



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr William Shawcross  
Chairman  
Charity Commission  
PO Box 211  
BOOTLE  
L20 7YX

21<sup>st</sup> June 2017

Dear Mr Shawcross,

I am writing to express my deep concern at activities which occurred at the Al Quds demonstration in London last Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> June.

This event was organised by the Islamic Human Rights Commission, a charity.

As you may have seen, a number of demonstrators – as they have done at the march on previous years – were carrying Hezbollah flags.

Hezbollah is not only deeply anti-Semitic – its Secretary General having previously declared: *"If all Jews gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide"*, while Robert Wistrich devotes a chapter of his history of anti-Semitism, *A Lethal Obsession*, to Hezbollah. Its 'military wing' is proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000.

According to media reports, the Metropolitan Police Service, has taken the view that those carrying the flags were supporting Hezbollah's 'political wing' which is not proscribed. Indeed, I have been told that some demonstrators attached stickers to their flags to exploit this totally artificial distinction. Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary General, Naim Qassem, himself stated in 2009 that the *"same leadership that directs the parliamentary and government work also leads jihad actions in the struggle against Israel"*. In 2012, he further stated: *"We don't have a military wing and a political one; we don't have Hezbollah on one hand and the resistance party on the other."*

In addition, it appears that IHRC actually encouraged participants to bring Hezbollah flags, again exploiting a distinction which Hezbollah itself does not recognise. In a statement on its website, the IHRC is reported to have stated that participants *"are welcome to bring flags that show solidarity with the Palestinian"*



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*cause". While warning that flags of proscribed or illegal organisations would not be allowed, it went on to say: "You can bring a Hezbollah flag to show support for the political wing of Hezbollah. This is because the political wing of Hezbollah is not a proscribed organisation."*

While I recognise that the Mayor and the Met are potentially constrained by the government's failure to proscribe both wings of Hezbollah, I believe that IHRC may have broken Charity Commission guidelines, which state with regard to proscribed organisations:

**Any links between a charity and terrorism are totally unacceptable and corrosive of public confidence in charities ... even indirect or informal links with a terrorist organisation pose unacceptable risks to the property of a charity and its proper and effective administration. *Even if the link or association did not amount to a criminal offence, it is difficult to see how a charity could adequately manage the risks to the charity and find a way in which the trustees could properly discharge their charity law duties and responsibilities.* What constitutes a link will depend on the circumstances in each case [my emphasis].**

I would be grateful if the Charity Commission could now investigate whether the IHRC has, indeed, breached these guidelines. If it is found to have done so, it is crucial – given that the charity was aware of concerns about the displaying of Hezbollah flags prior to the event – that immediate and robust action be taken to ensure that this does not occur again.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Louise Ellman".

**Louise Ellman MP**  
**Vice Chair, Labour Friends of Israel**