islam' that were provided by our witnesses often differed between the broad and narrow, depending on whether these witnesses were supportive or sceptical of 'political Islam'. Some of our witnesses, generally those who were more sceptical, provided us with broader definitions.<sup>25</sup> These definitions often included democratic and non-violent groups alongside violent and anti-democratic groups under the labels of 'political Islam' or 'Islamism'. Some witnesses argued that these groups had shared goals, even if the methods for reaching these goals differed.<sup>26</sup> These end goals have been described by some as being to implement a restrictive interpretation of 'Islamic law', or to establish a 'Caliphate'.<sup>27</sup>

16. Other witnesses, predominantly those who were supportive of the concept, provided us with a narrower definition of 'political Islam'. In particular, these witnesses rejected the term 'Islamism' as too vague to be useful<sup>28</sup> and too tainted by associations with violence and extremism.<sup>29</sup> Some witnesses also objected to the phrase 'political Islam', on theological grounds.<sup>30</sup> But these witnesses, who supported the concept, overwhelmingly argued that there existed a distinctive sub-section of 'Islamist' ideology, one that should be differentiated from other forms of 'Islamism' on the particular basis of its non-violence<sup>31</sup> and commitment to democracy; for example, some specifically asked to be called 'Muslim Democrats'.<sup>32</sup>

23 [ISL0047](#), para 4

24 [ISL0047](#), in particular para 7, and also paras 2, 3, and 6.

25 See, for example, the definitions provided by Dr Machteld Zee, A Research Fellow at the Henry Jackson Society; Ed Husain, a Senior Advisor at the Centre on Religion & Geopolitics; and Mokhtar Awad, a Research Fellow at the Program on Extremism, George Washington University, in Q107.

26 See, for example, Dr Machteld Zee in Q109 and Q140.

27 Q107. Also, in his [Statement on the Muslim Brotherhood Review](#), the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, said of the Muslim Brotherhood that its "foundational texts call for the progressive moral purification of individuals and Muslim societies and their eventual political unification in a Caliphate under Sharia law".

28 See, for example, the rejection of the term 'Islamism' by Usaama Al-Azami, a PhD candidate at Princeton University, in [ISL0048](#) paras 1 and 3.

29 See, for example, Foreign Affairs, [From Political Islam to Muslim Democracy: the Ennahda party and the future of Tunisia](#), an article by Rached Ghannouchi, the President of the EnNahda party from Tunisia, in which he wrote that "[EnNahda] no longer accepts the label of "Islamism" – a concept that has been disfigured in recent years by radical extremists".

30 Some 'political Islamists' who gave evidence to our inquiry rejected the phrase political Islam because they believed that it implied a qualification of Islam, which they rejected by describing Islam as a holistic faith. See, for example, Ibrahim Mounir, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood (Q44) and Wael Haddara, a former senior advisor to President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt ([ISL0010](#) para 3).

31 See, for example, the objections to being included in the same definition as violent groups that were offered by Anas Al-Tikriti, the CEO of the Cordoba Foundation and a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood, in [ISL0012](#) paras 6 and 7, or by Dr Daud Abdullah, a researcher at the British Muslim Initiative, in [ISL0002](#) paras 4.1, 4.2, and 6.6.

32 The EnNahda party identifies itself as 'Muslim Democratic' in its evidence ([ISL0022](#)). See, also, the use of 'Muslim Democrat' by Dr Abdulmawgood Dardery, a former member of the Egyptian Parliament for the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), in [ISL0027](#) para 1, or by Sondos Asem, formerly Foreign Media Coordinator at the office of President Mohamed Morsi, Egypt, in [ISL0041](#).

## Our definition of 'political Islam'

17. We have identified three values that should guide the degree of positive engagement with groups and parties in the MENA region. These values should be applied to political Islamists, but they should also be a benchmark for assessing all political philosophies on an equal basis globally, with the same standards being applied to the Islamists as to all other ideologies in terms of what behaviour is acceptable to the UK and what is not.

- i) **Participation in, and preservation of, democracy. Support for democratic culture, including a commitment to give up power after an election defeat. We assess this in Chapter 2 and 3.**
- ii) **An interpretation of faith that protects the rights, freedoms, and social policies that are broadly congruent with UK values. We assess this in Chapter 4.**
- iii) **Non-violence, as a fundamental and unambiguous commitment. We assess this in Chapter 5.**

The aim of this inquiry is to assess the extent that 'political Islamists' fulfil these criteria, and to assess against these criteria the policies and practices of the FCO towards these groups.

18. We partially agree with the FCO's definition of 'political Islam'. We agree with their definition of it as a broad phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of different beliefs, but believe that groups engaged in illegal violence should be included in the definition despite them being excluded from overt engagement with the UK Government. The FCO should use more precise language to differentiate between different types of political Islamist. The FCO told us that there is one form of Islamism that embraces "democratic principles and liberal values", and another form of Islamism that instead holds "intolerant, extremist views". *We consider it inappropriate to place these two types of Islamism within the same, single category and—if the FCO wishes to encourage Islamist groups towards democracy, non-violence, and a flexible interpretation of their faith—then we recommend that it devises a vocabulary that doesn't group these types together.*

19. The FCO's submission to our inquiry repeatedly emphasises the need to tackle extremism. By contrast, the need to recognise the legitimacy of democratic, peaceful, and ideologically moderate groups is less prominent within the FCO submission. *As the FCO told us, an effective strategy for countering Islamist extremism is vital for the UK's national interests. But, in addition to outlining the ideologies that the UK is determined to oppose in the MENA region, the FCO should likewise make a clear case for the political philosophies that the UK will commit to engage with. We suggest the above three criteria as a basis for doing so.*

## 2 Democracy and political Islam

### Democracy and elections: Winning elections

20. Some political Islamists emphasise that an acceptance of democracy is at the heart of their values, and some have specifically identified themselves as 'Muslim Democrats'.<sup>33</sup> But this assertion has been treated with scepticism by some. For example, Dr Maria Holt, from the University of Westminster, told us that "Islamic involvement in politics is viewed by many in the west and some western governments as being inherently 'dangerous' and probably undemocratic".<sup>34</sup>

21. In as much as they have seen an extension of free and fair elections, democratic openings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have resulted in a number of successes for parties that we would classify as political Islamist. There were examples in Algeria, Turkey, and the Palestinian Territories prior to 2011, but it was the Arab Spring revolutions—and the elections that they led to—that gave political Islamists an unprecedented opportunity to seek power in several MENA states. Different varieties of political Islamist performed strongly in elections in Tunisia (2011), Morocco (2011 and 2016), Egypt (2012), Libya (2012), Iraq (2014), and Jordan (2016).

22. The acceptance of democracy by political Islamists has led to them being condemned by extremist, militant Islamist groups. ISIL, for example, devoted 25 pages of the fourteenth issue of its regular propaganda publication (in April 2016) to denigrating the Muslim Brotherhood for—among other things—participating in elections.<sup>35</sup> The group has been similarly condemned by Al-Qaeda, whose leader Ayman al-Zawahiri released an audio message in August 2016 that described the Brotherhood as misguided for participating in parliamentary elections under a secular constitution.<sup>36</sup>

23. As well as contesting national elections, several political Islamist parties told us that their internal procedures were also premised on the principle that decision-making bodies should be elected. Dr Radwan Masmoudi, an advisor to the President of Tunisia's EnNahda party, described EnNahda's decision-making institutions as elected:

There is the Congress—we had one just two and a half weeks ago—which is about 1,200 elected people. It is the highest institution in the party. Then there is the elected Shura Council, with 150 people, and they set the policy between the two Congresses.<sup>37</sup>

24. The Muslim Brotherhood also emphasised to us that its internal procedures were premised on elections. The organisation's evidence to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, which was also submitted to our inquiry, said:

33 The EnNahda party identifies itself as 'Muslim Democratic' in its evidence ([ISL0022](#)). See, also, the use of 'Muslim Democrat' by Dr Abdulmawgood Dardery, a former member of the Egyptian Parliament for the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), in [ISL0027](#) para 1, or by Sondos Asem, formerly Foreign Media Coordinator at the office of President Mohamed Morsi, Egypt, in [ISL0041](#).

34 [ISL0037](#)

35 We will not link to or quote from ISIL propaganda. A summary of the publication was produced by [Middle East Eye](#), among other sources.

36 We will not link to or quote from Al-Qaeda propaganda. A summary of the audio message was produced by [The Long War Journal](#), among other sources.

37 Q68

The Muslim Brotherhood is a democratic organisation that despite the repression, managed to elect more than nine leaders since its foundation until today through a popular internal democratic process. It is of note that all positions within the Muslim Brotherhood from the most junior post to the most senior are obtained through elections.<sup>38</sup>

25. The Nour party, a Salafist party from Egypt that participates in elections and is associated with a more conservative interpretation of 'Islamic law', also told us that its internal institutions (its president, presidential committee, and its High Authority) are elected.<sup>39</sup>

26. Several witnesses gave us a theological justification for the compatibility of Islam and democracy, rooted in the Islamic concept of 'shura'. Mohamed Soudan, the Foreign Relations Secretary for the Freedom and Justice Party, said:

According to Islam, it is the society as a whole—not one person, like the Egyptian pharaoh in the time of Moses—that owns and exercises power... Al-Shura, or consultation, is the Quranic expression of democracy.<sup>40</sup>

Ibrahim Mounir was another witness who emphasised the relationship of 'shura' with democracy, saying that "an action cannot take place against people's choice and opinion, at least in priority matters; this is where a near-complete (if not complete) consensus can be reached".<sup>41</sup> Among the characteristics of democracy that were emphasised by the Nour party in Egypt were "Shura (consultation)" and "considering the opinion of the majority of those who have the right to vote".<sup>42</sup>

**27. Political Islamists self-identifying as democrats have embraced elections as a mechanism for contesting and winning power. They should be allowed to freely participate in democratic processes, and the FCO should use the ability of political Islamists to take part as one of the key criteria for defining free elections in the MENA region.**

## Democracy and elections: A 'majoritarian' understanding?

28. Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the FCO, told us that a 'winner-takes-all' conceptualisation of democracy was an issue in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA):

That is a failing, I should stress, which both secular and Islamist parties are prone to and which points to the need to develop a culture of democracy throughout the region. Whichever party comes out on top in an election needs to recognise the need to govern on behalf of all sections of the electorate.<sup>43</sup>

38 Written evidence from ITN Solicitors on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim Brotherhood's submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, paras 102 and 103. Placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

39 [ISL0055](#)

40 [ISL0026](#)

41 Q47, [ISL0058](#). Other witnesses who highlighted the concept of 'shura' included Dr Daud Abdullah from the British Muslim Initiative ([ISL0002](#), para 3.1) and Dr A Amr Darrag from the Freedom and Justice Party ([ISL0009](#) para 4).

42 [ISL0055](#)

43 [ISL0057](#), Q1b

Speaking about political Islam in particular, the FCO said that the participation of some groups in democracy was “purely tactical”,<sup>44</sup> and that:

When political Islamist groups declare that they are going to embrace the democratic process, we should welcome that but remain vigilant as to whether this is a real and lasting conversion.<sup>45</sup>

Some witnesses have argued, particularly with regards to the Muslim Brotherhood, that political Islamists have held a ‘majoritarian’ view of democracy, meaning that they reduce democracy to votes and elections (rather than considering wider cultures of democracy) and that they emphasise themselves as victors, without the need to share power or compromise on their policies.<sup>46</sup>

29. The EnNahda party from Tunisia and the Nour party from Egypt specifically refuted this accusation of majoritarianism. The Nour party told us that it had accepted representation in Egypt’s 2012 constitution-drafting assembly that was less than the proportion of its representation in parliament, and that it had insisted on the inclusion of other, smaller parties in a variety of processes.<sup>47</sup> From EnNahda, Dr Rafik Abdessalem, the head of the party’s External Relations Department, told us in the party’s written submission that:

Ennahdha approached the transition with the view that transitional phases should not be governed by a 51% majority. It sought to build consensus between the broadest possible trends in society in order to establish stable and shared democratic traditions.<sup>48</sup>

30. In terms of emphasising itself as a victor, the Muslim Brotherhood and its sympathisers have argued that the group’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) “won five elections” in Egypt.<sup>49</sup> We examined the five votes that took place in Egypt in 2011 and 2012:

- i) Of these five votes, two were referendum campaigns. The FJP campaigned on the winning side of both campaigns. These referendums were votes on issues rather than votes on parties per se. The FJP was not the only party to campaign on the winning side.<sup>50</sup>

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44 [ISL0047](#), para 1

45 [ISL0057](#), Q2

46 See, for example, the descriptions of ‘majoritarianism’ used by Alison Pargeter, a researcher and Middle-East analyst, in [ISL0039](#), and by Dr Courtney Freer, from the London School of Economics, in [ISL0005](#), para 5 (with regards to the Muslim Brotherhood); or the description of the Muslim Brotherhood’s conceptualisation of democracy used by Professor Noha Mellor, from the University of Bedfordshire, in [ISL0003](#), para 22.

47 [ISL0055](#)

48 [ISL0022](#), para 13

49 See, for example, the comment on “five elections” in Dr Daud Abdullah, from the British Muslim Initiative, in [ISL0002](#) para 6.6, and Sondos Asem, a former Foreign Media Coordinator at the office of President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt, in [ISL00041](#) para 6. Miss Asem later clarified that she had meant that “a majority of voters” had supported the FJP on these five occasions, rather than ‘a majority of Egyptians’ ([ISL0050](#)).

