

IMPACT: The Quilliam Foundation is a “counter-extremism” think-tank that has worked with a number of individuals and organizations that promote anti-Muslim views. The organization has called for tougher action on “non-violent extremism” and supports CVE policies, which many civil rights organizations state are based on faulty science and only seek to criminalize and securitize Muslims. The think-tank shut down in April 2021 citing “lack of funds.”

- The Quilliam Foundation was founded in London in 2007 by [Ed Husain](#) and [Maajid Nawaz](#). It [describes](#) itself as the **“world’s first counter-extremism organization”** that aims “to tackle extremism of all kinds.” One area of Quilliam’s [focus](#) is “emphasizing the difference between Islamism and Islam.” Quilliam defines [Islamism](#) as “a political ideology that seeks to impose itself on society.” In September 2017, it announced the [launch](#) of its North America office.
- Quilliam has [historically supported](#) the U.K. government’s [Prevent strategy](#), with Nawaz [publicly](#) taking credit for helping the Prime Minister with the program. The strategy was introduced by the British government as part of post-9/11 policies aimed at preventing “[radicalization](#).” **Prevent has been criticized by government officials, human rights experts, academics, teachers, and community organizers for securitizing and criminalizing Muslims. It has also influenced the United States’s Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program.** Nawaz has [lashed out](#) at the ‘preventing Prevent lobby’” accusing them of being “committed to undermining any form of counter extremism strategy.” New York University professor Arun Kundnani has [stated](#) that **Prevent is “being used to gather intelligence about innocent people who are not suspected of involvement in terrorism.”**
- In August 2017, Quilliam’s North America director [revealed](#) that it will be “assisting in the efforts with [Masjid Muhammad](#)...as they find credible, tangible ways to combat violent extremism.” The D.C.-based Masjid is one of the [recipients](#) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [CVE grants](#).
- Quilliam has **“long argued for a tougher line on non-violent extremism.”** In 2015, Quilliam’s Managing Director Haras Rafiq, [criticized the Prevent strategy for not doing enough](#), stating the U.K. has “half a prevent strategy,” and that “we don’t have a strategy preventing people from radicalization in the first place.”
- A 2017 *BuzzFeed News* [investigation](#) revealed that Quilliam’s former [Head of Outreach and Training Unit and Manager](#), Ghaffar Hussain, **had sent tips to Breitbart’s Milo Yiannopoulos, which “immediately led to a story on Breitbart.”** Hussain currently serves as the Prevent manager for London borough of Newham. Newham’s Muslim community leaders have [voiced](#) their criticism of the Prevent strategy, which has been [described](#) as a “serious risk of human rights violations and is also counterproductive.”
- Quilliam has stated its [funding](#) comes from “private individual donations, private philanthropic foundations and trust grants.” In 2009 [testimony](#) before the House of Commons, **Ed Husain stated the think-tank received £850,000 per year from the British government.** In 2011, Quilliam [stated](#) that since 2008 it had received **“a total of only £2.7 million from the British government for all its work in the UK, Pakistan and elsewhere.”**
- A 2016 [investigation](#) found that **Sam Harris, who has stated “we are war with Islam,” and supported the profiling of Muslims, gave Quilliam \$20,000.** Sam Harris and Quilliam’s head, Nawaz, also co-authored a book in 2015 called [Islam and the Future of Tolerance: A Dialogue](#).
- The same investigation revealed that [Quilliam](#) **“has received over a million dollars in funding from an American conservative philanthropic organization, with close ties to the Tea Party and extreme right-wing Christian networks.”**

