

Yvonne Ridley, Hamas and Antisemitic Language

From writer *habibi* of the British political blog Harry's Place, <http://hurryupharry.org>

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This is Yvonne Ridley speaking in 2008 at the London "Al Quds Day" (Jerusalem Day) demonstration against Israel. The flag of Lebanese terrorist group Hezbollah, a common sight on Al Quds Day, flies behind her. The demonstration is held annually by UK-based Khomeinists and other Islamist extremists.¹

This document briefly profiles Yvonne Ridley, a close ally of George Galloway and a strong supporter of Hamas.

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¹ <http://hurryupharry.org/2009/08/30/marching-for-hate-in-london/>

1 Background

Yvonne Ridley is a **British journalist**. She is most famous for being **captured by the Taliban** in Afghanistan in September 2001. She had slipped into the country after the September 11 attacks to cover the impending invasion by the US and its allies for the *Sunday Express*. She was released after ten days and says she was not harmed.

In 2003 she **converted to Islam**. Since then she has become one of the UK's **most prominent and radical Islamists**.

Her **activities** and **roles** include the following:

- She is a founder of George Galloway's "**Respect**" party and the UK's far left, anti-American "Stop the War Coalition".²
- She is a regular presenter on **Press TV**, the English language propaganda arm of the Iranian government.³ Several UK presenters have left the channel in protest against Iran's suppression of dissidents since the elections in June 2009, but Ridley, like Galloway, remains loyal.
- She is the patron of **Cageprisoners**, the Islamist propaganda operation of former jihadi and Guantanamo detainee **Moazzam Begg**. Cageprisoners openly supported al Qaeda preacher Anwar al Awlaki right up to the terrorist attack at Fort Hood in November 2009.
- Over the past two years she has been an active campaigner⁴ for **Aafia Siddiqui**, the Pakistani woman who was convicted in February 2010 in New York of attempting to murder US soldiers and officials in Afghanistan.⁵ This campaigning included a US tour in October 2009.⁶

Ridley's **views** are **very extreme**. A few examples:

- In 2006, she told a public meeting organised by the Respect Party in the aftermath of anti-terrorist raids by London's Metropolitan Police that British Muslims should **boycott the police**.⁷
- She wrote an article in which she sought to justify al Qaeda bombings in Amman, Jordan and expressed her preference for the al Qaeda terrorist, **Abu Musab al Zarqawi**, over the Jordanian royal family.⁸
- Chechen jihadi leader **Shamil Basayev** was the mastermind of the Moscow theatre siege and the horrific attack on a school in Beslan, Russia. When Basayev was killed in 2006, Ridley said the news made her "sad" and she called him a "shaheed" (Islamic martyr) in an admiring article.⁹
- She **incites anti-American hatred** in Pakistan and the west by insisting, without presenting any credible evidence, that **Aafia Siddiqui** and her children were abducted in Pakistan by the US in 2003. Ridley maintains that Siddiqui was taken to the Bagram base in Afghanistan, where she was tortured for five years. The US flatly denies these allegations.¹⁰ So does Siddiqui's former husband.¹¹
- She resorts to **antisemitic language** to incite hatred of Israel and Zionism. Examples are provided in the last section of this report.

² <http://gaza-journey.blogspot.com/2008/08/who-is-yvonne-ridley.html>

³ <http://www.presstv.ir/programs/detail.aspx?sectionid=3510509>

⁴ <http://www.cageprisoners.com/articles.php?id=31014>

⁵ <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/US/lady-qaeda-aafia-siddiqui-found-guilty-attempted-murder/story?id=9738915>

⁶ <http://yvonneridley.org/yvonne-ridley/5.html>

⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/5054600.stm

⁸ <http://mreugenides.blogspot.com/2006/06/zarqawi-dead-yvonne-ridley-weeps.html>

⁹ <http://yvonneridley.org/yvonne-ridley/articles/the-passing-of-a-chechen-4.html>

¹⁰ <http://writ.news.findlaw.com/mariner/20100203.html>

¹¹ http://www.thenews.com.pk/top_story_detail.asp?id=20404

2 Support for Hamas

Ridley is a **strong supporter of Viva Palestina**. She can be seen in this picture, entering Rafah, Gaza, in March 2009 with Galloway and other participants in the first Viva Palestina convoy.



In a televised ceremony in Gaza during the first convoy's visit, Galloway **named Ridley as one of the donors** whose cash he handed over to Hamas:¹²

But I, now, here, on behalf of myself, my sister **Yvonne Ridley**, and the two Respect councillors – Muhammad Ishtiaq and Naim Khan – are giving three cars and 25,000 pounds in cash to Prime Minister Ismail Haniya.



Galloway handing cash to Hamas economy minister Ziad al Zaza

In an interview recorded in Gaza around the same time, Ridley **confirms** that she personally **donated money to Hamas** in a **deliberate violation of sanctions law**:¹³

I brought cash and I am happy to say I have given that cash to George Galloway and we have both given that money to the Palestinian prime minister, **Ismail Haniyeh**, which has **broken UN sanctions**. If they want to charge us, if they want to arrest us, bring it on.

