بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Shi'a Muslim Council
Interim Working Committee

ORGANISATIONS' CONSULTATION DOCUMENT
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The proposed creation of a unified umbrella organisation to represent Shi'a Muslims in the United Kingdom

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Preamble and Introduction – What is all this about?

The creation of a united body to represent the interests and welfare of all Shi'a Muslim organisations within the U.K. has for a long time been the aspiration of many. The aim of such a formation would be to unify**,** develop and enhance the Shi'a Muslim community such that its members recognise and aid one another, becoming an integral community that is able to contribute not only to its own progression, but also to that of society in general.

Following a series of meetings held during 2006 in London and Birmingham between various Shi'a Muslim organisations, which included 'ulema, youth, intellectuals and professionals, it was proposed that now was the time to form an establishment which would **not** represent Shi'a Muslims by ethnicity, political inclination or nationality but by our ultimate identity: followers of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). The organisations that supported these meetings include: Abrar Foundation, Al Khoei Foundation, Al Khoei Islamic Centre, Al Mahdi Institute, Alulbayt (a.s.) Foundation, Bilal Cultural Centre, Council of European Jamaats, Husayniyyah Rasool A'zam - London, Imam Ali Foundation, Imam Hussein Foundation, International College for Islamic Studies, Islamic Centre of England, Islamic College for Advanced Studies, Islamic Thought, Islamic Unity Society, Islamic Universal Association, Jamaat Ulema, Majlis e Ulama, Markaz al Tafkeef Islami, Rasool A'zam – Birmingham, Shabab al Mahdi, The Saviour Foundation, The World Federation of KSIMC and the World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League**.** This list is by no means final, and continues to grow each day.

In order to further the above aim, and building upon previous work, an Interim Working Committee for the formation of a Shi'a Muslim Council was created at a meeting held in Birmingham on Sunday 18th June 2006. A full list of the committee members can be found overleaf. The aim of this committee is simple; to engage in a consultation process, region by region, with all Shi'a Muslim organisations, and to work with them towards the eventual formation of a Shi'a Muslim Council. The ethos behind this paper is to gain your views on the formation of such an umbrella organisation, and to ensure that the formation of such a body is achieved through a fair, representative and electoral process. This consultation document has been sent to all Shi'a Ithna-Asheri organisations and interested individuals within the Shi'a Ithna-Asheri Muslim community in the U.K. for their valued input. Indeed, by consultation their views can be heard and given due recognition.

In the following pages, you should find several sections, each one pertaining to an important issue relating to the formation of an umbrella organisation. Please complete each and every section.

We look forward to your suggestions, input and involvement, which we regard as most valuable. Indeed with mutual cooperation, dedication and perseverance we shall together be able to bring forth the true spirit of Islam and noble teachings of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

Please return the completed Consultation Document no later than 30th November 2007. A self-addressed envelope has been provided for your convenience.

End of preamble – please turn over

SHIA MUSLIM COUNCIL
INTERIM WORKING COMMITTEE

- Mr. Ahmad Ahmadi

- Mr. Aftab Ahmed

- Mr. Hamid Ali

- Ms. Sadaf Ali

- Ms. Fatema Dossa

- Dr. Mohamed Haidar - **Committee Appointed Umbrella Organisations Coordinator**

- Dr. Ali Hussaini

- Sheikh Arif Hussein

- Mr. Ali Ridha Jaffar - **Committee Appointed Central Coordinator**

- Sayyed Hussain Jawid

- Ms. Sabira Lakha

- Mr. Shabbir Lakha

- Mrs. S. Musarrat

- Dr. Syed Zafar Haidar Naqavi

- Mr. Hashim Nawrozzadeh - **Committee Appointed Regional Coordinator**

- Sheikh Ayub Rashid

- Mr. Munawer Rattansey

- Dr. Sajjad Rizvi

- Mr. Qalab Shah

- Sayyed Saeed Khalkhali - **Formally invited observer**

- Dr. Zuhair Olyabek - **Formally invited observer**

ORGANISATIONS' CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

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Part A – Your Details

The purpose of part A is to ensure that no Shi'a Muslim organisation is left out of the consultation process. Please kindly fill in the details below as best you can.

General Information

What is the name of your organisation?