50 For the March 2011 Referendum, for example, several sources referred to the National Democratic Party (NDP, the party of President Hosni Mubarak who was deposed in 2011) as supporting the same side as the Muslim Brotherhood. See, for example, New York Times, [Egyptian Voters Approve Constitutional Changes](#) (accessed 27 July 2016); BBC, [Large Turnout in Egypt’s Constitutional Referendum](#) (accessed 27 July 2016); and Al-Jazeera, [Deep Divisions over Egypt’s Referendum](#) (accessed 27 July 2016). The December 2012 Referendum saw the Muslim Brotherhood joined in its support for the draft constitution by some Salafi parties, such as the Nour party. See, for example, Al-Ahram, [Egypt draft charter vote ‘right move for stability’: Salafist leaders](#) (accessed 27 July 2016) and Al-Jazeera, [The Salafi Nour Party In Egypt](#) (accessed 27 July 2016).

- ii) The FJP's other three victories came in elections. In the second round of the 2012 presidential election, the party did win a majority of the votes cast: The FJP's Mohamed Morsi become president after he won 51.7% of the votes cast and his rival, Ahmad Shafik, won 48.3%.<sup>51</sup>
- iii) In the other two 2012 elections, to the Lower House (People's Assembly) and Upper House (Shura Council) of the Egyptian parliament, the FJP was the best-performing party, though it did not win a majority of the votes cast. In elections to the Lower House (completed in January 2012) the FJP won 37.5% of votes cast.<sup>52</sup> In elections to the Upper House (completed in February 2012) the FJP won 45% of votes cast.<sup>53</sup> Other parties, such as the Salafist 'Nour' party (which was the second-best performing) and the more-liberal, secularist 'Wafd' party (which was the third-best performing), also gained significant representation.<sup>54</sup>
- iv) Turnout figures varied. For elections to the Lower House, turnout was 54%.<sup>55</sup> For elections to the Upper House, turnout was approximately 11-12%.<sup>56</sup> For the second round of the presidential election, which Mohamed Morsi won, it was 51.85%.<sup>57</sup>

31. We asked Sondos Asem, a former Foreign Media Coordinator at the office of President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt, about Morsi's victory as the FJP candidate in the second round of the 2012 presidential election.<sup>58</sup> To assess whether the FJP had exaggerated its mandate, we observed that the result had seen the FJP win the votes of approximately quarter of the electorate rather than, as Miss Asem had previously argued, "a majority of Egyptians".<sup>59</sup> She replied that:

The suggestion that the President only had the support of a "quarter of the electorate, not a majority of Egyptians" is typical of an unfortunate double standard that has plagued assessment of the situation in Egypt. The standard in any democracy is the mandate given by voters. For example,

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51 [Full results](#) from Egypt's High Elections Commission, in Arabic, accessed 1 August 2016

52 Egyptian sources from the time, such as the newspapers [Al-Masry Al-Youm](#) and [Daily News Egypt](#), reported that the FJP won 10,138,134 votes out of 27,065,135 votes cast.

53 According to [a statement released on 26 February 2012 by the Muslim Brotherhood's website Ikhwanweb.com](#), which quoted the High Judicial Elections Commission. Accessed on 22 July 2016.

54 Different sources exist for the results of these two elections. Sondos Asem lists the result of the Lower House (People's Assembly) elections as: "The [FJP-led] Democratic Alliance garnered 44.9% of the vote. The Islamist bloc led by the Salafi Al Nour party received 25% of the votes. The remainder of the votes went to the Liberal Al Wafd party (7.5%), the Egyptian Bloc (6.7%) and a coalition of young revolutionary activists (1.6%)" ([ISL0041](#), para 17). Sondos Asem listed the result of the Upper House Elections as: "The FJP gained 45 percent of the seats in the Shura Council elections (105 seats out of 270) followed by the [Nour-party led] Salafi/Islamist coalition at 28.6 percent, The Wafd Party at 8.45 percent and The Egyptian Bloc at 5.43 percent" ([ISL0050](#), para 2).

55 [ISL0041](#), para 16

56 Observers from the Carter Center put turnout at less than 14% in the first round of the Shura Council elections, and less than 7% in the second round ([page 6](#)). The website [Mada Masr](#) quoted Ayman Abbas, then head of Egypt's High Elections Commission, as saying in October 2015 that turnout in the 2012 Shura Council election had been 12%.

57 [ISL0050](#). Also reported by observers from the Carter Center ([page 5](#)).

58 [ISL0050](#), first question

59 [ISL0041](#), para 6

in the US presidential elections in the same year, Mr Obama won only 51.1 percent of the votes, with a voter turnout of 54.9 percent. That represents only 28% of Americans. Yet no one would dispute Mr Obama's mandate.<sup>60</sup>

It is also the case that other political Islamist parties at the time—the PJD in Morocco and EnNahda in Tunisia, in 2011—also won power without receiving a majority of the votes cast in their elections.

### Democratic culture: sharing power

32. As well as the mechanics of elections, democracy also involves a broader culture. A key aspect of this culture, and one that was especially relevant in the political context that followed the Arab Spring, is power-sharing. The free and fair elections that took place in several Arab states in 2011 and 2012 gave Arab political parties an incentive to compete. But their highly-fractured political environments, combined with the need to govern effectively and re-draft national constitutions after decades of dictatorship, gave them a need to cooperate.

33. In both Tunisia and Morocco, political Islamist parties won elections in 2011 and shared power through coalition governments. They formed these coalitions with more secularist parties and, in both Morocco and Tunisia, the winning political-Islamist party included in its initial coalition the party that had performed second-best in the election:

- In Tunisia, the EnNahda party won a plurality in the 2011 Constituent Assembly elections. But it governed in coalition 'troika' with two smaller, more secularist parties: 'Ettakatol' and the 'Congress for the Republic' party.<sup>61</sup> When EnNahda lost the 2014 parliamentary election it contributed to the cabinet led by the winner, the secularist Nidaa Tounes party, as a coalition partner.<sup>62</sup> In its written submission, EnNahda emphasised its aim to create an inclusive political culture and its "rejection of any monopolisation of power by one party".<sup>63</sup>
- In Morocco, the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) was the best performing in the 2011 parliamentary elections but it governed in coalition with smaller, more secularist parties that included the 'Istiqlal' party (the larger of the coalition partners, and one that subsequently pulled out of the coalition in 2013).<sup>64</sup>

34. In Egypt, the Freedom and Justice Party won a plurality in the 2012 parliamentary elections. But it did not ultimately form a coalition with the second-best performing party (the Salafist 'Nour' party) or with the third-best performing (the more liberal, and secularist, 'Wafd' party).

- Sondos Asem told us that the Nour Party had withdrawn from the FJP's coalition, the Democratic Alliance.<sup>65</sup> The Nour party told us that it had never been part

60 [ISL0050](#)

61 The National, [Tunisia's troika of parties must learn to compromise](#), accessed 25 July 2016.

62 Brookings Institute, [Tunisia, The Courage of Compromise](#), accessed 25 July 2016. For EnNahda's account of its reaction to Tunisia's 2011 and 2014 election results, see [ISL0022](#) paras 12-15.

63 [ISL0022](#), para 12

64 BBC, [Istiqlal party quits Morocco's Islamist-led government](#), accessed 25 July 2016

65 [ISL0050](#)

of the Democratic Alliance.<sup>66</sup> Sondos Asem has written that the FJP avoided an alliance with the Salafists because such an alliance would impede (rather than enhance) the FJP's efforts to be inclusive.<sup>67</sup>

- Sondos Asem described the Democratic Alliance as an inclusive "cross-ideological alliance".<sup>68</sup> But evidence shows that, regardless of the diversity of its member parties, the Democratic Alliance was dominated by the FJP, which held 94% of the coalition's 226 seats in parliament.<sup>69</sup>

35. Witnesses sympathetic to the FJP told us that the party took numerous steps to be inclusive. Sondos Asem said that President Mohamed Morsi had fulfilled his promise to have "an inclusive presidential team" as he appointed four "senior assistants" with the rank of deputy-prime minister, including a woman, a Coptic Christian, and a Salafist.<sup>70</sup> Wael Haddara, a former senior advisory to Mohamed Morsi, told us that the former president had "coordinated meetings with every segment of society".<sup>71</sup> His evidence then provides a list of different meetings held on different dates.<sup>72</sup>

36. Nevertheless, a report commissioned by the Egyptian authorities, and published in June 2015, said that "the Muslim Brotherhood's assurance that it did not seek to monopolise parliament was nothing more than a façade".<sup>73</sup> When asked what factors led to the removal of the FJP from power, Tobias Ellwood MP said that "there was resistance, if you like, to the monopoly of power that the Muslim Brotherhood was creating".<sup>74</sup>

**37. In their definitions of democracy, political Islamists have sometimes emphasised a highly mechanical understanding that equates democracy with elections, and reduces elections to an outcome of 'winners' and 'losers'. There is a risk that this definition fails to take sufficient account of broader aspects of democratic culture, such as power sharing and inclusive governance. In terms of how they have behaved in power, some political-Islamist parties—especially EnNahda in Tunisia—have shown a greater acceptance of broader democratic culture, including a commitment to give up power after an election defeat. *The FCO should encourage a broader understanding of democracy, and condemn majoritarian and exclusionary practices whether they are committed by Islamists, their opponents, or other governments.***

66 [ISL0055](#)

67 The Atlantic, Sondos Asem, [Seeking Consensus, Egypt's Brotherhood Party Remains Wary of Alliance with Salafis](#), accessed 25 July 2015.

68 [ISL0041](#), para 15

69 [ISL0050](#)

70 [ISL0050](#). Sondos Asem said that these four were (1) Dr. Pakinam Hassan El-Sharkawi, assistant for Political Affairs. (a woman). (2) Dr. Samir Morcos Abdel-Masseih, assistant for democratic transition. (a Coptic Christian) (3) Dr. Essam Al-Haddad, assistant for Foreign Relations and International Cooperation. (FJP) and (4) Dr. Imad Abdul-Ghafoor Abdul-Ghani, assistant for community outreach (Salafi, Nour Party). Anas Al-Tikriti also referred to the appointment of these advisors as being a sign of inclusivity ([ISL0049](#)).

71 [ISL0010](#), para 13b

72 [ISL0010](#), para 13b

73 '[The Egyptian Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Power 2012–2013](#)', para 39. This is part of a series of reports commissioned from '9 Bedford Row' by the State Lawsuit (Litigation) Authority of Egypt after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from power. This, the second report in the series, was provided to us by the Egyptian Embassy in London.

74 Q170

## Democracy and checking power

38. A key principle of democracy is that there is a separation of the different branches of the state, and that a system of checks and balances exists between them. In particular, the independence of the judiciary is maintained under democracies, to ensure that all individuals—no matter what their power or status—are subject to the rule of law.

39. Critics of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt have accused this group in particular of disregarding these principles. These critics have focused on the relationship of President Mohamed Morsi (and his FJP-led government) with the judiciary. The report commissioned by the current Egyptian authorities argued that the FJP had disregard for the rule of law. One example that it gave was an effort by President Morsi to prevent the Egyptian parliament from being annulled:

On 10 July 2012, Morsi reinstated the Islamist-dominated parliament that had previously been disbanded by the Supreme Constitutional Court on the grounds that it was unconstitutional as its membership was too unrepresentative...The decision to defy the court's ruling and reconvene Parliament raised concerns that Morsi was acting beyond his authority.<sup>75</sup>

The report also gave the example of a decree that President Mohamed Morsi issued on 21 November 2012 (Morsi later rescinded the decree, on 8 December 2012.<sup>76</sup>). It described Morsi as:

Granting himself almost total power while effectively neutralizing a judicial system that had emerged as a key opponent. He did so by declaring that the courts were barred from challenging his decisions and in particular barring the Constituent Assembly from being dissolved rendering any dissolution ruling by the courts moot.<sup>77</sup>

40. The Muslim Brotherhood and its sympathisers told us that, rather than undermining democracy, actions like Mohamed Morsi's 21 November decree were designed to protect elected institutions from unelected bodies—like Egypt's judiciary—that were biased against the Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood's submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review said:

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75 ['The Egyptian Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Power 2012–2013'](#), paras 76 and 78. This is part of a series of reports commissioned from '9 Bedford Row' by the State Lawsuit (Litigation) Authority of Egypt after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from power. This, the second report in the series, was provided to us by the Egyptian Embassy in London.

76 ['The Egyptian Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Power 2012–2013'](#), para 216. This is part of a series of reports commissioned from '9 Bedford Row' by the State Lawsuit (Litigation) Authority of Egypt after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from power. This, the second report in the series, was provided to us by the Egyptian Embassy in London.

77 ['The Egyptian Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Power 2012–2013'](#), paras 100, 102, 111, and 112. This is part of a series of reports commissioned from '9 Bedford Row' by the State Lawsuit (Litigation) Authority of Egypt after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from power. This, the second report in the series, was provided to us by the Egyptian Embassy in London.

