

Canada's Political Leaders to Share Platforms with Leading Islamist Extremists



From “the warm comforts of your home ... a dynamic array of international speakers” will kick off this year’s Reviving the Islamic Spirit ([RIS](#)) [Convention](#) in a virtual setting. One of the most important Islamic conferences in the West, this two-day Canadian event will feature a wealth of world famous Islamic [clerics and activists](#), as well as leaders of both Canada’s political Left and Right: [Jagmeet Singh](#), the head of Canada’s New Democratic Party; and [Erin O’Toole](#), leader of Canada’s Conservative Party.

According to *Point de Bascule*, the RIS convention [began](#) in 2003 with the financial support of the Wahhabi-backed World Assembly of Muslim Youth. Early conventions regularly featured prominent extremists affiliated with hardline ideologies and institutions. This year, many of this weekend’s speakers are just as dangerous.

One of Saturday's controversial speakers includes Shaykh Abdul Nasir [Jangda](#), the founder, of the Qalam Institute in Arlington, Texas. In his early academic career, Jangda studied at [Jamia Binoria](#)—an international Deobandi Islamic educational institute located in Karachi, Pakistan. Extremist ideas have followed the Shaykh back to the United States, where, in his sermons and lectures, he has reportedly [attempted](#) to justify sex slavery and has “expressed support for the killing of apostates and adulterers.”

Another Deobandi speaker, Maulana Tariq [Jamil](#), is a popular Pakistani preacher and religious writer. He is also [a leader](#) of Tablighi Jamaat, a Deobandi missionary organization that Western security services have [tied](#) to dozens of terror plots. [According](#) to Pakistani media, Jamil has “refused to issue *fatwas* condemning suicide bombing because according to their viewpoint that would have discouraged the brutal campaigns of their fellow Muslims in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Palestine.”

Other speakers are just as appalling. Imam Siraj Wahhaj, an Islamist preacher with an extensive history of involvement in extremist causes, is also slated to speak. He is the imam of New York's [Masjid At-Taqwa](#) and was once listed as a potential [“unindicted co-conspirator](#) in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.” [His views on women, homosexuals, non-Muslims and the West](#) have often led counter-extremism analysts to refer to Wahhaj as one of the most extreme Islamist preachers in North America.

Imam Zaid [Shakir](#), meanwhile, is an American Muslim scholar and co-founder of Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California. Shakir has [called for](#) the “development of a core group committed to the ultimate goal – the establishment of Islam and Shariah in America,” He suggests “guerrilla war” can achieve these goals. He has further [warned](#) against befriending Jews and Christians.

The Sunday session is set to begin with Shaykh Yahya Rhodus, a

lecturer at the Al-Madina Institute. In 2004, he [reportedly refused](#) to denounce Osama bin Laden, claiming it was “a little bit offensive for us to talk bad about someone behind their back.” When asked if he condemned Al Qaeda, Rhodus said: “I don’t really know too much about them enough to say any, yes I’m for them or no I’m against them.”

Another Sunday speaker, Ubaydullah Evans once [complained](#) that “A lot of people malign the Taliban,” adding “they were trying to run a country like you run a *madrassa*” and merely lacked “worldly sophistication.”

Previously [referred](#) to as “one of the most influential conservative clerics in American Islam,” fellow speaker Shaykh Yasir Qadhi is yet another theocratic imam with a [long history](#) of preaching hateful views about non-Muslims and minorities. Canada’s Point de Bascule [notes](#) that Qadhi mixes “anti-Jewish motives with Western anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial.”

These clerics will be joined by Mufti Hussain Kamani, who studied at one of the most prominent seminaries within the Deobandi movement, the Darul Uloom Bury in England. *The Times* [reported](#) in 2016 that this Islamic seminary “preaches contempt for non-Muslims and warns of the ‘repulsive qualities’ of Christian and Jewish women.” In fact, as well as [expressing support](#) for sex slavery, Kamani [cites](#) teachings that call on Muslims to seek “cleanliness” and “purity,” so as to “not resemble the Jews.”

That the leaders of Canada’s official opposition should so willingly attend such an event alongside such extreme voices is extraordinary. After all, O’Toole’s predecessor, former Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister Steven Harper, was widely considered a leading anti-Islamist voice in the West during his 2006 to 2015 tenure. For Canada’s leading political voices now to share a platform with such hardline Islamists not only wrecks that legacy, but it falsely

legitimizes these extremists as genuine Islamic leaders and betrays Canada's moderate and reformist Muslim networks, which have spent decades fighting the influence of these theocrats.

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