

Clarification

It is rather unfortunate that with the verdict of the tragic and brutal killing of the late Lee Rigby, the media has begun sensationalising and implicating people, including myself. In this instance, they are unnecessarily attributing a quote to me which was made in 2006 following the 7/7 attacks which has nothing to do with the killing of Lee Rigby.

The quote has been misused to say that I am encouraging people to carry out terrorist attacks when in essence, this is very far from the truth. The truth of the matter is that the whole purpose of the lecture from which the quote had been taken, was to condemn the 7/7 attacks as a terrorist act where I had been informing and making it clear to those in attendance not to get involved in terrorist activities such as those which had taken place or any other for that matter and making it clear that there is no 'Jihad' taking place here in the UK and that these acts were unacceptable.

It is for this reason that the Federation of Students Islamic Societies stated the following in addressing the issue at the time when the quote was first reported:

"Some of the comments that have been attributed within the article, have been deliberately taken out of context to push a certain viewpoint, rather than present a balanced picture. An example of this was the misquotation of Imam Shakeel Begg who was actually delivering a talk on the illegitimate nature of terrorist activities that have taken place in recent years, which was overlooked by the article" (<http://media.fosis.org.uk/press-releases/168-fosis-reiterates-stance-on-extremism-on-campuses>).

It can be categorically stated that I have never supported terrorist activities in any way, shape or form. My standpoint has always been consistent as can be found in the responses from myself and the Lewisham Islamic Centre following 9/11, 7/7 and the Woolwich Attack wherein we condemned each of these atrocities.

The concept of 'Life' in Islam is sacred one and to kill a person unjustly is like killing the whole of humanity as Allah states in the Qur'an: "*Whosoever kills a soul unjustly it is like he has killed all of humanity and whosoever saves a life it is like saving the whole of humanity*".

I hope this has clarified my stance and it is hoped that the media will now stop misquoting me. I urge them to report on issues sensibly and avoid sensationalism.

Imam Shakeel Begg