President Morsi issued a decree in an attempt to protect the constitutional process and protect the Assembly from being dissolved...Morsi undertook these protective steps as it was clear to him at that time that the Judiciary were not neutral.<sup>78</sup>

41. The FJP and its sympathisers also identified the military as another aspect of the “deep state”<sup>79</sup> that they felt to be biased against them. Sondos Asem told us that:

The inability of President Morsi to safeguard elected institutions led him to resort to the controversial November 2012 decree...the real struggle in the Egyptian transition was not simply ideological, but was a power struggle between pro-democracy forces and an entrenched undemocratic military regime...The coup against President Morsi was perhaps a result of his persistent (but failed) attempts to challenge a deeply entrenched military regime.<sup>80</sup>

***42. The FCO should have made clearer its concerns over the incompetent, non-inclusive, and narrow nature and behaviour of President Mohamed Morsi’s government in Egypt. The FCO should also condemn the influence of the military in politics as contrary to UK values. The FCO should not let itself be seen as justifying the way in which the FJP was removed from power in Egypt, and it should be forthright in highlighting to the Egyptian Government the contradictions inherent in forcibly excluding the Muslim Brotherhood from taking part in democratic processes.***

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78 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 71, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

79 [ISL0026](#)

80 [ISL0041](#) paras 49, 50, and 52

## 3 Transparency and political Islam

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### Transparency of organisation, and internal structures

#### Introduction

43. Critics accuse the Muslim Brotherhood, in particular, of being what the former Prime Minister David Cameron called a “deliberately opaque and habitually secretive” organisation.<sup>81</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood Review concluded that:

From its foundation the Muslim Brotherhood organised itself into a secretive ‘cell’ structure, with an elaborate induction and education programme for new members. It relied heavily on group solidarity and peer pressure to maintain discipline. This clandestine, centralised and hierarchical structure persists to this day.<sup>82</sup>

44. It is also the case that the Muslim Brotherhood argues that—from its foundation and throughout its history, in Egypt and elsewhere in the region—the group has been broadly repressed, thus necessitating a relatively secretive structure. The submission from the group to the Muslim Brotherhood Review detailed how the movement was proscribed in Egypt in 1954, and repressed under numerous Egyptian presidents thereafter.<sup>83</sup> In terms of the present day, the movement argued that “the Muslim Brotherhood finds itself in a period of extreme repression and persecution in Egypt and the Middle East generally”.<sup>84</sup>

**45. The repression that the Brotherhood has faced in Egypt, and other parts of the Middle East, makes the group unlikely to be fully transparent about its structure and operations. We have found the Muslim Brotherhood to be a secretive organisation, but not a secret one. *The secretiveness of some political-Islamist groups makes it important for the FCO to have a clear understanding of them, and the resources to enable it to do so.***

#### Membership and funding of the Muslim Brotherhood

46. Documents provided to us by the Muslim Brotherhood have given some insight into its structure and activities. The submission from the Muslim Brotherhood to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, for example, outlined three types of Brotherhood membership.<sup>85</sup> Speaking about the organisation in Egypt alone, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Ibrahim Mounir, told us that “in Egypt, the number of Muslim Brotherhood members who gained the right to vote on internal issues within the organisation after passing through several stages is nearly 900 thousand or a million”.<sup>86</sup>

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81 [Statement on the Muslim Brotherhood Review](#)

82 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 9

83 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, paras 31-47, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

84 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 122, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

85 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 104, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

86 Q76, [ISL0058](#)

47. In terms of their initiation, Mr Mounir told us that members did swear an oath, but said that neither the wording of the oath nor the requirement to swear one was controversial or unique to the Brotherhood.<sup>87</sup> We asked Mr Mounir if he would repeat the oath to us, and he said:

I vow to obey the Muslim Brotherhood organisation, work for its ideas and follow its leadership orders unless they command me to disobey God.<sup>88</sup>

48. In terms of its funding, the Muslim Brotherhood's submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review said:

The Muslim Brotherhood is a privately and independently funded movement relying on membership subscription fees to sustain its activity, with each local administrative office charged with independently managing the economic activity in its respective sector. However, the Muslim Brotherhood also accepts donations from members or supporters. In addition to this, the organisation is built on the principle of charity and much of the Muslim Brotherhoods relies on voluntary work by its members.<sup>89</sup>

### ***National structure of the Muslim Brotherhood***

49. The submission from the Muslim Brotherhood to the Muslim Brotherhood Review said that, despite the repression that the group faced, "the Muslim Brotherhood continues to be a powerful and organised voice in Egypt".<sup>90</sup> The submission described, seemingly referring to Egypt, a national structure that consisted of "a pyramid formation that can be broken into three geographical spheres"<sup>91</sup>:

- i) "Local—the "family" (usra), is a framework established in the first several decades of the movement's existence. It is essentially an Islamic study circle. Each "family" chooses a leader (naqib) to represent it on the administrative council of the local Muslim Brotherhood branch. Each family member is required to lead an Islamic lifestyle";
- ii) "Regional—The activity of the "families" is monitored by a regional administration...The activity of the regional administrations is directed by the professional departments, subjected to the General Guidance Office".
- iii) "National—the structure of the Muslim Brotherhood has remained essentially identical to the initial scheme formed in the 1930s and 1940s".

50. The submission explained that the top decision-making body of the Muslim Brotherhood was the General Guidance Office, which operated in conjunction with the General Shura Council.<sup>92</sup>

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87 Q78, [ISL0058](#)

88 Q79, [ISL0058](#)

89 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 107, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

90 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 123, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

91 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 105, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

92 Written evidence from ITN Solicitors on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim Brotherhood's submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 106. Placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

### **International structure of the Muslim Brotherhood**

51. The Muslim Brotherhood has an international presence. The group told us that the Grand Shura Council of the organisation represented the Brotherhood's "transnational presence".<sup>93</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood has established or inspired branches in several states, with the evidence provided to us by the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood being one example.<sup>94</sup> The Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review described how some exiled Brotherhood members had settled, for example, in the UK from Egypt and the UAE.<sup>95</sup> Ibrahim Mounir, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood, was described by the group as being "Secretary General of the International Section".<sup>96</sup>

52. One analyst argued to us that the Muslim Brotherhood's international presence is highly developed, but deliberately obscured by the group. Steven Merley, an investigator who has conducted research into what he calls "The Global Muslim Brotherhood", told us that Brotherhood exiles had established like-minded organisations in their host countries.<sup>97</sup> But Mr Merley told us that the Brotherhood made it difficult to ascertain the nature and extent of its international organisation:

The [Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review] underestimates the degree of global networking and deception employed by the worldwide networks of the Muslim Brotherhood...In depth investigation has shown that beyond secrecy, there appears to be a concerted effort to deceive and obscure the identity and activities of the Brotherhood network.<sup>98</sup>

53. Ibrahim Mounir, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood and Head of its International Section, described the international structure of the Muslim Brotherhood as a loose coordination between like-minded groups:

Chair: The question was, do the branches of the Muslim Brotherhood in other countries co-ordinate?

Ibrahim Mounir: There is a real coordination among members of the Muslim Brotherhood, all of its branches and all people who embrace its ideology in almost the whole world. This kind of coordination of those principles does exist in more than one country...This coordination does not necessitate adopting the name "Muslim Brotherhood" or its ideology. The only requirement for this coordination is that it occurs under the principle of Islam's comprehensiveness which focuses on deeds for this world and the hereafter.<sup>99</sup>

54. There are instances in which the Brotherhood's emphasis on loose affiliations has made it difficult to ascertain the exact nature of its international structure.

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93 Written evidence from ITN Solicitors on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim Brotherhood's submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 106. Placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

94 [ISL0030](#)

95 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 26

96 [ISL0016](#), para 16ii

97 [ISL0006](#), para 4

98 [ISL0006](#), paras 1 and 10

99 Q54, [ISL0058](#)

- One example is the ambiguous way in which Mr Mounir described the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. This example is discussed in Chapter 5.
- Another example concerned whether the Muslim Brotherhood is present in the UK. In its submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, the group told us that “the Muslim Brotherhood has no organisational presence in the United Kingdom”.<sup>100</sup> But some evidence describes the Brotherhood as operating in the UK. Mohamed Abdulmalek, a member and spokesman of the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood, told us that he “joined the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in the UK in 1983”.<sup>101</sup> In his book *Inside the Brotherhood*, the author Hazem Kandil says that he interviewed individuals who had participated in meetings of a Muslim Brotherhood “family” (the name for the grassroots structure of the group in Egypt) in the UK.<sup>102</sup> Both Dr Anas Altikriti and Mr Abdulmalek told us that there were organisations in the UK that shared the Brotherhood’s ideology.<sup>103</sup>

**55. The Muslim Brotherhood has a highly defined organisational structure at both a local and national level in Egypt. But the Muslim Brotherhood told us that, incongruously, its international structure comprises a loose and vague affiliation of like-minded groups. The ambiguity of this international structure makes it more difficult to tell which groups around the world are Muslim Brotherhood.**

## Transparency of messaging: Arabic and English

### *Varied messaging*

56. The Muslim Brotherhood has been described as varying its messaging, to emphasise one aspect (possibly more liberal or conciliatory) in English while emphasising a different aspect of the same topic (possibly more conservative, or rigid) in Arabic. Using the example of the group’s attitudes towards violence, the Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review concluded that:

Their [the Muslim Brotherhood’s] public narrative—notably in the West—emphasised engagement not violence. But there have been significant differences between Muslim Brotherhood communications in English and Arabic.<sup>104</sup>

The FCO told us that it judged the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as other political Islamist groups, on the basis of both “their words and actions”.<sup>105</sup>

57. Some witnesses told us that the strategy of adapting the same message when delivering it to different audiences was not unique to the Muslim Brotherhood. Dr Omar Ashour

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100 Written evidence from ITN Solicitors on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim Brotherhood’s submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 13. Placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

101 [ISL0030](#) para 1

102 Hazem Kandil, *Inside the Brotherhood*, p186

103 Dr Altikriti spoke about The Muslim Association of Britain in Q82 while Mr Abdulmalek said that, in the UK, “MB linked organisations and affiliates (UKIM, MSS etc) were founded in the early sixties” in [ISL0030](#) para 3.

104 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 39

105 [ISL0047](#), paras 4 and 6

said this was something done by “all politicians”.<sup>106</sup> Other witnesses also told us that political Islamists may have positive and pragmatic reasons for varying their messaging. Alison Pargeter told us that:

Political Islamist parties may sometimes tell Western audiences one thing and behave differently when addressing their own constituencies. However, this is not a deliberately deceptive act. Rather it is a reflection of its populist politics and of its immaturity within the political arena. It is also intrinsically linked to these movements' longstanding desire to encompass as wide a constituency as possible.<sup>107</sup>

### **Arabic and English: Contradictory messages**

58. Some instances of varied messaging, by the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, have indicated a contradiction of the desired outcome. One example took place in September 2012, when the United States Embassy compound in Cairo was breached by a crowd outside. The crowd was demonstrating against a film made in the US that they regarded as insulting Islam. An exchange took place on Twitter between the English-language-feed of the Muslim Brotherhood and that of the US Embassy. A Tweet from the Muslim Brotherhood read:

We r relieved none of @USEmbassyCairo staff were harmed & hope US-Eg relations will sustain turbulence of Tuesday's events.<sup>108</sup>

The US Embassy in Cairo responded:

Thanks. By the way, have you checked out your own Arabic feeds? I hope you know we read those too.<sup>109</sup>

59. Articles in the Egyptian media suggested that the Arabic-language Twitter feed of the Muslim Brotherhood was encouraging and praising the protests,<sup>110</sup> while the English-language feed issued conciliatory messages of concern for the welfare of embassy staff. An article by Jeed Basyouni, from BBC Monitoring (the translation and analysis branch of the BBC), also lists other examples of what the author termed the Brotherhood's “doublespeak”.<sup>111</sup>

**60. In terms of their messaging, we have seen evidence that some political Islamist groups vary their message to different audiences and, in particular, that they vary content depending on whether the message is in English or Arabic. This is hardly a trait confined to political Islamists alone. But, in some communications, particularly from the Muslim Brotherhood, the English and Arabic messages have proved contradictory. In future, the FCO should take account of this in its dealings with, and analysis of, the Muslim Brotherhood's communications in different languages in order to assess the sincerity of their public statements.**

106 Q29

107 ISL0039

108 Tweet captured by [Egypt Independent](#), as well as other sources, accessed on 29 July 2016

109 Tweet captured by [Egypt Independent](#), as well as other sources, accessed on 29 July 2016

110 Some examples include [Egypt Independent](#), [US Embassy](#), [Muslim Brotherhood spat on Twitter over embassy protests](#) and [Ahram Online](#), ['We can read Arabic too!' US embassy tells Egypt's Brotherhood](#), (accessed 29 July 2016).

111 BBC, [Brotherhood under fire over tailored language](#), (accessed 29 July 2016)

### **Ambiguity in English**

61. Some of the statements provided to us by the Muslim Brotherhood, on fundamental principles, have contained contradictions, caveats, or significant ambiguities. These include:

- The ambiguity over what does, and does not, constitute a branch of the 'Muslim Brotherhood' internationally, as discussed earlier in this Chapter.
- Written answers from Ibrahim Mounir, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, on the question of violence. Having said that the Muslim Brotherhood's position is "unequivocal, unambiguous and unconditional; No violence shall be used or approved in the national effort for change", the letter then appears to offer a number of caveats. We discuss this evidence in Chapter 5.
- The Muslim Brotherhood's attitude to the writings of Sayyid Qutb, and their perceived advocacy of violence, as discussed in Chapter 5.
- Written answers from Ibrahim Mounir, on the question of corporal punishment and the death penalty. We asked Mr Mounir whether he supported the death penalty, and corporal punishments such as "whipping/beating and amputation". His reply addresses the death penalty, but makes no specific mention of the corporal punishments that we specifically asked about. We discuss this evidence in Chapter 4.

