

# YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS

**COUNTER  
EXTREMISM  
PROJECT**

## YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS

### Key Facts:

- CEP has documented 15 extremist individuals and organizations with ties to Yusuf al-Qaradawi.
- As the unofficial chief ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood, Qaradawi supported violent Brotherhood leaders such as Mohammed Morsi, who was serving a life sentence in Egypt for killing protesters prior to his own death, and former acting Supreme Guide Mahmoud Ezzat, who is in Egyptian custody for instigating violent protests in Egypt.
- Qaradawi previously declared that the “abduction and killing of Americans in Iraq is a [religious] obligation” and defended suicide bombings as “heroic operations of martyrdom.” Qaradawi has also called for Muslims around the world to become foreign fighters in Syria and supported “jihad until death” against Israel.
- Qaradawi-led organizations provided ideological and material support to terrorist groups. The U.S. government designated the Qaradawi-chaired Union of Good charity in 2008 for providing financial support to Hamas. Until November 2018, Qaradawi served as president of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, which Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain designated a terrorist organization in February 2017 for the group’s “work to promote terrorism through the exploitation of Islamic discourse....”



[Yusuf al-Qaradawi](#) was a Qatar-based Islamist theologian and the unofficial chief ideologue of the [Muslim Brotherhood](#).<sup>1</sup> Qaradawi died on September 26, 2022, at the age of 96.<sup>2</sup> Qaradawi’s death ended a long and influential career, during which he called for the murder of Americans, gay people, and Jews through his writings, speeches, and fatwas.<sup>3</sup> Qaradawi served as the chairman of numerous Islamic organizations and operated on a variety of media platforms,

---

<sup>1</sup> “Al-Qaradawi turns down top Brotherhood post,” Al Jazeera, January 12, 2004, <http://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2004/01/2008410145045889729.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Influential cleric Qaradawi, supporter of Arab Spring uprisings, dies,” Reuters, September 26, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/influential-muslim-cleric-qaradawi-dies-twitter-2022-09-26/>.

<sup>3</sup> Melanie Phillips, *The World Turned Upside Down*, (New York: Encounter Books, 2010), 214; “Sheik Yousuf Al-Qaradawi: Homosexuals Should Be Punished Like Fornicators But Their Harm Is Less When Not Done in Public,” MEMRI, June 5, 2006, [http://www.memri.org/clip\\_transcript/en/1170.htm](http://www.memri.org/clip_transcript/en/1170.htm).

## YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS

including a televised broadcast on Al Jazeera, which reached approximately 60 million viewers.<sup>4</sup> He was a co-founder of the popular Islamic website IslamOnline.net, which features a larger number of his fatwas.<sup>5</sup> Qaradawi wrote more than 120 books,<sup>6</sup> some of which are included in the Muslim Brotherhood's educational curriculum.<sup>7</sup>

As head of the Ireland-based European Council for Fatwas and Research (ECFR) and, until November 2018, president of the International Union of Islamic Scholars (IUMS), Qaradawi used his influence to promote extreme positions justifying violent terrorism. Qaradawi has defended suicide bombings as “the supreme form of Jihad ... that is allowed by the Shari'a” and “heroic operations of martyrdom.”<sup>8</sup> He has called for the murder of U.S. citizens in Iraq<sup>9</sup> and for Muslims around the world to travel to Syria to take up arms in defense of Bashar al-Assad. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain added the IUMS to its collective terrorism list in February 2017 for the group's “work to promote terrorism through the exploitation of Islamic discourse, which they use as cover to carry out various terrorist activities.”<sup>10</sup> According to his website, Qaradawi “called on all those able to undertake jihad and fighting to head to Syria to stand by the Syrian people who are being killed at the hands of the regime and are now being killed at the hands of what he called the party of Satan.”<sup>11</sup>

As a result of his public persona, Qaradawi was tied to violent extremists and propagandists around the world. Matthew Levitt of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy called Qaradawi “one of the most public figureheads of the radical wing of the Muslim Brotherhood.”<sup>12</sup> Qaradawi was directly linked to the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership, including former acting

---

<sup>4</sup> Alexander Smoltczyk, “Islam's Spiritual 'Dear Abby': The Voice of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood,” Spiegel, February 15, 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islam-s-spiritual-dear-abby-the-voice-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-a-745526.html>.