_____

On what date was your organisation founded?　　Date (dd/mm/yyyy): ___/___/_____

If your organisation is a registered charity, please state the charity number: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____　　Post Code: _____

Telephone (Please include the full area code): _____

Fax: (Please include the full area code): _____

E-mail: _____

Please inform us of the main contact person at your organisation

Contact Name: _____

Position: _____

E-mail: _____　　Mobile: _____

What is/are the predominant ethnic groups of your community?
(Please indicate a percentage in the box)

Afghan　　[　　]　　　　African　　　[　　]
Iranian　　[　　]　　　　Iraqi　　　　[　　]
Khoja　　[　　]　　　　Lebanese　　[　　]
Pakistani　[　　]　　　　Other　　　[　　] Please specify nationalities:

_____

Gender Composition
What is the male and female composition for your average congregation? Please indicate the percentage.

Male:　　　　[　　]　　　　Female:　　　[　　]

What facilities/services do you offer?

□ Prayer Hall   □ Funeral Services
□ Community Hall   □ Library
□ Income generating projects   □ Youth Activities
□ Social Activities   □ Recreational Facilities
□ Islamic Education/Madrasah   □ School
□ Health Advice   □ Advice and Counselling

What activities do you hold at your centre?

□ Daily Prayers   □ Other. (Please state these below)
□ Dua al-Kumayl Programmes   a)
□ Ramadhan Programmes   b)
□ Muharram Programmes   c)
□ Interfaith Dialogues   d)

How many members do you have?

If you do not have a membership system, please indicate the average size of your congregation per year. In order to calculate this, estimate your congregation for each of the 52 weeks during the year, add them all up and divide this figure by 52.

Number of members or average congregation: [Please ☑ the appropriate box]

　　　　1 to 500

　　　　501 – 1000

　　　　1001 – 2000

　　　　2001 – 3000

　　　　3000 +

　　　　We don't have an active congregation

Please provide us with any additional information about your organisation, which you feel may be useful:

Part B – The case for a unified umbrella organisation to represent Shi'a Muslims in the United Kingdom

In this part of the document, we want your views on the case for a unified umbrella organisation that shall represent all Shi'a Muslim organisations within the United Kingdom. You may wish to read the preamble and introduction on page 2 once again, before completing this section.

Please indicate your views below (by ☑ the appropriate box), in relation to the above

I agree: In the space below you may add your comments if you wish.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

I disagree: In the space below you may add your comments if you wish.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

I am undecided: In the space below you may add your comments if you wish.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

End of Part B – Please turn over

Part C – Proposed Aims and Objectives for a unified umbrella organisation

In this part of the document, we want your feedback on the proposed aims and objectives for a unified umbrella organisation. We believe these carefully drafted aims and objectives are vitally important and necessary, what do you think? (Please ☑ the appropriate box and please submit your comments if you wish)

Aims and Objectives	Agree?	Disagree?	Comments
1. To promote the teachings and practices of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his Purified Progeny, the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.)			
2. To unite all the Shi'a Muslims within the United Kingdom			
3. To represent the interests of the Shi'a Muslims in relation to the media, Central and Local Government, NGO's and other charitable organisations			
4. To formulate policies and strategies for advancing the best interests of the Shi'a Muslims			
5. To promote and support best practices in relation to the corporate governance of each member organisation			
6. To encourage the sharing of expertise and the cross fertilisation of ideas between member organisations and within the Shi'a Muslim community in general			
7. To promote all forms of excellence within the Shi'a Muslim community			
8. To promote and encourage greater cooperation and understanding within the wider Muslim community			
9. To take all steps to promote peace, justice and harmony within society			
10. To promote and support interfaith activities			
11. To work for the common good of all people within the United Kingdom.			

End of Part C, please turn over

Part D – Proposed name for a unified umbrella organisation to represent Shi'a Muslims in the United Kingdom

In this part of the document, we want your views on proposed names for the united umbrella organisation. The selection of names below has been chosen on the basis that they include the combination of the following words: "Shia", "Muslim", "U.K./Britain" and "Council".
(Please ☑ the appropriate box and please submit your comments if you wish)

a)

Proposed Name	Please ☑ your preferred name	Comments
Council of British Shi'a Muslims (CBSM)		
Shi'a Muslim Council of the United Kingdom (SMCUK)		
British Shi'a Muslim Council (BSMC)		
Shi'a Muslim Council of Great Britain and N. Ireland (SMCGBNI)		

b)

Should the name above specifically state 'Ithna-Asheri', or do you feel that 'Shi'a Muslim' shall suffice?	'Shi'a Muslim' shall suffice	The name should state 'Shi'a Ithna-Asheri'

End of Part D, please turn over

Part E – Eligibility of membership

In this part of the document, we want your views in relation to the eligibility for membership of the unified umbrella organisation. The various factors to be taken into consideration are tabulated below. Please feel free to contribute any additional comments in the space provided.