62. **Some statements by the Muslim Brotherhood to us in English gave the impression of reluctance to offer a straight answer to questions, or of playing defensive rhetorical games with fundamental rights. *The FCO is correct to judge these groups on the basis of both their words and their actions. The FCO must be provided with sufficient resources to maintain the capabilities—particularly in linguistics training and translation—that are necessary to identify when the messaging of political-Islamist groups diverges between different languages.***

## 4 The policies of political Islam

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### Illiberal ideologies

63. Some witnesses have argued that, although political-Islamist groups may be democratic or non-violent, they are not 'liberals' in the sense of the social policies and rights that they are willing to support. Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the FCO, said:

Some Islamist political groups may be committed to non-violence, but many still have socially conservative agendas. Even if they are non-violent in that sense, we still find that there is much work to do in encouraging improvements on human rights issues, women's rights and the rights of minorities.<sup>112</sup>

The FCO described a spectrum of political-Islamist ideology that included "attitudes that are fundamentally hostile to the West and liberal, progressive societies".<sup>113</sup> It told us that:

The degree to which political Islamists adhere to human rights varies greatly from context to context but, in some cases, there has been systematic abuse, including denial of freedom of religion or belief and discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation.<sup>114</sup>

64. Some witnesses affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood described to us how, while in power in Egypt, for example, the group's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) did work to improve human rights. Dr Nermeen Abdelbary, the Coordinator of the Human Rights Portfolio at the office of President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt (2012–2013), explained how the Morsi administration had worked to create "a holistic vision and strategy for implementation of human rights laws as well as abiding by international human rights conventions".<sup>115</sup>

65. But some of the answers that we received from the Muslim Brotherhood, more generally, showed ambiguity with regard to some fundamental principles. In terms of the punishments that it was permissible to use in the criminal justice system, Ibrahim Mounir, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, told us that he supported the death penalty. When asked clearly and specifically whether he supported "corporal punishments in criminal justice (with whipping/beating and amputation being some examples)",<sup>116</sup> Mr Mounir did not unequivocally reject these punishments. He instead gave a vague answer to the specific question, and spoke about the "divinely prescribed penal code" as well as the conditions under which it could be implemented.<sup>117</sup>

66. In terms of homosexuality, we asked Ibrahim Mounir if he accepted "that in sexuality an individual is entitled to a private life that the law should not interfere with".<sup>118</sup> Mr

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112 Q159

113 [ISL0047](#), para 1

114 [ISL0047](#), para 5

115 [ISL0029](#)

116 [ISL0051](#), Sixth Question

117 [ISL0051](#), Sixth Question

118 Q98

Mounir said that the Brotherhood had not yet been able to adequately discuss the issue.<sup>119</sup> As an initial answer, he told us that an individual was entitled to a private life, but that this was a complex question that should not be legislated upon:

The answer of this question cannot be yes or no. I can say that it is not realistic to apply a global rule regarding this issue. This is new to human laws and behaviour and cannot be included under a rule this way. What I assert is that each man is free to choose in terms of sexual life and other matters. What I cannot understand is the attempt to force this in a society or region. If this is forced by law, it would have serious cons, not only in Muslim communities or because of Shari'a. If it is forced in a community, it will open the door for a wave of exclusion of persons from religious communities and resistance; leading to a kind of corruption no state can fight.<sup>120</sup>

67. Dr Anas Altikriti, Chief Executive Officer and founder of the Cordoba Foundation, told us that debates over homosexuality were cultural and regional, rather than being for the Muslim Brotherhood or 'political Islam' alone:

Laws exist under the rule of secular and non-Muslim governments, which criminalise homosexuality, and it is in largely non-religious, often non-Muslim societies that homosexuals are subject to persecution in various forms. Hence to make this an issue which Political Islamic actors are demanded to explain and justify, I fear, is irrelevant and unhelpful.<sup>121</sup>

We agree, and note that the difficult challenge around sexuality to a faith-based political movement in the Middle East now appears to be under reconsideration.

## Pragmatic policies

### *Emphasis on welfare policies*

68. In terms of the policies that they pursued in power, witnesses described the behaviour of political Islamist parties as being pragmatic rather than dogmatic. Some witnesses told us that political Islamists had been pragmatic in the sense of supporting policies with broad appeal, but that they could root in Islam in an abstract sense, rather than pursuing specific points of dogma. Emphasis on welfare policies, healthcare, education, and fighting corruption are typical examples. In its submission, the EnNahda party told us that:

Ennahdha has long held that the primary orbit for religion is not the state's apparatus but rather personal conviction. The state's duty is to provide services such as health and education and to provide the framework for a dignified life.<sup>122</sup>

119 Q99

120 Q99, [ISL0058](#)

121 [ISL0049](#)

122 [ISL0022](#), para 8

For Egypt, Dr A. Amr Darrag, a member of the Freedom & Justice Party's Executive Board, said that:

The FJP was able to advance a progressive agenda. Several legislations towards social justice and fighting poverty had been proposed and passed.<sup>123</sup>

### 'Shari'a' and the constitution

69. What constitutes 'Shari'a', or 'Islamic law', is disputed. Opponents of political Islamists have accused them of wanting to impose a highly restrictive understanding of 'Islamic law' based on a literal interpretation of the seventh-century sources of 'Islamic law'. But Murtaza Shaikh, a Co-Director of the think tank Averroes, told us that some 'Islamists' have interpreted 'shari'a' differently:

In both the theoretical exposition and practical application of the *shari'ah*, a particular movement may drastically differ from another. The term *shari'ah* remains tenuous and to a great degree has always been flexible[ ... ].

Jihadist ideology is underpinned by the ultimate goal of establishing a theocratic State, otherwise referred to in popular discourse as a caliphate, predicated on the medieval and imperial construct of politics and international relations. Jihadi groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda or Boko Haram reject any and all forms of democratic governance as a violation of 'pure' *shari'ah*[ ... ].

The majority of religiously based movements lie on various points on the spectrum of progressiveness, exploring the application of religious ideals in modern society. Thus we see a number of mainstream movements that do not conceptualise the relationship between religion and politics as manifesting in a medieval caliphate but as a modern democratic nation-State.<sup>124</sup>

70. Speaking on behalf of EnNahda, Dr Radwan Masmoudi told us that the Tunisian constitution of 2014 did not include a reference to 'shari'a', and that EnNahda had not insisted on one:

From the beginning EnNahda took a position that they would not require, insist or demand that shari'a be mentioned at all in the constitution. The first clause in the old constitution says that Tunisia is a republic whose language is Arabic and whose religion is Islam, and they said, "That is enough. That is all we need. We do not need shari'a in the constitution, because shari'a can be misinterpreted".<sup>125</sup>

71. Critics of the FJP government in Egypt, however, describe 'Islamification'<sup>126</sup> or 'Islamisation' as having taken place under the party's rule. When asked what led to the

123 ISL0009, para 9

124 ISL0045, paras 15, 20, and 21

125 Q64

126 'The Egyptian Experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Power 2012–2013', para 112. This is part of a series of reports commissioned from '9 Bedford Row' by the State Lawsuit (Litigation) Authority of Egypt after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from power. This, the second report in the series, was provided to us by the Egyptian Embassy in London.

FJP being deposed from power, Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the FCO, told us that “there was a rejection of the attempted Islamisation of the Egyptian state and society”.<sup>127</sup>

72. Critics of the FJP expressed the fear that, although the FJP did not necessarily move to implement a more restrictive interpretation of ‘shari’a’ while in power, it nevertheless intended to do so in the future. A particular point of anxiety, for these critics, was the new constitution that was produced for Egypt in 2012 under FJP rule. Detailing particular concerns, the FCO told us that:

- “Many feared that the new constitution laid the foundations for a much greater role for Sharia Law in domestic legislation and undermined the traditional position of the Supreme Constitutional Court”.<sup>128</sup>
- “Some Egyptians” feared that the Muslim Brotherhood’s definition of rights and freedoms might “open the door to more conservative legislation on issues like women’s rights or apostasy”.<sup>129</sup>
- “The Morsi Government proposed instituting reforms of school textbooks; removing a picture of Doria Shafik, a feminist activist who advocated universal suffrage in the 1940s, because she was unveiled. The MB was also accused of doing little to deal with radical attacks on Christians and Shi’a Muslims by groups that acted as self-declared enforcers of public morality”.<sup>130</sup>

73. Despite these anxieties, several witnesses nevertheless maintained that the FJP-government did not intend to introduce a more restrictive interpretation of Islamic law. Dr Barbara Zollner, from Birkbeck College, University of London, concluded that “there is little evidence that the Mursi-government, despite its many short-comings, showed any intention to turn Egypt into an Islamic republic”.<sup>131</sup> Michael Marcusa argued that, in Egypt and elsewhere, the dependence of political Islamists on retaining a wide range of support, meant that they did not offer “a radical, revolutionary ideology”,<sup>132</sup> as their support within the electorate included “those who don’t have a particular commitment to the symbols that Islamists use, but see Islamists as the only viable alternative to the powers that be in the region”.<sup>133</sup>

**74. Political Islamists have varied in the policies they have pursued in power. Some have been very pragmatic. Others have been more dogmatic. The PJD in Morocco and EnNahda in Tunisia have generally articulated their Islamist ideology in a broad sense, through the promotion of welfare policies. Fears over the introduction of a restrictive interpretation of ‘Islamic law’ by the FJP in Egypt were based on both speculation about the future and on experience. *The FCO should see the pragmatism of some political-Islamist parties as an opportunity to engage with them, and to influence their current trajectory, as well as considering their future intentions.***

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127 Q170

128 [ISL0057](#), Q3

129 [ISL0057](#), Q3

130 [ISL0057](#), Q3

131 [ISL0043](#), para 8

132 Written evidence from Michael Marcusa, Doctoral Candidate in Political Science, Brown University, Notes on Political Islam for UK FAC, placed in the Parliamentary Archives

133 Written evidence from Michael Marcusa, Doctoral Candidate in Political Science, Brown University, Notes on Political Islam for UK FAC, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

75. We assess that exposure to free and fair elections, the need to appeal to a broad range of the electorate in order to win elections, and the need to work with other political perspectives in order to govern effectively, will serve to encourage political-Islamist groups to adopt a more pragmatic ideology, and an increasingly flexible interpretation of their Islamic references. Moves by them towards embracing certain universal human rights may be slower, and more tentative. *The FCO should do all it can to hasten this process, in keeping with its global commitment to defending human rights.*

### An evolving policy debate

76. Witnesses told us that profound debates are taking place within (and between) political-Islamist groups about what their policies should be, and how to achieve them. Some commentators, such as Tarek Osman in his book *Islamism*,<sup>134</sup> and Dr Rifai Sulaiman Lebbe<sup>135</sup> (from the Centre for Eradication of Muslim Radicalism) in his evidence, argue that the outcome of these debates will define whether political Islamist groups can succeed in winning broad appeal and governing inclusively.

77. There is great diversity within political Islam in this respect. Tunisia's EnNahda has even debated what role religion, and religious figures, should play in its official structures. At its party conference in May 2016, EnNahda decided to draw a distinction between social-religious activities and religiously-inspired politics. Its leader, Rached Ghannouchi, said that EnNahda would henceforth be a purely political party and not a social movement.<sup>136</sup> Speaking about these changes before they took place, Dr Rafik Abdessalem wrote on behalf of EnNahda that these proposals would:

Introduce a definition of the party that separates it from cultural and religious activities, which should be kept within the exclusive sphere of religious institutions and civil society organisations. Ennahdha does not purport to speak for religion. Like other Tunisian parties, Ennahdha is also evolving to meet changing times and more clearly define its vision.<sup>137</sup>

78. In terms of their policies towards women, Dr Machteld Zee, a Research Fellow at the Henry Jackson Society, told us that "the political ideology of Islamism actually can be brought to a core that, regardless of the women's issue at hand, will never be liberal democracy".<sup>138</sup> But EnNahda told us that women played a significant role within its institutional structures and, when asked whether a woman could lead the party, Dr Radwan Masmoudi, an advisor to EnNahda's leader Rached Ghannouchi, said:

Absolutely, yes. Female members are at every level of the leadership in EnNahda. Tunisia is the only country that has parity in the elections for Parliament in the constitution, so about 30% or almost 40% of Members of Parliament are women.<sup>139</sup>

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134 Tarek Osman, *Islamism*, 2016, 'Conclusion'

135 [ISL0004](#), 'Western social values vs Islamic religious values'

136 Foreign Affairs, [From Political Islam to Muslim Democracy: the Ennahda party and the future of Tunisia](#)

137 [ISL0022](#), para 24

138 Q124

139 Q95

79. When asked whether a woman could lead the FJP, the Brotherhood's political party in Egypt, Ibrahim Mounir confirmed that they could do so within the Brotherhood's democratic system.<sup>140</sup> In terms of more clearly distinguishing between its religious and political activities, as EnNahda has done, the Brotherhood released a statement in May 2016 saying that it was considering the issue but that the debate was on-going.<sup>141</sup>

80. In debates as diverse as those on anti-Semitism,<sup>142</sup> homophobia,<sup>143</sup> sectarian prejudice by Sunni Muslims against Shi'a Muslims,<sup>144</sup> and the role of 'shari'a' law in the state,<sup>145</sup> witnesses told us that political-Islamists were products of societies where illiberal attitudes were prevalent. A frequent counter-point to criticism of illiberal views held by political-Islamist groups has therefore been that these are broad cultural and social debates, rather than being views held by political-Islamists alone. Mokhtar Awad, a Research Fellow at the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, countered that political-Islamist groups themselves had played a role in making society more conservative.<sup>146</sup>

81. *The FCO should encourage political-Islamist groups to accept an interpretation of faith that protects the rights, freedoms, and social policies that are congruent with UK values, with the EnNahda party in Tunisia being a prime example of one that has moved in this direction. The FCO is also right to look for indications that political Islamists may act to undermine these values. But it should also hold all governments—in the Middle East and North Africa, and around the world—to the same standards, regardless of their ideology.*

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140 Q94, [ISL0058](#)

141 IkhwanWeb, [Muslim Brotherhood Press Statement 22 May 2016](#), accessed 18 August 2016

142 See, for example, "the context of the society in which they are operating" in [ISL0039](#).

143 See, for example, [ISL0049](#), 'Political Islam/Muslim Brotherhood and Homosexuality'.

144 See, for example, the citing of a 2012 Pew Research Centre poll in [ISL0046](#), para 11.

145 See, for example, Q72, "Shari'a is not the issue to be asked of Islamic parties, the Muslim Brotherhood or otherwise. Societies demand shari'a".