<sup>5</sup> “Yusuf al-Qaradawi,” Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, accessed May 6, 2016, <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/yusuf-al-qaradawi>.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Smoltczyk, “Islam's Spiritual 'Dear Abby': The Voice of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood,” Spiegel Online, February 15, 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islam-s-spiritual-dear-abby-the-voice-of-egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-a-745526.html>.

<sup>7</sup> “Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi: Theologian of Terror,” Anti-Defamation League, March 15, 2011, <http://archive.adl.org/nr/exeres/788c5421-70e3-4e4d-bff4-9be14e4a2e58.db7611a2-02cd-43af-8147-649e26813571.frameless.html>.

<sup>8</sup> “Sheikh Yousef Al-Qaradhawi in London to Establish ‘The International Council of Muslim Clerics,’” MEMRI, July 8, 2004, [http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/1168.htm#\\_edn2](http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/1168.htm#_edn2).

<sup>9</sup> “Reactions to Sheikh Qaradhawi's Fatwa Calling for the Abduction and Killing of American Civilians in Iraq,” MEMRI, October 6, 2004, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/1231.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> “Saudi-led bloc blacklist scholars' union, individuals as terrorists in Qatar boycott,” *Daily Sabah* (Istanbul), November 23, 2017, <https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2017/11/23/saudi-led-bloc-blacklist-scholars-union-individuals-as-terrorists-in-qatar-boycott>.

<sup>11</sup> Sami Aboudi, “Leading Sunni Muslim cleric calls for 'jihad' in Syria,” Reuters, June 1, 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-crisis-qaradawi/leading-sunni-muslim-cleric-calls-for-jihad-in-syria-idUSBRE9500CQ20130601>.

<sup>12</sup> Sudarsan Raghavan and Joby Warrick, “How a 91-year-old imam came to symbolize the feud between Qatar and its neighbors,” *Washington Post*, June 27, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/how-a-91-year-old-imam-came-to-symbolize-feud-between-qatar-and-its-neighbors/2017/06/26/601d41b4-5157-11e7-91eb-9611861a988f\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.73afe65fad22](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/how-a-91-year-old-imam-came-to-symbolize-feud-between-qatar-and-its-neighbors/2017/06/26/601d41b4-5157-11e7-91eb-9611861a988f_story.html?utm_term=.73afe65fad22).

## **YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS**

Supreme Guide Mahmoud Ezzat and political leaders Mahmoud Ghozlan and Muhammad al-Beltagy—all of whom have been charged with encouraging violent protests against the Egyptian government. He has also supported the Brotherhood's former Egyptian president, Mohammed Morsi, who was sentenced to life in prison for killing protesters. Qaradawi was also the chair of the U.S.-designated charity Union of Good, accused of funneling money to the Muslim Brotherhood's Palestinian offshoot, Hamas. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh is a member of Qaradawi's International Union of Islamic Scholars, and Qaradawi previously called for "jihad until death" against Israel during meetings with Haniyeh.<sup>13</sup>

**CEP has recorded 15 extremist entities—10 individuals and five organizations—with ties to Qaradawi.**

### **Individuals**

1. [Hassan al-Banna](#) ([Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [BBC News](#), [Oxford Islamic Studies Online](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Telegraph](#))
  - a. Founder of Muslim Brotherhood. Formed the Brotherhood's underground military wing, the "secret apparatus," in the 1940s. Assassinated in February 1949 by the Egyptian secret service in retaliation for the December 1948 assassination of Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmoud an-Nuqrashi Pasha by members of the Muslim Brotherhood.
  - b. Qaradawi joined the Brotherhood in the early 1940s after studying under Banna. Qaradawi has claimed that Banna shaped his political and religious ideologies.
2. Muhammad al-Beltagy [[image](#)] ([Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#), [Christian Science Monitor](#), [Ahram Online](#), [New York Times](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Reuters](#))
  - a. Muslim Brotherhood politician. First elected to the Egyptian People's Assembly in 2005. Began protesting the Egyptian government after losing reelection in 2010. Arrested by Israeli forces in 2010 after participating in Turkey's aid flotilla to the Gaza Strip. Convinced the Muslim Brotherhood to support the revolution against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Helped establish the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice political party after Mubarak's removal from office. Served in the Egyptian parliament as a Muslim Brotherhood representative. Arrested in August 2013 for involvement in violent protests after the 2012 fall of the Muslim Brotherhood government. Sentenced to life in prison.