¹² http://www.memritv.org/clip_transcript/en/2060.htm and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYFGIbaabTU>

¹³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p5gAMATmiY>

After the convoy participants returned to the UK, a “reunion” meeting was held in Birmingham. Yvonne Ridley addressed the meeting and a tape of her speech is available on Youtube.¹⁴ The people behind her on the podium are Kevin Ovenden, George Galloway’s parliamentary aide and a trustee of Viva Palestina, and Salma Yaqoob, a candidate for parliament for Galloway’s “Respect” party in the British general election this May. Galloway also attended this event. In her speech, Ridley says she had the “**privilege**” to meet Hamas leader **Ismail Haniyeh**. She encouraged him not to “liberate” Palestine alone, but North Africa too:

During our brief time in Gaza, I did have the **privilege** to join a few of us together to meet Ismail Haniyeh. I said to him, that, I said, you know, they say that Gaza is the largest open air prison in the world, and it is, without doubt. But I said at least your people are free, I said. And when you do eventually **liberate Palestine**, and you will liberate Palestine, please don’t stop there because we have got to go right across North Africa and liberate every bloody country in North Africa that we passed through. He smiled at that as well.

In that speech, she confirms that **Interpal** was a contributor to the convoy. It is a British charity that has been designated by the US Treasury for its services to Hamas.¹⁵ She adds that two other British charities, **Islamic Help** and the **Ummah Welfare Trust**, were also participants. Neither has been designated but both are closely linked to Hamas.¹⁶

Interpal was a partner on board Viva Palestina and so were **Ummah Welfare Trust** and lots of other charities. ...
I’ve looked back over what was achieved and what will continue to be happening in Gaza and there are a few projects that have been born out of Viva Palestina. One is a £2 million project launched by **Islamic Help** which will take about two years to go and achieve. [This is a reference to the Darul Fadilah project in Rafah.]

During the Gaza war, Ridley spoke at an anti-Israel and pro-Hamas demonstration in London. Brandishing her honorary Palestinian passport, given to her by Ismail Haniyeh, she **saluted Hamas**.¹⁷

If I could use my Palestinian citizenship, it would be to vote Ismail Haniyeh and Hamas back in again in Gaza. Victory to intifada 3! **Victory to Hamas!**

3 Antisemitic Language

Ridley uses **incendiary antisemitic language** when speaking to radical audiences.

At the 2006 Al Quds Day rally in London, held that year in front of the US embassy, she declared:¹⁸

“Drinking Coca Cola is like **drinking the blood of Palestinian children**”

At a Viva Palestina meeting in the UK in January 2009, she resorted to the “**tentacles**” and “**media control**” motifs when referring to the BBC’s decision not to broadcast a charity appeal during the Gaza war.¹⁹ Galloway was present at this meeting.

The Zionists have **tentacles** everywhere. Not content with keeping the western media outside of Gaza, stopping them from covering the war, they are putting pressure on communities throughout the UK to stop gatherings like this. And it isn’t just at community level. We’ve seen with the disgraceful behaviour from the BBC that this interference goes right to **the very top of the media**, into the very heart of our homes.

¹⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZ6IU8oiW4U>

¹⁵ <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/is672.htm>

¹⁶ <http://hurryupharry.org/2009/08/16/islamic-help-aiding-hamas/> and <http://hurryupharry.org/2009/01/22/ummah-welfare-trust-charities-regulators-and-banks/>

¹⁷ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruF3h_hZSE8

¹⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=na5KLaj7LRg>

¹⁹ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSJpcUqFq_Y

At the same meeting, with a Jewish fig leaf in the shape of far left American activist Barbara Lubin in place, she conjured up **Sophie's Choice** to demonise Israel:

I am going to finish off with a story that was sent to me today from a Jewish peace activist called Barbaba Lubin.

...

[from the "story"] "I met a mother who was at home with her ten children when Israeli soldiers entered the house. The soldiers told her she had to choose five of her children "to give as a gift to Israel". As she screamed in horror they repeated the demand and told her she could choose or they would choose for her. Then these soldiers **murdered five of her children in front of her**. The concept of "Jewish morality" is truly dead. We can be fascists, terrorists and Nazis, just like anyone else."

Can you imagine the mother's dilemma, being told, "choose". Can you imagine the horror of being told "choose" which child should live and which child should die. **We have to end the Zionist state**. We've got to charge the war criminals. We have to boycott Israeli goods.

Before Ridley used this tale in her speech, Lubin had **backtracked** and asked people **not to post it** on the internet.²⁰ Those who had posted were asked to add an update:

Barbara Lubin and all of us at the Middle East Children's Alliance believe that we **should have confirmed** the story about the Gaza woman who was told by an Israeli soldier to choose which five of her ten children should die, and then witnessed their murder. We are doing everything we can now to verify the story, but have been **unable to do so**. We ask that you **do not publish or post this story** on the Internet. If you have already done so, please post this statement, as well.

...

In these catastrophic circumstances, it's not difficult to see how Barbara would find this story credible. Unfortunately, we sent it out **before taking the time to verify** it.

In 2006 Ridley had these fierce words for **Israel** and **Zionists** in a speech at Imperial College, London.²¹

"Israel is a **vile little state**. It's propped up by America. It cannot survive without American money".

"[Respect] is a **Zionist-free party**... if there was any Zionism in the Respect Party they would be **hunted down** and kicked out. We have no time for Zionists."

"[Israel is a]"**disgusting little watchdog** of America that is festering in the Middle East."

"[The UK's mainstream parties are] **riddled with Zionists**".

²⁰ <http://pulsemedia.org/2009/01/24/letter-from-gaza-barbara-lubin/>

²¹ <http://web.archive.org/web/20061015125040/http://www.felixonline.co.uk/v2/article.php?id=2923>