<u>Issue 1</u>		
a) Should the proposed umbrella organisation consider for membership every entity that considers itself to be Shi'a? i.e. organisations which represent Agha Khani Isma'ilis, Dawoodi Bohras and so forth? OR b) Should the proposed umbrella organisation restrict eligibility to only those organisations that follow the Ja'fari Madhab, i.e. Ithna-Asheri (Twelver) Shi'a?		
Your View **(Please ☑ the appropriate box to show your preference)** Please present your view ➜	A) Eligibility for membership should be open for organisations of all denominations that consider themselves to be Shi'a, i.e. organisations which represent Agha Khani Isma'ilis, Dawoodi Bohras and so forth.	B) Eligibility for membership should be restricted to only those who follow the Ja'fari Madhab, i.e. Ithna-asheri (Twelver) Shi'a.
	Comments	Comments

Please turn over for Issue 2 of part E

Part E – Continued – Eligibility for membership

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center"><u>**Issue 2**</u></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">Should federated and regional bodies be eligible for membership?</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td align="center">**Argument For**</td><td align="center">**Argument Against**</td></tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Federated and regional bodies often represent a number of organisations, and therefore they ought to be eligible for membership.</td>
<td>✘ Individual organisations may directly become members of the unified umbrella organisation. Therefore, to allow Federated bodies to also join the umbrella body may well amount to double representation and additional voting power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td colspan="2" align="center">**Your View
(Please ☑ the appropriate box)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eligibility for membership should be open to federated and regional bodes, which may also be represented directly by their members.</td>
<td>Eligibility for membership should **<u>not</u>** be open to federated and regional bodies, which may be represented by direct participation of their members.</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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End *of Part E, please turn over*

Part F – Forms of representation

In this part of the document, we want your views in relation to the form of democratic representation which could be adopted in order to ensure that the unified umbrella organisation strikes the right balance between fair representation and effective implementation of any voting mechanism. Two distinct mediums of representation have been tabulated below. Please give careful consideration to each one and make your choice accordingly. There is additional space for your comments.

Form A	Argument For	Argument Against
The number of votes each organisation is granted is dependent upon membership or their average congregation. The system would be as follows: **Average congregation Votes** 0 - 500 1 vote 501 - 1000 2 votes 1001 – 2000 3 votes 2001 – 30000 4 votes 3000 + 5 votes	✓ A more proportional system of representation ✓ Organisations shall be granted votes dependent upon their average congregation. ✓ This ensures larger organisations get their fair share of votes, compared to smaller less prevalent organisations.	✖ Verifying and quantifying a congregation is often subjective, hence an organisation may get an unfairly high or low number of votes. ✖ An organisation which has a large congregation may not necessarily be representative of their attendees. ✖ The views of smaller organisations may be drowned out by the larger ones. ✖ Not all organisations have a regular congregation, but nonetheless contribute to the community.
Form B	**Argument For**	**Argument Against**
Each member organisation is given one vote no matter what its size. Hence, the system is one member, one vote, regardless of size.	✓ The problem with verifying and quantifying an average congregation is eliminated. ✓ Small and big organisations are treated equally. ✓ Organisations without a regular congregation are given an equal voice.	✖ May be perceived as unfair by larger organisations.

Your View (Please ☑ the appropriate box)	I agree with **Form A**
	I agree with **Form B**

Please turn over

Part F – Continued – Forms of representation

There are many interested individuals within the Shi'a Muslim community such as scholars, lecturers and so forth who work independently and are not under any particular Shi'a Muslim organisation. In your opinion, how should such individuals, who contribute significantly to the progress of the Shi'a Muslim community here in the U.K., be represented in this proposed council?

End of Part F, please turn over

Part G – Additional comments and feedback

In this section, we welcome your comments and feedback in relation to this document and any other issues which you feel may be of relevance.

Any additional comments and feedback

END OF CONSULTATION DOCUMENT