

GOREY MUSLIM COMMUNITY

'Tugtar cuireadh do gach duine bealach an Tiarna a leanuint tri ghaois agus tri sheanmoireacht thaitneamhach' (An Nahl: 125)



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June 12, 2008

British Muslim lawyers tackle forced marriage 'crisis'

British Muslim lawyers said Thursday they had decided to take matters into their own hands with a radical plan to combat the forced marriage "crisis" in their community.

Backed by heavyweight sheikhs and muftis, the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal (MAT) proposed setting up their own system to tackle the widespread culture of forced marriages between British Muslims and spouses from South Asia.

Sheikh Faiz Siddiqi, a barrister and a leading community figure, said the resentment and alienation created by forced marriages drove young British Muslims towards extremism.

Combating extremism has dominated the British political agenda since the 2005 London suicide bombings, perpetrated by British Islamists.

The MAT claims that more than 70 percent of marriages in the Muslim community involving a foreign spouse have some element of coercion or force, while the incidences are minimal between British Muslims.

Marriages without consent, or people refusing them, have led to suicides and honour killings in Britain, shocking a nation generally deemed to have successfully absorbed immigrant communities and practices.

The government has taken steps to tackle the forced marriage culture and has been looking for credible grass-roots partners.

The MAT now wants to start sorting out the problem "in-house."

Going through the British courts to resolve a forced marriage leaves the victim "ostracised by the community" Siddiqi said, launching the proposal in London.

Forced marriages leave young Muslims feeling frustrated by the British system and their communities, he explained, saying it was "little wonder" some went off the rails.

"A lot of people who are steering towards extremism are those who have been rejected by the mainstream Muslim society or the mainstream establishment," Siddiqi told AFP.

"If we can fill those vacuums, we will be moving towards pre-empting those people that steer towards extremism."

Full story [here](#).

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