146 Q150

## 5 Violence and political Islam

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### Involvement in violence and terrorism

82. The Muslim Brotherhood Review's Main Findings said that "the Muslim Brotherhood has not been linked to terrorist-related activity in and against the UK".<sup>147</sup> Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Syria, and Egypt have designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation,<sup>148</sup> but the UK has not. Nevertheless, the Main Findings did say that the Brotherhood held "views about terrorism which, in reality, were quite different from our own",<sup>149</sup> and that it had been willing to consider violence:

For the most part, the Muslim Brotherhood have preferred non-violent incremental change on the grounds of expediency, often on the basis that political opposition will disappear when the process of Islamisation is complete. But they are prepared to countenance violence—including, from time to time, terrorism—where gradualism is ineffective.<sup>150</sup>

83. Mokhtar Awad, a Research Fellow at the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, told us that elements of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt had turned to violence. He argued that this violence started in late 2013, after the group's removal from power, and escalated with the support of Brotherhood-backed television stations.<sup>151</sup> Mr Awad told us that, by mid-2014, this violence included:

New groups calling themselves "Popular Resistance Movement" and "Revolutionary Punishment" that used IEDs [Improvised Explosive Devices] and engaged in armed assaults.<sup>152</sup>

Mr Awad said that the need for Brotherhood members to leave the group in order to pursue violence had declined, as the group formed its own theological justifications for violent acts.<sup>153</sup>

84. Guney Yildiz, a Turkish and Kurdish affairs analyst, emphasised to us that the embrace of democracy by some Islamist groups did not necessarily mean that these groups were entirely committed to peaceful means. Using examples from Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories, he told us that:

Militant Islamist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas also engage with democratic processes but could resort to violence and other anti-democratic means at the same time.<sup>154</sup>

85. Michael Marcusa, a PhD candidate at Brown University who has focused on dynamics of youth radicalisation in Tunisia, told us that the willingness or unwillingness of 'Islamists' to use violence may amount to a generational divide. He drew a distinction

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147 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 6

148 Q186

149 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 36

150 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 17

151 [ISL0035](#), para 14

152 [ISL0035](#), paras 14 and 15

153 [ISL0035](#), Executive Summary

154 [ISL0044](#), para 1

between 'radical Islamists', which he described as being willing to use violence to impose a largely literal interpretation of 'Islamic law', and 'political Islamists', which he described as being non-violent and focused on the symbolism of Islamic renewal:

The paradigmatic Political Islamist is not necessarily young and not necessarily poor...He or she may well come from the "pious middle class—doctors, lawyers, and engineers...Radical Islamists on the other hand come from a very different social demographic: they are usually young, have feelings of despair, and express a desire to rage against the system.

Radical Islamism is very much an ideology tied to the experience of frustration and marginalization during the emotionally-volatile youth years. When these one-time radical Islamist activists marry, have children, and settle into routine middle-aged lives, they simply no longer have the anger, rage, and desire to see society wiped clean that they did as single young men.<sup>155</sup>

**86. The UK has not designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation, and we agree with this decision. The Muslim Brotherhood states that it does not aspire to achieve its goals through violence. But we note the Government believes that the group might be willing to consider violence where gradualism is ineffective. However, the evidence so far in Egypt is that if the Muslim Brotherhood supported or condoned violence, then Egypt would be a far more violent place today.**

### Association with terrorists

87. Some of the evidence to our inquiry has argued that, even if political Islamist groups have not undertaken terrorism or violence themselves, they have been willing to associate with terrorist groups or support them. Some witnesses accused the Muslim Brotherhood, in particular, of forming pragmatic alliances with Islamist militant and extremist groups during regional civil wars. Alastair Crooke, the Director of the Conflicts Forum think-tank, told us that:

In some places such as Yemen and Syria, the Brotherhood and Al-Qaeda are already co-joined in armed conflict against a shared 'enemy'.<sup>156</sup>

Speaking about the Libyan conflict, Alison Pargeter told us that:

The Libyan Brotherhood has allied itself with some of the most extreme elements in the name of fighting what it believes are the counter-revolutionary forces of the past.<sup>157</sup>

88. However, the FCO—in responding to our question on whether Muslim-Brotherhood factions fought in the wars that followed the Arab Spring: in Libya or Syria or Yemen—said:

In Syria, some elements linked to the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood have taken part in armed resistance to the Assad regime (as many other groups

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155 Written evidence from Michael Marcusa, Doctoral Candidate in Political Science, Brown University, Notes on Political Islam for UK FAC, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

156 [ISL0040](#)

157 [ISL0039](#)

have done). In Libya, the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood has not participated directly in the conflict, though many of its members are likely to have links to armed groups. In Yemen, the Islah party (which includes the Yemeni Muslim Brotherhood as well as salafi and tribal elements) has not participated directly in the conflict. But Islah is part of the Government of Yemen and Islah-aligned fighters have taken part in military action against Huthi and Salih-aligned forces.

### **The Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas**

89. The Muslim Brotherhood's relationship with the Palestinian group Hamas has also been regarded as an association with terrorism. The Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review described the group as having "deliberately, wittingly and openly incubated and sustained an organisation—Hamas—whose military wing has been proscribed in the UK as a terrorist organisation (and which has been proscribed in its entirety by other countries)".<sup>158</sup> In terms of the support that the Brotherhood offered to Hamas, the Main Findings said that:

The Muslim Brotherhood at all levels have repeatedly defended Hamas attacks against Israel, including the use of suicide bombers and the killing of civilians. The Muslim Brotherhood facilitate funding for Hamas.<sup>159</sup>

90. The Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review said that "the Hamas founding charter claims they are the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Muslim Brotherhood treat them as such".<sup>160</sup> But Ibrahim Mounir, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood and Head of its International Section, described a more ambiguous relationship:

Although Hamas does indeed espouse the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood which has been present throughout Palestine since the 40s of the last century, it does not have any shared operational or administrative functions therewith.<sup>161</sup>

91. When asked "Do you condemn the violence used by Hamas?", Ibrahim Mounir replied that he condemned violent attacks that took place outside certain "laws and charters", particularly the four Geneva Conventions and "numerous United Nations Resolutions".<sup>162</sup> Mr Mounir also said that:

The Muslim Brotherhood has constantly and consistently rejected any and all acts of violence which target civilians, places of religious significance and whatever causes damage and harm to the environment.<sup>163</sup>

92. Several witnesses have emphasised that, given the prominence and sensitivity of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the Muslim Brotherhood is not alone in the region in supporting Hamas.<sup>164</sup> In addition, Dr Anas Al-Tikriti told us that Hamas was not alone in

158 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 17

159 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 16

160 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 14

161 [ISL0051](#), Second Question

162 [ISL0051](#), Third Question

163 [ISL0051](#), Third Question

164 See, for example, Usaama Al-Azami, a PhD candidate at Princeton University, [ISL0048](#), para 24.

its use of violence in the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and that associating this violence with the group's Islamist character was therefore erroneous.<sup>165</sup> We asked the FCO whether it assessed Hamas' use of violence as being rooted more in its Islamist character as opposed to its nationalist objectives of opposing Israel. Neil Crompton, Director of the Middle East and North Africa at the FCO, told us:

There probably is a slightly nationalist element to Palestinian violence, against what they see as the existence of the state of Israel, but there is also a religious, Islamist dimension to that. Opposition to the state of Israel is a strongly held and shared view by many political Islamic groups.

We would suggest that the Palestinian perspective in the Israel-Palestinian conflict contains rather more than a "slightly" nationalist element. However, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also has a profound religious aspect. This conflict deserves full and thorough analysis, and it is our intention to undertake this analysis in the near future.

### **EnNahda and Jihadist Salafists in Tunisia**

93. EnNahda has also been accused of tolerating extremist Islamist groups during its time in power, in 2012 and 2013. Michael Marcusa told us that:

When al-Nahda was in power, extremists were allowed to operate openly and recruit followers from the street. Jihadist Salafists operating under the banner of the now-banned group Ansar al-Shari'a erected preaching tents and held conferences calling for the imposition of shari'a law and inciting youth to jihad in places like Syria.<sup>166</sup>

Mr Marcusa argued that, even if it did not support them ideologically, EnNahda had held a "permissive attitude towards the Salafists" due to "a desire not to antagonize them and lose their potential political support".<sup>167</sup>

94. When defending EnNahda's policy towards extremist groups, Dr Radwan Masmoudi, an advisor to the party's leader Rached Ghannouchi, told us that several factors had impeded the party's efforts. He listed an amnesty in March 2011 (before EnNahda came to power) that released "about 1,200 prisoners accused of belonging to radical and extremists groups",<sup>168</sup> and also described disarray in Tunisia's security forces after the 2011 revolution.<sup>169</sup> EnNahda only took its most decisive steps to counter Ansar Al-Sharia, an extremist group, after nine months in power and following an attack against the US Embassy in Tunis in September 2012.<sup>170</sup>

### **'Conveyor belt' to extremism**

95. Some witnesses have told us that, even if they do not commit violence themselves or associate with groups that do, political Islamist groups still act as a 'conveyor' belt

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165 [ISL0049](#), Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood

166 Written evidence from Michael Marcusa, Doctoral Candidate in Political Science, Brown University, Notes on Political Islam for UK FAC, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

167 Written evidence from Michael Marcusa, Doctoral Candidate in Political Science, Brown University, Notes on Political Islam for UK FAC, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

168 [ISL0052](#), para 1

169 [ISL0052](#), para 2

170 [ISL0052](#), para 3

to extremism. This argument describes political Islamists as laying the foundation of ideologies that their individual members may later use to join extreme or violent groups. The Counter Extremism Project UK told us that the ideology of political Islam is “the thin edge of the radicalisation wedge”,<sup>171</sup> and the former Prime Minister David Cameron said that:

Parts of the Muslim Brotherhood have a highly ambiguous relationship with violent extremism. Both as an ideology and as a network it has been a rite of passage for some individuals and groups who have gone on to engage in violence and terrorism [...]

The main findings of the review support the conclusion that membership of, association with, or influence by the Muslim Brotherhood should be considered as a possible indicator of extremism.<sup>172</sup>

96. Critics of the Muslim Brotherhood, who have accused the group of inspiring its members to violence and extremism, have often focused on the writings of the Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb. The Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review, for example, argued that Qutb’s theories of Islamic resistance in particular (written during the 1950s and 1960s) had ultimately contributed to the ideology of Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups.<sup>173</sup> Mokhtar Awad argued that, in Egypt following the Brotherhood’s removal of power in 2013, the ideas of Qutb had been used by some Brotherhood members to justify violence:

The Egyptian Brotherhood was and continues to be ideologically rigid, and as a result, at the first sign of crisis and adversity, radical ideas like those found in the writings of early Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid Qutb or the use of violence by the Secret Apparatus under the command of the founder Imam Hassan al-Banna, easily seep back into the body of the membership [...].

The organization is not immune to radicalization; it is indeed the Brotherhood’s leadership and its underlying ideology that are among the key drivers in facilitating radicalization which justifies responding to state repression with violence on religious grounds.<sup>174</sup>

97. But Sayyid Qutb wrote on a wide array of subjects, and he is held in high esteem by some Islamists for other aspects of his broad work that do not necessarily relate to violence. Ibrahim Mounir, for example, praised Qutb’s opposition to the influence of Marxism in the Middle East,<sup>175</sup> and said that Qutb was “using his religious thoughts to fight against Marxism on behalf of all countries of the region”.<sup>176</sup>

98. The Muslim Brotherhood’s leadership has formally repudiated Sayyid Qutb’s writings where they are associated with violence, principally through the publication of the book

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171 [ISL0011](#), para 4

172 [Written statement on the Muslim Brotherhood Review](#)

173 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 16

174 [ISL0035](#), para 4

175 Q60, [ISL0058](#)

176 Q59, [ISL0058](#)

'Preachers not Judges' by Hassan Al Hudaibi, the then-Supreme Guide of the Brotherhood, in 1969.<sup>177</sup> In their submission to this inquiry, the Muslim Brotherhood said of 'Preachers not Judges' that it:

Reasserted the central peaceful teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood. The book stresses that the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in society is to encourage people to reform and promote social justice, rather than acting as judges who condemn them. To date, this book remains central to the philosophy of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>178</sup>

99. The Centre on Religion & Geopolitics, an initiative of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, told us that there was not an "inevitable 'conveyor belt' from non-violent political Islam to militancy. Indeed, many Islamists travel 'the other way' to become democrats".<sup>179</sup> Nevertheless, its submission reported that:

Our research has identified a notable connection between the aims of Islamism and violent militancy...This relationship goes beyond the objectives of groups to the individual's route to violence. Our research has found that 51 per cent of a sample of prominent jihadis from the Middle East and Africa had clear links to non-violent Islamist organisations, before joining militant groups. Half of these had links to the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>180</sup>

### Ambiguities in the Muslim Brotherhood's rejections of violence

100. Ibrahim Mounir, the Deputy Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, told us that:

The position of the Muslim Brotherhood regarding using violence and/or arms in national resistance is unequivocal, unambiguous and unconditional; No violence shall be used or approved in the national effort for change. The position has been stated, re-stated and reiterated time and again by the Muslim Brotherhood; stemming from their understanding and appreciation of the true values, principles and teachings of Islam, violence is condemned and rejected in whatever form or method it occurs, whoever the perpetrators and whatever the motives.<sup>181</sup>

101. In the same letter, Mr Mounir nevertheless seemed to introduce a number of caveats:

- In answer to a question about whether affiliates of the Muslim Brotherhood fought against the regimes of Muammar Qadhafi in Libya and Bashar al-Assad by Syria, Mr Mounir offered the above rejection of violence. But he also concluded by saying "should a breach of this occur by any group or individual anywhere in response to provocation and abuse by a regime (such as those of Qadhafi and Assad), then it is a decision which is made by the group in that

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177 Dr Courtney Freer, for example, told us that "*Preachers not Judges*, made clear that "Sayyid Qutb represented himself alone and not the Muslim Brethren", [ISL0005](#), para 20.