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- In 2013, the [Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation](#) gave Quilliam [\\$75,000](#). **The Center for American Progress's report, [Fear, Inc. 2.0](#), lists the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation as part of the "Islamophobia network" as it also funds the [David Horowitz Freedom Center](#) and the [Center for Security Policy](#).**
- Quilliam also [received](#) a **grant totaling \$1,080,997 from the [John Templeton Foundation](#)**, covering the period from September 2014 to June 2017. A 2015 peer-reviewed study [concluded](#) that the **Templeton Foundation was a "key player in the funding of right-wing organizations."**
- In 2011, the same year the organization [lost funding](#) from the British Home Office, **Quilliam was registered in California under the agent [Michael Davidson](#), the CEO of Gen Next**. In 2005, anti-Muslim speaker [Ann Coulter](#) praised Davidson, [calling](#) him the **pioneer of "the new McCarthyism."** Davidson also [serves](#) on Quilliam's U.S. Board of Directors.
- Gen Next, Google Ideas, and the London-based [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#) (ISD) **partnered together to create counter-extremism programs** including [Against Violent Extremism](#) (AVE) and the [Strong Cities Network](#). **Quilliam's senior researcher [Usama Hasan](#) and director [Maajid Nawaz](#) are among those featured on AVE**. Over [21 civil rights and civil liberties](#) organizations **expressed their concerns regarding the Strong Cities Network**, citing that such [CVE programs](#) end up "stigmatizing Muslim communities as suspicious" and "threaten freedoms of speech, association, and religion."
- In 2010, a *Guardian* article [revealed](#) that **a document prepared by Quilliam was sent to a top British security official, accusing a number of "Muslim groups, politicians, a television channel and a Scotland Yard unit of sharing the ideology of terrorists."** The document entitled, "[Preventing terrorism; where next for Britain?](#)", lists alleged extremist sympathisers, including the Muslim Council of Britain.
- Quilliam has previously [worked](#) with the [Henry Jackson Society](#), a think tank whose Associate Director, [Douglas Murray](#), **published in June 2017 a piece in *The Sun*, declaring that the UK needs "less Islam."** Additionally, Murray has stated that "Conditions for [Muslims in Europe](#) must be made harder across the board." He has also described Islamophobia as "[a crock](#)."
- Quilliam has worked with the [Gatestone Institute](#), which *The Intercept* [states](#) "publishes a steady flow of inflammatory content," "focused on stoking fears about immigrants and Muslims." In 2015, **Quilliam signed on to a full page advert in the *New York Times*, taken out by Gatestone, calling on Muslims to condemn worldwide violence and implying that the explanation for such violence was Islam**. Muslim groups and others criticize this claim that Muslims should do more to condemn terrorism, saying that this narrative overlooks both the fact that Muslims do [condemn terrorism](#), and that they [shouldn't have to](#).
- In October 2013, Quilliam organized a [press conference](#) alongside Tommy Robinson and his cousin, Kevin Carroll. Robinson and Carroll at the time were part of the far-right [English Defense League](#) (EDL). At the press conference, **Robinson stepped down as the head of EDL, a move which Quilliam took credit for. In 2015 Robinson alleged that Quilliam had paid him "thousands of pounds to resign."** Robinson [stated](#) the money went to pay "my wife's rent and help with basic bills, [and] in return Tommy Robinson would be their poster boy." In 2016, Robinson helped [set up](#) the [UK](#) arm of [Pegida](#), the pan-European anti-Islam movement.
- Quilliam's senior researcher, Usama Hasan, is listed as one of the [founders](#) of the Muslim Reform Movement, a global coalition of reformers who want to "[take back the faith](#)." Other individuals in the movement include [Asra Nomani](#) and [Zuhdi Jasser](#). In 2015, Hasan gave a detailed [interview](#) to the [Clarion Project](#) about the "global struggle against Islamism." In the piece, he did not dispute the misinformation in the interviewer's [claim](#) that the Council on American Islamic Relations' (CAIR) "long term goal" is to "impose sharia law." The Clarion Project is

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listed as an organization in the [Islamophobia network](#), and has [published](#) a vast array of anti-Muslim material.

- In 2018, **Quilliam published a report entitled, “Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation – Dissecting Grooming Gangs,” which claimed that 84% of grooming gang offenders are [South] Asian**, the majority “of Pakistani origin with Muslim heritage,” **amplifying a far-right trope** and “cementing the narrative of an ‘epidemic’ of [South] Asian grooming gangs.” The report played into the stereotype that it’s the “culture” of Muslim communities that cause this problem. In response to this report, **Dr. Ella Cockbain, a lecturer in security and crime science and an expert on child sexual exploitation, noted that it was “a case study in bad science: riddled with errors, inconsistencies, a glaring lack of transparency, sweeping claims and gross generalisations unfounded its own ‘data’.”** A December 2020 [piece](#) in the *Guardian* by Cockbain and Dr. Waqas Tufail stated that while the “horrific and widely reported crimes committed in places such as Rochdale, Oxford and Telford were real,” Quilliam’s “racist stereotyping and demonisation deflected from that.” In December 2020, the **Home office released a report concluding there was “no credible evidence” for this claim** and that in reality the “majority of child sexual abuse gangs are made up of white men under the age of 30.”
- In June 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) issued an [apology](#) and agreed to a \$3.375 million settlement with Nawaz and Quilliam for including them on its list of “anti-Muslim extremists.”
- On **April 7, 2021, Nawaz released a statement on Twitter announcing the closure of Quilliam**, stating “Due to the hardship of maintaining a non-profit during Covid lockdowns, we took the tough decision to close Quilliam down for good.” After this, **Quilliam’s website and Twitter account were taken down**. In an April 2021 *Al Jazeera* [piece](#), Malia Bouattia reflected on Quilliam’s closure and [wrote](#) that “for 13 years Quilliam reinforced the idea that Muslims are a suspect community and supported the draconian “counter-terrorism” policies being pushed by the government.”
- Following this announcement, many took to social media questioning the lack of funds claim given that the group won \$3.375 million in 2018. In an investigative piece for *Byline Times*, Brian Cathcart asked where the settlement money went as he “examined the publicly available financial records for Quilliam in both the UK and the US and could find no clear evidence that the \$3.375 million found its way into the Quilliam coffers.”