

Presented by WBII

PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

Proscribing the IRGC and the Muslim Brotherhood



JANUARY 2026



LEEDS leads AGAINST ANTISEMITISM



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Why this matters now

This briefing is premised on a simple claim: the UK is facing a dual-headed Islamist challenge that is routinely misunderstood because it is still analysed through an outdated and overly sectarian lens. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) are commonly treated as separate phenomena—one “Shia” and state-backed, the other “Sunni” and political-social. The paper argues this framing is strategically inadequate, because it misses the more operational reality: beneath public antagonisms lies a strategic convergence.

The consequence of missing that convergence is policy drift: governments isolate one actor while leaving adjacent networks intact, allowing the wider ecosystem—funding pathways, propaganda, recruitment, intimidation, and institutional entryism - to continue functioning. The paper’s conclusion is that proscription is urgently required for both organisations, not as symbolism, but as national security and democratic self-preservation.

1) The central thesis: convergence beyond sectarian theatre

The document's starting point is that Western commentary has over-weighted Sunni–Shia rivalry as the organising principle of Islamist politics and, in doing so, has missed “quiet coordination and parallel agendas.” The “sectarian story,” the paper argues, has also served extremists as a smokescreen—useful for mobilisation, while obscuring deeper ideological affinities.

In practical terms, the paper contends that both the IRGC and the MB:

- seek to subordinate the nation-state to a transnational religious ideology;
- treat liberal democracy as a temporary inconvenience; and
- pursue influence through a blended toolkit of intimidation, infiltration, propaganda, and —where useful—violence.
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It reinforces this thesis with examples and argumentation that stress that sectarian identity is not an immutable barrier; rather, extremists “exploit it as circumstance dictates,” sometimes waging sectarian conflict, and sometimes crossing sectarian lines to undermine shared adversaries.

Parliamentary implication: A strategy that treats “Shia extremism” and “Sunni extremism” as unrelated threats risks being outflanked by precisely the cross-pollination and cooperation the paper identifies.

3) Threats to UK national security: two different models, one ecosystem

The briefing argues that the UK faces a dual risk profile: an overt state-backed threat from the IRGC, and a slower, institutional threat from MB-linked networks.

IRGC: state-backed coercion with UK-facing risk

The IRGC is framed as an “especially acute threat” because it operates as a state-backed security and coercive apparatus, linked to hostile activity abroad and intimidation campaigns directed at dissidents beyond Iran’s borders.

The paper also references UK security warnings about Iranian plots and describes a pattern of brazen activity that resembles a hostile intelligence service more than a conventional military unit—arguing that tolerating this without strong countermeasures endangers British lives and the rule of law.

Muslim Brotherhood: gradualism, entryism, and ecosystem building

The MB threat is described as “less spectacular but no less corrosive,” rooted in:

- gradualism,
- institutional entryism, and
- reshaping norms via influence in charities, community structures, and religious platforms.

The paper argues that the net effect can include insularity and the fostering of “enclavism,” hindering integration and straining cohesion; it also argues MB-linked influence can marginalise more moderate or secular Muslim voices within community representation.

It provides specific discussion of influence operations around institutions of worship and education, including examples of alleged ideological messaging and the potential role of Brotherhood-dominated community structures.

Parliamentary implication: The document’s case is that the UK’s national security posture must address both dimensions in tandem: disrupting overt hostile-state activity and closing the civic-space loopholes that allow “non-violent in presentation” extremist ecosystems to incubate radicalisation and social division.

4) Why proscription is framed as “statecraft,” not symbolism

The briefing explicitly positions proscription as necessary because it removes operational space—criminalising membership/support, enabling disruption of fronts, and signalling that the UK will not serve as a permissive environment for state-backed terrorism or long-horizon extremist infrastructure.

It argues that proscription should be paired with a practical package:

- modernised legal tools for state-linked entities,
- tighter financial scrutiny/enforcement,
- strengthened regulator capacity (especially where charities/education are at risk of capture), and
- alignment with partners to reduce safe havens and deny legitimacy.

It also notes that a cross-party coalition of “over 550 Parliamentarians” has urged government to proscribe the IRGC, presenting this as evidence of unusual consensus.

5) The policy asks: what the paper wants Parliament and Government to do

The recommendations are framed as an integrated programme, not single-point action:

- **IRGC proscription:** The Home Secretary should lay an order to add the IRGC to the proscribed list; the paper cites the US 2019 designation and argues proscription can coexist with state-level diplomacy, as with UK proscription of Hezbollah.
- **MB designation/proscription:** Government should pursue designation under terrorism laws or at minimum proscribe the “most dangerous branches and aliases,” and evaluate UK Brotherhood-linked groups (including those identified in the 2015 review) for further action if evidence supports it.
- **State-linked threats legal framework:** The paper argues there is a legal gap where an entity is an organ of a foreign state but operates like a terrorist actor. It urges follow-through on adapting proscription mechanisms for state actors, including potential “hostile state proxy” designations.
- **Diplomatic isolation and financial disruption:** It calls for allied coordination and strengthened financial sanctions/scrutiny to disrupt networks and funding flows.