178 [ISL0016](#), para 37

179 [ISL0046](#), para 15

180 [ISL0046](#), Executive Summary

181 [ISL0051](#), First Question

respective country, for which it shall bear sole responsibility".<sup>182</sup> The FCO told us that the Muslim Brotherhood's participation in the civil wars of Syria, Libya, Yemen had been only indirect, or ambivalent.<sup>183</sup>

- Discussing Hamas, Mr Mounir said that "the Muslim Brotherhood firmly believes that it is not acceptable to carry out any violent attacks outside Palestinian territories".<sup>184</sup> It is unclear how he defines "Palestinian territories", and it would seem to at least imply that violence within the Palestinian Territories was acceptable. Rather than offering an unequivocal rejection of violence used by Hamas, Mr Mounir said that violent acts should be condemned if they took place outside of the Geneva Conventions and UN Resolutions, and if they targeted civilians, among other restrictions.<sup>185</sup>

102. With regard to Sayyid Qutb, the Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review said that:

The leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood has never condoned or legitimised any interpretation of Syed Qutb's views which supports the use of violence.<sup>186</sup>

But Ibrahim Mounir told us that "the report [the Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review] referred to Sayyid Qutb as one who was calling for violence. Anyone who reads Qutb's books realises that this was not true."<sup>187</sup> As we argue above, there are violent elements within Qutb's philosophy, and these must be clearly identified and countered.

### 'Firewall' against extremism

103. Political-Islamists and their sympathisers argued that their emphasis on non-violence and democracy meant that, far from being a 'conveyor belt', political-Islamist groups acted as a 'firewall' against extremism.<sup>188</sup> Repressing them, they argued, was the true driver of extremism. Dr Rifai Sulaiman Lebbe told us that:

Isolation of democratic forces of political Islamic groups by successive British governments will give golden opportunities for the forces of extremist Islamic groups to indoctrinate youth and public in Muslim countries with their radical ideologies and staunch criticism of western social values and way of life. Extremism grows in Muslim world rapidly due to the fact that moderate voices have been suppressed in Muslim countries by both national and international political establishments.<sup>189</sup>

182 [ISL0051](#), First Question

183 [ISL0057](#), Q4

184 [ISL0051](#), Second Question

185 [ISL0051](#), Third Questions

186 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 41, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

187 Q59, [ISL0058](#)

188 The word "Firewall" has been used to characterise a concept that political-Islam plays an important role in counter-extremism and counter-terrorism. Although some political Islamists emphasised this concept, the word "firewall" itself has only been used in our evidence by those who are sceptical about the concept. See, for example, the use of the word by Mokhtar Awad in [ISL0035](#) and Steven Merley in [ISL0006](#). We use the word in our title neutrally, to discuss the concept.

189 [ISL0004](#)

Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the FCO, said:

Some Islamists have been locked out of the political process or subject to repression and that has caused a risk of previously peaceful individuals resorting to violence for political ends.<sup>190</sup>

104. Dr Anas Al-Tikriti rejected the 'conveyor belt' concept, arguing that those who want to commit violence cannot do so within the Muslim Brotherhood and are therefore forced to leave. He said that this should be taken as an indicator of the group's peacefulness.<sup>191</sup>

105. Basheer Nafi, a Senior Research Fellow at the Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, told us that few Brotherhood members had left the organisation to join jihadist groups, and that authoritarian government in the region was to blame for terrorism:

If Al-Qaeda and ISIS are the ones that are meant by the word "extremism", it is highly probable that neither of the two organizations managed to recruit any number worth mentioning from amongst the affiliates of the MB, whether from within the countries of the Muslim world or elsewhere.

The truth is that Jihadi-Salafism, and all the violent organizations that came out of its womb, were mainly the off-springs of the coup in Algeria, of the police state of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Syria's Bashar al-Assad and Iraq's Nuri al-Maliki.<sup>192</sup>

**106. Based on the experience of Tunisia, political Islam could in some countries be a way of providing a democratic alternative for political, social, and economic development and a counter-narrative against more extremist ideologies. However, there are cases where political Islamist groups have inspired individuals to commit violent acts; the fact that such individuals left the groups to do so does not excuse the groups from some responsibility for inspiring the individual in the first place. Nonetheless, the vast majority of political Islamists are involved in no violence whatsoever. Because of this, and because of their broader status as a 'firewall' against extremism, political Islamists have suffered criticism and attack from ISIL and other extremist organisations. No political movement can entirely control its individual members or supporters, particularly under extreme provocation. Incarceration of political activists without fair trial and the shutting down of political avenues to address grievances is likely to lead some to extremism. Political Islam is far from the only firewall, but in the Muslim World it is a vehicle through which a significant element of citizens can and should be able to address their grievances. The nature of Islam makes it more likely that religion and politics will remain overlapping for the foreseeable future, and emerging democratically accountable systems will need to accommodate this.**

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190 Q159

191 [ISL0012](#), para 18

192 [ISL0007](#), paras 4 and 5

## Victims of violence

107. Political Islamist parties have historically been repressed in the Middle East, and some continue to be today. The leader of the EnNahda party from Tunisia, Rached Ghannouchi, has written about how members of the movement had been imprisoned, tortured, discriminated against, and forced into exile prior to 2011.<sup>193</sup>

108. This treatment could be said to have included heavy-handed media intrusion during Mr Ghannouchi's exile in London, particularly by Independent Television News, for which the correspondent involved, now the honourable Member for Gravesham, took the opportunity to apologise to Mr Ghannouchi in person during our visit to Tunis in March 2016.

109. When responding to allegations of involvement with violence, the Muslim Brotherhood in particular emphasises that its members have been the victims of violence. Anas Altikriti told us that Islamist militant and extremist groups had targeted the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq and across the region.<sup>194</sup> The Brotherhood emphasises in particular that it has been intensively repressed in Egypt following its removal from power in Egypt in 2013. One aspect that the group highlights is that of mass detentions, trails, and death sentences against its members and perceived sympathisers. The Muslim Brotherhood told us (via its lawyers, ITN Solicitors) that 20,000 of its members were held in "illegal detention in Egypt, many of whom had been sentenced to death".<sup>195</sup> The group said that:

Disappearances, kidnappings and torture are routine and many hundreds of prisoners have been sentenced to death, without representation, in mass trials lacking any conventional norms of justice. President Morsi himself has been sentenced to death.<sup>196</sup>

Dr Gemal Heshmat, who was an FJP member of the Egyptian parliament that was elected in 2012, told us that 180 members who were elected to that parliament are now in prison in Egypt.<sup>197</sup> There is evidence that the violent victimization of the Brotherhood in Egypt continues in custody, both at the hands of prison officers and extremist fellow prisoners.<sup>198</sup>

110. The Muslim Brotherhood also emphasises the death toll among those who demonstrated against the removal of the group from power in 2013, as the Egyptian security forces dispersed their protests. The group's submission to the Muslim Brotherhood Review describes the clearing of the Rabaa al-Adawiya protest camp by the Egyptian security forces, on 14 August 2013, as "the worst incident of unlawful killing in Egypt's

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193 Foreign Affairs, [From Political Islam to Muslim Democracy: the Ennahda party and the future of Tunisia](#), 'Resistance and Renaissance'.

194 [ISL0012](#), para 13

195 [ISL0016](#), para 46

196 [ISL0016](#), para 5

197 [ISL0031](#)

198 See for instance <https://www.facebook.com/mohamed.aboelgheit/posts/10154352410678674>; <https://www.facebook.com/tigara.azhar/posts/913642512081497>. Reports of clashes between ISIL-supporting prisoners and Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated prisoners in the Tora prison have been challenged by the prison authorities: <https://goo.gl/EPTvHP>.

modern history”<sup>199</sup> and argues that “this single incident resulted in the death of over 1,000 civilians”.<sup>200</sup> The submission also describes other incidents of protesters being killed by the Egyptian security forces.<sup>201</sup>

111. The death toll figures from Rabaa al-Adawiya are disputed. Dr John Esposito, from Georgetown University, told us that:

According to the post-coup interim government’s statistics, 638 people were killed, 595 civilians and 43 police officers, and some 3,994 injured at Rabaa Square. However, other more independent estimates ranged from 2600 upwards dead and more than 4500 injured in what came to be called the Massacre at Rabaa Square.<sup>202</sup>

112. The Egyptian authorities say that the clearing of the protest camps was necessary to restore order, that the security forces attempted to do so peacefully, and that they were attacked by armed elements among the protesters.<sup>203</sup> This version of events is unsupported by independent analysis, and evidence of active preparations for mass casualties in advance of the clearance, as well as being refuted by the Muslim Brotherhood.

113. The FCO provided us with an account of the dialogue that it held, during the summer of 2013, to urge non-violence from all sides in Egypt and to try to avoid the violent dispersal of protests.<sup>204</sup> After the protests were violently dispersed, the FCO told us that it had urged the Egyptian Government to release the full report of the “Egyptian National Fact Finding Committee set up to investigate the events following Morsi’s removal”. The FCO said that it had “stressed the importance of accountability for the deaths that took place during the clearances at Rabaa”, and Tobias Ellwood MP told us that he “personally raised this issue with the Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry on 9 September 2015”.

**114. While some political-Islamist groups have failed to unequivocally condemn political violence in the region, they are notable among its historic and current victims. The FCO should highlight and condemn all human rights abuses, including those against political Islamists. The scale of political and civil turmoil in Egypt in recent years is unprecedented. The FCO must continue to do all it can to encourage the application of basic human and political rights in the country.**

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199 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 138, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

200 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 138, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

201 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 139, placed in the Parliamentary Archives.

202 [ISL0001](#), para 19

203 See, for example, the report '[The Egyptian Revolution Against the Muslim Brotherhood](#)', paras 283-303. This is part of a series of reports commissioned from '9 Bedford Row' by the State Lawsuit (Litigation) Authority of Egypt after the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood from power.

204 [ISL0057](#), Q6

## 6 The Muslim Brotherhood Review

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### Background

115. In April 2014, the former Prime Minister David Cameron commissioned the Muslim Brotherhood Review to assess 'the philosophy, activities, impact and influence on UK national interests, at home and abroad, of the Muslim Brotherhood, and of government policy towards the organisation'.<sup>205</sup> Sir John Jenkins, then a senior member of HM Diplomatic Service, led the Review<sup>206</sup> and assessed the international aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates overseas. Charles Farr, then a senior Home Office official, assessed the domestic aspects of the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates in the UK.<sup>207</sup> The 'Main Findings' of the Review were made public in December 2015.<sup>208</sup> Sir John Jenkins had originally been given the deadline of reporting to the Prime Minister by Parliament's summer recess of 2014,<sup>209</sup> and the Review was completed in July 2014.<sup>210</sup> The 'Main Findings' of the Review were made public in December 2015.<sup>211</sup>

**116. There was a delay of a year and a half between the completion of the Muslim Brotherhood Review in July 2014 and the publication of the Main Findings on 17 December 2015, the last day on which the House sat before the Christmas recess. *The Government should explain its handling of the Review after its completion.***

117. The full report of the Muslim Brotherhood Review was an internal report to the Prime Minister, and has not been made public. We have not been allowed to see the full report on the grounds that, as the former Prime Minister David Cameron told us, it contains "materiel provided by foreign Governments in the strictest confidence".<sup>212</sup> We have also not been allowed to see a redacted version because, Mr Cameron said, such material "is reflected throughout the Review and cannot be redacted".<sup>213</sup> Mr Cameron told us that "the Main Findings already in the public domain are comprehensive and representative"<sup>214</sup> and that they "accurately reflect our knowledge of the Muslim Brotherhood at the conclusion of the Review".<sup>215</sup>

**118. We were disappointed that the Government, despite two formal requests, did not see fit to provide the Committee with access to a full copy of the Muslim Brotherhood Review, even under controlled conditions; nor was it prepared to provide us with a redacted copy. This was an obvious hindrance to our scrutiny during this inquiry, as was the rejection of our request that Sir John Jenkins give oral evidence, on the grounds that the Minister and a serving official should answer our questions on the Review.**

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205 UK Government, [Government review of the Muslim Brotherhood](#), accessed 30 August 2016

206 UK Government, [Government review of the Muslim Brotherhood](#), accessed 30 August 2016

207 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#)

208 David Cameron, [Written statement on the Muslim Brotherhood Review](#)

209 UK Government, [Government review of the Muslim Brotherhood](#), accessed 30 August 2016

210 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#), para 6

211 David Cameron, [Written statement on the Muslim Brotherhood Review](#)

212 [ISL0053](#)

213 [ISL0054](#)

214 [ISL0053](#)

215 [ISL0054](#)

## Reactions to the Main Findings

### *Agreement with the Main Findings*

119. When asked whether the FCO agreed with all of the Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review, Tobias Ellwood MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the FCO, told us that “this report is now two years old”<sup>216</sup> but that “I do not have any reason to alter anything”.<sup>217</sup> The wording of the FCO’s written submission to our inquiry<sup>218</sup> closely matched a Ministerial Written Statement about the Muslim Brotherhood Review,<sup>219</sup> and the Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review,<sup>220</sup> both of which were submitted by the FCO as Annexes to its evidence.

120. Of those witnesses to our inquiry who commented on the Review, those who agreed with the Main Findings included Dr Ziya Meral,<sup>221</sup> Ed Husain,<sup>222</sup> Dr Machteld Zee,<sup>223</sup> Mokhtar Awad,<sup>224</sup> and the Community Security Trust (CST).<sup>225</sup>

### *Alleged misrepresentation of the Muslim Brotherhood*

121. A number of witnesses who commented on the Muslim Brotherhood Review were critical of the Main Findings. Speaking in general terms about the Findings, Dr Omar Ashour, from the University of Exeter, told us that: “sometimes they were not very nuanced and sometimes they were inaccurate”.<sup>226</sup> In particular, several witnesses felt that the Main Findings had mischaracterised the Muslim Brotherhood. For example:

- Alison Pargeter<sup>227</sup> and Courtney Freer<sup>228</sup> said that the Main Findings had over-emphasised the connection between the Muslim Brotherhood and violence. Mohamed Abdulmalek,<sup>229</sup> the spokesman for the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood, argued that the Findings failed to contextualise some of the past statements made by Muslim-Brotherhood leaders. Courtney Freer<sup>230</sup> also argued that the group’s international structure had been over-emphasised.

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216 Q191

217 Q192

218 [ISL0047](#), para 6

219 David Cameron, [Written statement on the Muslim Brotherhood Review](#) The statement said that: “Parts of the Muslim Brotherhood have a highly ambiguous relationship with violent extremism” and “the main findings of the review support the conclusion that membership of, association with, or influence by the Muslim Brotherhood should be considered as a possible indicator of extremism”.

220 Muslim Brotherhood Review, [Main Findings](#) The final bullet point of para 39 says that “aspects of Muslim Brotherhood ideology and tactics, in this country and overseas, are contrary to our values and have been contrary to our national interests and our national security”.

221 Q38

222 Q112 and Q113

223 Q112

224 Q112

225 [ISL0020](#), para 5, with regards to anti-Semitism.

226 Q39

227 [ISL0039](#), in relation to Egypt

228 Q39

229 [ISL0030](#), para 5

230 [ISL0005](#), para 16

- In its submission to our inquiry, the Muslim Brotherhood told us (via its lawyers, ITN Solicitors) that “the main findings as released present a complete misrepresentation of the Muslim Brotherhood and suggest that the findings were pre-ordained irrespective of the facts or evidence”.<sup>231</sup>

### *Undermining the UK's image abroad*

122. Several witnesses told us that the premise of the Muslim Brotherhood Review, and its Main Findings, would damage the image of the UK abroad. One of the specific objections was that the UK had held an inquiry into the Muslim Brotherhood's perceived practice of violence, but not the violence practiced against the Brotherhood following its removal from power in 2013. Alison Pargeter told us that:

The UK's decision to conduct this review and to focus on the Brotherhood and its relationship to violence (as opposed to its engagement in the political process) while failing to speak out more robustly against the atrocities being committed against the movement and its supporters by the current Egyptian regime is highly questionable. Its doing so has only compounded the view that is held widely throughout the region that the West prefers dealing with authoritarian regimes, that it is opposed to Islamism, and that its rhetoric on democracy and human rights is completely hollow.<sup>232</sup>

123. Speaking about the Muslim Brotherhood Review, Usaama Al-Azami, a PhD candidate from Princeton University, described “the widespread perception in the Muslim world that a clear double standard applies to democracy promotion when the democrats in question are Islamists.”<sup>233</sup> Dr A. Amr Darrag, a member of the Executive Board of the Freedom and Justice Party, complained of “double speak”<sup>234</sup> in the UK's foreign policy and Nezar Ghorab, a former member of the Egyptian parliament for the now-banned FJP, described the UK as having a “record of double standards”.<sup>235</sup>

124. We asked the FCO why the Main Findings of the Muslim Brotherhood Review discussed the relationship of the Muslim Brotherhood with violence, but made no mention of the violence perpetrated against the group, particularly (but not exclusively) in Egypt during the summer of 2013. The FCO told us that the Main Findings had made reference to violence against the Muslim Brotherhood by mentioning examples from the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>236</sup> With regards to events in Egypt in the summer of 2013, the FCO told us that:

The Review, as the then Prime Minister said when commissioning it, was about getting to grips with the background behind MB in order fully to understand the nature of the organisation and its implications for UK interests. That did not require an examination of events in Egypt following the fall of the Morsi Government.<sup>237</sup>

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231 [ISL0016](#), para 9

232 [ISL0039](#)

233 [ISL0048](#), para 26

234 [ISL0009](#), Executive summary

235 [ISL0025](#), para 9

236 [ISL0057](#), Q5

237 [ISL0057](#), Q5

125. We criticise the lack of transparency of the Muslim Brotherhood, but this criticism also applies to the Government's Review of the Muslim Brotherhood. The opacity of the process, the obvious charge around motivation for the Review, and the failure to publish it in full, left the Review's Main Findings wholly open to criticism. Given that the Review was led by one of the FCO's most senior diplomats, these shortfalls damaged the UK's reputation for fair dealing more generally. *The Government should immediately publish as much of the evidence given to the Muslim Brotherhood Review as possible, in the interest of transparency and the credibility of the process.*

126. The FCO told us that the Review was about "getting to grips with the background behind [the Muslim Brotherhood] in order fully to understand the nature of the organisation". Given this objective, it is rather more than unfortunate that the Main Findings neglected to mention the most significant event in the Brotherhood and Egypt's modern political history: its removal from power in Egypt (the Arab World's most populous state) in 2013, the year after being democratically elected, and through a military intervention.

127. Additionally, and although the Main Findings mentioned historic examples of the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, the FCO's assessment that understanding the Brotherhood "did not require" an examination of events following the removal of the group from power in Egypt—including the killing in August 2013 of large numbers of protesters who sympathised with the Brotherhood, and the continuing repression of the group in Egypt and elsewhere—is a glaring omission. *This violence and repression are clearly factors that affect how the Brotherhood behaves; the Review should have taken them into account when assessing the group, and the FCO should do so in the future.*

### **Perceived pressure from Gulf allies**

128. Political Islamists and their sympathisers believed that the UK had undertaken the Muslim Brotherhood Review to appease regional allies that had designated the Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation, principally Egypt,<sup>238</sup> the UAE,<sup>239</sup> and Saudi Arabia<sup>240</sup>. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood told us (via its lawyers, ITN Solicitors) that:

There was much speculation at the time that the Review had been ordered not as a result of any genuine security concerns about the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UK but rather in response to pressure exerted by the Saudis and other Gulf States who felt their own regimes were threatened by the rise of democracy in the Middle East and by the Muslim Brotherhood's role in those processes.<sup>241</sup>

129. This sentiment led some witnesses to conclude that the findings of the inquiry were pre-ordained, and not the result of an independent investigation. Dr Abdulmawgood

238 Egypt designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation in November 2013

239 The UAE designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation in November 2014

240 Saudi Arabia designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation in March 2014

241 [ISL0016](#), para 7

Dardery, a former member of the Egyptian Parliament for the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) of the Muslim Brotherhood, told us that the Review “was politically motivated and so it led to what it was intended for”.<sup>242</sup>

130. The Muslim Brotherhood emphasised that Sir John Jenkins had held the position of UK Ambassador to Saudi Arabia at the same time as the Review was being written, and led, by him. The Brotherhood said that:

Sir John’s position as head of the review might be seen by some as implying some wish on the part of the UK Government to reflect or appease views communicated by the government of Saudi Arabia.<sup>243</sup>

Lord Wright of Richmond, himself a former UK Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, has also questioned whether Sir John was put in an “invidious position” by being asked to lead the Review while concurrently serving as Ambassador, given that Saudi Arabia sought to “discredit and destroy the Muslim Brotherhood”.<sup>244</sup>

131. Some witnesses, who sympathised with political Islam, believe that the perceived deference of the UK to its Gulf allies took place for commercial reasons. For example, Dr Anas Altikriti told us that:

The appearance that Her Majesty’s Government was pandering to undemocratic, authoritarian regimes which had little or no regard for freedoms or human rights, was problematic to say the least. The fact that this pandering appeared to be for commercial and business interests, made the case even worse.<sup>245</sup>

**132. We have high regard for the work and impartiality of all UK diplomats. But, notwithstanding his knowledge, experience, and professional integrity, Sir John Jenkins’s concurrent service as UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia made his appointment to lead the Muslim Brotherhood Review misguided. It created the impression that a foreign state, which was an interested party, had a private window into the conduct of a UK Government inquiry. Whilst we have seen no evidence to suggest that Saudi Arabia was able to exercise undue influence over the report, the appointment of Sir John Jenkins created the perception that this was the case. This has undermined confidence in the impartiality of the FCO’s work on such an important and contentious subject.**

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242 [ISL0027](#), para 38

243 Submission from ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood, to the Muslim Brotherhood Review, para 187, placed in the Parliamentary Archives

244 House of Lords Hansard, Volume 753, 8 April 2014, [Muslim Brotherhood](#)

245 [ISL0012](#), para 22

## Conclusions and recommendations

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### Defining 'political Islam'

1. National circumstances are certainly a relevant factor for assessing political-Islamist groups, but it is also the case that some of the most significant recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region—from the Arab Spring to the spread of ISIL—show the power of ideas that cross national borders. Political Islamist groups in different countries influence one another, and share elements of political ideology and philosophy. (Paragraph 13)
2. *The FCO should supplement its country-specific framework for understanding 'political Islam' with a thematic basis for analysis, which forms policies towards common global, regional, and political ideologies as well as individual countries.* (Paragraph 13)

### Our definition of 'political Islam'

3. We have identified three values that should guide the degree of positive engagement with groups and parties in the MENA region. These values should be applied to political Islamists, but they should also be a benchmark for assessing all political philosophies on an equal basis globally, with the same standards being applied to the Islamists as to all other ideologies in terms of what behaviour is acceptable to the UK and what is not.
  - i) Participation in, and preservation of, democracy. Support for democratic culture, including a commitment to give up power after an election defeat.
  - ii) An interpretation of faith that protects the rights, freedoms, and social policies that are broadly congruent with UK values.
  - iii) Non-violence, as a fundamental and unambiguous commitment.

The aim of this inquiry is to assess the extent that 'political Islamists' fulfil these criteria, and to assess against these criteria the policies and practices of the FCO towards these groups. (Paragraph 17)

4. We partially agree with the FCO's definition of 'political Islam'. We agree with their definition of it as a broad phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of different beliefs, but believe that groups engaged in illegal violence should be included in the definition despite them being excluded from overt engagement with the UK Government. The FCO should use more precise language to differentiate between different types of political Islamist. The FCO told us that there is one form of Islamism that embraces "democratic principles and liberal values", and another form of Islamism that instead holds "intolerant, extremist views". (Paragraph 18)
5. *We consider it inappropriate to place these two types of Islamism within the same, single category and—if the FCO wishes to encourage Islamist groups towards democracy, non-violence, and a flexible interpretation of their faith—then we recommend that it devises a vocabulary that doesn't group these types together.* (Paragraph 18)

6. *As the FCO told us, an effective strategy for countering Islamist extremism is vital for the UK's national interests. But, in addition to outlining the ideologies that the UK is determined to oppose in the MENA region, the FCO should likewise make a clear case for the political philosophies that the UK will commit to engage with. We suggest the above three criteria as a basis for doing so. (Paragraph 19)*

### Democracy and elections: Winning elections

7. Political Islamists self-identifying as democrats have embraced elections as a mechanism for contesting and winning power. (Paragraph 27)
8. *They should be allowed to freely participate in democratic processes, and the FCO should use the ability of political Islamists to take part as one of the key criteria for defining free elections in the MENA region. (Paragraph 27)*

### Democratic culture: sharing power

9. In their definitions of democracy, political Islamists have sometimes emphasised a highly mechanical understanding that equates democracy with elections, and reduces elections to an outcome of 'winners' and 'losers'. There is a risk that this definition fails to take sufficient account of broader aspects of democratic culture, such as power sharing and inclusive governance. In terms of how they have behaved in power, some political-Islamist parties—especially EnNahda in Tunisia—have shown a greater acceptance of broader democratic culture, including a commitment to give up power after an election defeat. (Paragraph 37)
10. *The FCO should encourage a broader understanding of democracy, and condemn majoritarian and exclusionary practices whether they are committed by Islamists, their opponents, or other governments. (Paragraph 37)*

### Democracy and checking power

11. *The FCO should have made clearer its concerns over the incompetent, non-inclusive, and narrow nature and behaviour of President Mohamed Morsi's government in Egypt. The FCO should also condemn the influence of the military in politics as contrary to UK values. The FCO should not let itself be seen as justifying the way in which the FJP was removed from power in Egypt, and it should be forthright in highlighting to the Egyptian Government the contradictions inherent in forcibly excluding the Muslim Brotherhood from taking part in democratic processes. (Paragraph 42)*

### Transparency of organisation, and internal structures

12. The repression that the Brotherhood has faced in Egypt, and other parts of the Middle East, makes the group unlikely to be fully transparent about its structure and operations. We have found the Muslim Brotherhood to be a secretive organisation, but not a secret one. (Paragraph 45)

13. *The secretiveness of some political-Islamist groups makes it important for the FCO to have a clear understanding of them, and the resources to enable it to do so. (Paragraph 45)*
14. The Muslim Brotherhood has a highly defined organisational structure at both a local and national level in Egypt. But the Muslim Brotherhood told us that, incongruously, its international structure comprises a loose and vague affiliation of like-minded groups. The ambiguity of this international structure makes it more difficult to tell which groups around the world are Muslim Brotherhood. (Paragraph 55)

### Transparency of messaging: Arabic and English

15. In terms of their messaging, we have seen evidence that some political Islamist groups vary their message to different audiences and, in particular, that they vary content depending on whether the message is in English or Arabic. This is hardly a trait confined to political Islamists alone. But, in some communications, particularly from the Muslim Brotherhood, the English and Arabic messages have proved contradictory. (Paragraph 60)
16. *In future, the FCO should take account of this in its dealings with, and analysis of, the Muslim Brotherhood's communications in different languages in order to assess the sincerity of their public statements. (Paragraph 60)*
17. Some statements by the Muslim Brotherhood to us in English gave the impression of reluctance to offer a straight answer to questions, or of playing defensive rhetorical games with fundamental rights. (Paragraph 62)
18. *The FCO is correct to judge these groups on the basis of both their words and their actions. The FCO must be provided with sufficient resources to maintain the capabilities—particularly in linguistics training and translation—that are necessary to identify when the messaging of political-Islamist groups diverges between different languages. (Paragraph 62)*

### Pragmatic policies

19. Political Islamists have varied in the policies they have pursued in power. Some have been very pragmatic. Others have been more dogmatic. The PJD in Morocco and EnNahda in Tunisia have generally articulated their Islamist ideology in a broad sense, through the promotion of welfare policies. Fears over the introduction of a restrictive interpretation of 'Islamic law' by the FJP in Egypt were based on both speculation about the future and on experience. (Paragraph 74)
20. *The FCO should see the pragmatism of some political-Islamist parties as an opportunity to engage with them, and to influence their current trajectory, as well as considering their future intentions. (Paragraph 74)*
21. We assess that exposure to free and fair elections, the need to appeal to a broad range of the electorate in order to win elections, and the need to work with other political perspectives in order to govern effectively, will serve to encourage political-

Islamist groups to adopt a more pragmatic ideology, and an increasingly flexible interpretation of their Islamic references. Moves by them towards embracing certain universal human rights may be slower, and more tentative. (Paragraph 75)

22. *The FCO should do all it can to hasten this process, in keeping with its global commitment to defending human rights.* (Paragraph 75)

### An evolving policy debate

23. *The FCO should encourage political-Islamist groups to accept an interpretation of faith that protects the rights, freedoms, and social policies that are congruent with UK values, with the EnNahda party in Tunisia being a prime example of one that has moved in this direction. The FCO is also right to look for indications that political Islamists may act to undermine these values. But it should also hold all governments—in the Middle East and North Africa, and around the world—to the same standards, regardless of their ideology.* (Paragraph 81)

### Involvement in violence and terrorism

24. The UK has not designated the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation, and we agree with this decision. The Muslim Brotherhood states that it does not aspire to achieve its goals through violence. But we note the Government believes that the group might be willing to consider violence where gradualism is ineffective. However, the evidence so far in Egypt is that if the Muslim Brotherhood supported or condoned violence, then Egypt would be a far more violent place today. (Paragraph 86)

### 'Firewall' against extremism

25. Based on the experience of Tunisia, political Islam could in some countries be a way of providing a democratic alternative for political, social, and economic development and a counter-narrative against more extremist ideologies. However, there are cases where political Islamist groups have inspired individuals to commit violent acts; the fact that such individuals left the groups to do so does not excuse the groups from some responsibility for inspiring the individual in the first place. Nonetheless, the vast majority of political Islamists are involved in no violence whatsoever. Because of this, and because of their broader status as a 'firewall' against extremism, political Islamists have suffered criticism and attack from ISIL and other extremist organisations. No political movement can entirely control its individual members or supporters, particularly under extreme provocation. Incarceration of political activists without fair trial and the shutting down of political avenues to address grievances is likely to lead some to extremism. Political Islam is far from the only firewall, but in the Muslim World it is a vehicle through which a significant element of citizens can and should be able to address their grievances. The nature of Islam makes it more likely that religion and politics will remain overlapping for the foreseeable future, and emerging democratically accountable systems will need to accommodate this. (Paragraph 106)

### Victims of violence

26. While some political-Islamist groups have failed to unequivocally condemn political violence in the region, they are notable among its historic and current victims. (Paragraph 114)
27. *The FCO should highlight and condemn all human rights abuses, including those against political Islamists. The scale of political and civil turmoil in Egypt in recent years is unprecedented. The FCO must continue to do all it can to encourage the application of basic human and political rights in the country.* (Paragraph 114)

### The Muslim Brotherhood Review

28. There was a delay of a year and a half between the completion of the Muslim Brotherhood Review in July 2014 and the publication of the Main Findings on 17 December 2015, the last day on which the House sat before the Christmas recess. (Paragraph 116)
29. *The Government should explain its handling of the Review after its completion.* (Paragraph 116)
30. We were disappointed that the Government, despite two formal requests, did not see fit to provide the Committee with access to a full copy of the Muslim Brotherhood Review, even under controlled conditions; nor was it prepared to provide us with a redacted copy. This was an obvious hindrance to our scrutiny during this inquiry, as was the rejection of our request that Sir John Jenkins give oral evidence, on the grounds that the Minister and a serving official should answer our questions on the Review. (Paragraph 118)

### Reactions to the Main Findings

31. We criticise the lack of transparency of the Muslim Brotherhood, but this criticism also applies to the Government's Review of the Muslim Brotherhood. The opacity of the process, the obvious charge around motivation for the Review, and the failure to publish it in full, left the Review's Main Findings wholly open to criticism. Given that the Review was led by one of the FCO's most senior diplomats, these shortfalls damaged the UK's reputation for fair dealing more generally. (Paragraph 125)
32. *The Government should immediately publish as much of the evidence given to the Muslim Brotherhood Review as possible, in the interest of transparency and the credibility of the process.* (Paragraph 125)
33. The FCO told us that the Review was about "getting to grips with the background behind [the Muslim Brotherhood] in order fully to understand the nature of the organisation". Given this objective, it is rather more than unfortunate that the Main Findings neglected to mention the most significant event in the Brotherhood and Egypt's modern political history: its removal from power in Egypt (the Arab World's most populous state) in 2013, the year after being democratically elected, and through a military intervention. (Paragraph 126)

34. Additionally, and although the Main Findings mentioned historic examples of the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, the FCO's assessment that understanding the Brotherhood "did not require" an examination of events following the removal of the group from power in Egypt—including the killing in August 2013 of large numbers of protesters who sympathised with the Brotherhood, and the continuing repression of the group in Egypt and elsewhere—is a glaring omission. (Paragraph 127)
35. *This violence and repression are clearly factors that affect how the Brotherhood behaves; the Review should have taken them into account when assessing the group, and the FCO should do so in the future.* (Paragraph 127)
36. We have high regard for the work and impartiality of all UK diplomats. But, notwithstanding his knowledge, experience, and professional integrity, Sir John Jenkins's concurrent service as UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia made his appointment to lead the Muslim Brotherhood Review misguided. It created the impression that a foreign state, which was an interested party, had a private window into the conduct of a UK Government inquiry. Whilst we have seen no evidence to suggest that Saudi Arabia was able to exercise undue influence over the report, the appointment of Sir John Jenkins created the perception that this was the case. This has undermined confidence in the impartiality of the FCO's work on such an important and contentious subject. (Paragraph 132)

# Formal Minutes

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**Tuesday 1 November 2016**

Members present:

Crispin Blunt, in the Chair

Ann Clwyd

Ian Murray

Mike Gapes

Andrew Rosindell

Stephen Gethins

Nadhim Zahawi

Daniel Kawczynski

Draft Report (*'Political Islam', and the Muslim Brotherhood Review*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 132 read and agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That supplementary memoranda from Rt Hon David Cameron, the Al-Nour Party, the Strong Egypt Party and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the translation commissioned from Merrill Brink, be reported to the House for publication on the internet.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 8 November at 2.15 pm]

## Witnesses

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The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Tuesday 10 May 2016

*Question number*

**Dr Omar Ashour**, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, **Dr Courtney Freer**, Research Officer, Middle East Centre, London School of Economics, and **Ziya Meral**, Resident Fellow, Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research

[Q1–40](#)

### Tuesday 7 June 2016

**Ibrahim Mounir**, Deputy Supreme Guide, Muslim Brotherhood, **Dr Anas Altikriti**, Chief Executive Officer and founder, Cordoba Foundation, **Dr Radwan Masmoudi**, adviser to Rached Ghannouchi, President of the EnNahda party, Tunisia, and **Sondos Asem**, former Foreign Media Co-ordinator at the Office of President Mohamed Morsi, Egypt

[Q41–105](#)

### Tuesday 12 July 2016

**Mokhtar Awad**, Research Fellow, George Washington University, **Ed Husain**, Senior Adviser, Centre on Religion and Geopolitics, and **Dr Machteld Zee**, Research Fellow, Henry Jackson Society

[Q106–153](#)

### Wednesday 14 September 2016

**Tobias Ellwood MP**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and **Neil Crompton**, Director, Middle East and North Africa, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Q154–202](#)

## Published written evidence

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The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

ISL numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Abdur Razzaq, Jamaat-e-Islami ([ISL0024](#))
- 2 Al-Nour Party ([ISL0055](#))
- 3 APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief ([ISL0023](#))
- 4 Averroes ([ISL0045](#))
- 5 Bait Al Amanah (House of Trust) ([ISL0014](#))
- 6 Basheer Nafi ([ISL0007](#))
- 7 British Muslim Initiative ([ISL0002](#))
- 8 Centre for eradication of Muslim Radicalism ([ISL0004](#))
- 9 Centre on Religion and Geopolitics (CRG) ([ISL0046](#))
- 10 Community Security Trust (CST) ([ISL0020](#))
- 11 Conflicts Forum ([ISL0040](#))
- 12 Rt Hon David Cameron ([ISL0053](#))
- 13 Rt Hon David Cameron ([ISL0054](#))
- 14 Dr A Amr Darrag ([ISL0009](#))
- 15 Dr Abdulmawgood Dardery ([ISL0027](#))
- 16 Dr Anas Altikriti ([ISL0049](#))
- 17 Dr Barbara Zollner ([ISL0043](#))
- 18 Dr Courtney Freer ([ISL0005](#))
- 19 Dr Gamal Heshmat ([ISL0031](#))
- 20 Dr John Esposito ([ISL0001](#))
- 21 Dr Matthew Nelson ([ISL0013](#))
- 22 Dr Radwan Masmoudi ([ISL0052](#))
- 23 EnNahda Party ([ISL0022](#))
- 24 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([ISL0047](#))
- 25 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([ISL0057](#))
- 26 Guney Yildiz ([ISL0044](#))
- 27 Ibrahim Mounir ([ISL0051](#))
- 28 ITN Solicitors on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood ([ISL0016](#))
- 29 Merrill Brink ([ISL0058](#))
- 30 Mr Ehsan Siddiq ([ISL0034](#))
- 31 Mr Mohamed Abdul Malek ([ISL0030](#))
- 32 Mr Mohamed Soudan ([ISL0026](#))
- 33 Mr Steven Merley ([ISL0006](#))

- 34 Mr Ziya Meral ([ISL0042](#))
- 35 Mrs Alison Pargeter ([ISL0039](#))
- 36 Nermeen Abdelbary ([ISL0029](#))
- 37 Nezar Ghorab ([ISL0025](#))
- 38 Professor Noha Mellor ([ISL0003](#))
- 39 Program on Extremism at George Washington University ([ISL0035](#))
- 40 Sondos Asem ([ISL0041](#))
- 41 Sondos Asem ([ISL0050](#))
- 42 Strong Egypt Party ([ISL0056](#))
- 43 The Cordoba Foundation ([ISL0012](#))
- 44 The Counter Extremism Project UK ([ISL0011](#))
- 45 University of Westminster ([ISL0037](#))
- 46 Usaama al-Azami ([ISL0048](#))
- 47 Wael Haddara Former Senior Advisor to President Morsi ([ISL0010](#))

## Unpublished written evidence

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The following written evidence has been reported to the House, but has not been published. Copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library, where they may be inspected by Members. Other copies are in the Parliamentary Archives, and are available to the public for inspection. Requests to inspect them should be addressed to The Parliamentary Archives, Houses of Parliament, London SW1A 0PW (tel. 020 7219 3074). Opening hours are from 9.30am to 5.00pm on Mondays to Fridays.

- 1 "Submission of the Muslim Brotherhood to the Muslim Brotherhood Review" submitted by Tayab Ali, Partner, ITN Solicitors, on behalf of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and the Freedom and Justice Party (ISL0017)
- 2 "Notes on Political Islam" submitted by Michael Marcusa, doctoral candidate, Brown University (ISL0038)
- 3 Memorandum for Presentation to Prime Minister Dr Hazem El-Beblawy concerning "the legal grounds for the Council of Ministers to declare the Brotherhood Group a 'terrorist organisation'" submitted by the Egyptian Embassy in London (no number)
- 4 "A statement by the Umma's scholars on the crimes perpetrated by the coup in Egypt and the duty towards the coup" submitted by the Egyptian Embassy in London (no number)

## List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

### Session 2015–16

First Report	The FCO and the 2015 Spending Review	HC 467 (HC 816)
Second Report	The extension of offensive British military operations to Syria	HC 457
Third Report	The UK's role in the war against ISIL following the Cessation of Hostilities in Syria in February 2016	HC 683
Fourth Report	The FCO's administration and funding of its human rights work overseas	HC 860
Fifth Report	Implications of the referendum on EU membership for the UK's role in the world	HC 545
First Special Report	The FCO and the 2015 Spending Review: Government response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2015–16	HC 816

### Session 2016–17

First Report	The UK's role in the economic war against ISIL	HC 121 (HC 680)
Second Report	Equipping the Government for Brexit	HC 431
Third Report	Libya: Examination of intervention and collapse and the UK's future policy options	HC 119
Fourth Report	The use of UK-manufactured arms in Yemen	HC 688
Fifth Report	The future operations of BBC Monitoring	HC 732
First Special Report	The UK's role in the war against ISIL following the Cessation of Hostilities in Syria in February 2016: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2015–16	HC 209
Second Special Report	The FCO's administration and funding of its human rights work overseas: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2015–16	HC 545
Third Special Report	The UK's role in the economic war against ISIL: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2016–17	HC 680