---

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Gilligan, "How the Muslim Brotherhood fits into a network of extremism," *Telegraph* (London), February 8, 2015, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/11398538/How-the-Muslim-Brotherhood-fits-into-a-network-of-extremism.html>; "Treasury Designates the Union of Good," U.S. Department of the Treasury, November 12, 2008, <https://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp1267.aspx>; "Hamas Leader Haniyah Joins Emerging Network of Islamists," Access ADL, February 10, 2012, <http://accessadl.blogspot.com/2012/02/hamas-leader-haniyah-joins-emerging.html>; Nidal al-Mughrabi, "Influential Muslim cleric visits Hamas-controlled Gaza," Reuters, May 9, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/08/us-palestinians-gaza-cleric-idUSBRE94714Y20130508>.

**COUNTER  
EXTREMISM  
PROJECT**

**YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS**

- b. Arranged for Qaradawi's Tahrir Square speech in February 2011 after Mubarak's removal from office. Qaradawi called on protesters to maintain pressure on the Egyptian government.
3. [Mahmoud Ezzat](#) ([Al Arabiya](#), [Ahram Online](#), [Ikhwanweb](#), [Deutsche Welle](#))
  - a. Former acting supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood. Former secretary-general of the Muslim Brotherhood who assumed the role of acting supreme guide in 2013 following the arrest of Supreme Guide Mohammed Badie. In August 2017, a Cairo criminal court accused Ezzat of planning attacks within Egypt from abroad and added his name to the country's national terror list. Arrested in August 2020 in Cairo and sentenced to life in prison in April 2021.
  - b. Has cited Qaradawi's influence over the Muslim Brotherhood.
4. Mahmoud Ghozlan [[image](#)] ([Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#), [Financial Times](#), [Middle East Monitor](#), [Ahram Online](#), [Albawaba News](#), [The New Arab](#))
  - a. Member of Muslim Brotherhood Guidance Office. Previously served as secretary-general of the Muslim Brotherhood until his 2002 arrest. Released in 2005 and incarcerated again for eight months in 2007. Previously accused former Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman of being an "aide to the Jews." Denied that Christians face persecution in Egypt. Acted as a spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood while the group led Egypt's government and after its overthrow in 2013. Sentenced to death in Egypt in 2015, along with other Brotherhood members, for incitement to murder during protests against the Muslim Brotherhood in August 2013. The death sentence was overturned and Ghozlan is serving a life sentence.
  - b. Claimed the Muslim Brotherhood would defend Qaradawi after Dubai's police chief threatened to issue a warrant for his arrest. Qaradawi had criticized the United Arab Emirates for deporting several supporters of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The public comments resulted in a rift between Egypt and the United Arab Emirates.
5. [Ismail Haniyeh](#) ([Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#), [AccessADL](#))
  - a. Chief of Hamas's political bureau. Formerly served as deputy leader of Hamas between 2014 and 2017 and as Hamas's prime minister in Gaza between 2007 and 2014. Has called for and supported terrorist violence by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups.
  - b. Joined Qaradawi's International Union of Muslim Scholars in 2012 in a bid to raise Hamas's international profile. Qaradawi met with Haniyeh during a 2013 visit to the Gaza Strip. Qaradawi declared his support for Hamas and the elimination of Israel.
6. Essam Mustafa [[image](#)] ([U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [Telegraph](#))
  - a. INTERPAL trustee, co-founder and former secretary-general of the Union of Good. Formerly served as a member of Hamas's executive committee. Photographed alongside Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in the Gaza Strip in 2014. The U.S. government designated the Saudi Arabia-based Union of Good in 2008 as "a broker for Hamas" that facilitates financial transactions between charitable

## YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS

- organizations and the terror group. A group of Hamas leaders created the charity in 2000.
- b. Qaradawi was among the founders of the Union of Good and its first chairman.
  7. [Mohammed Morsi](#) ([Reuters](#), [Guardian](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))
    - a. Former president of Egypt and leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. Removed from office in 2013. Currently serving an Egyptian prison sentence on charges relating to spying, killing of protesters, and insulting the judiciary. Died on June 17, 2019, while serving an Egyptian prison sentence of 48 years for charges relating to spying, killing of protesters, and insulting the judiciary.
    - b. Qaradawi issued a fatwa after Morsi's removal from office calling for Egyptians to support the former president. Qaradawi has called Morsi the "legitimate" leader of Egypt.
  8. Abd Al-Sabour Shahin [[image](#)] ([MEMRI](#), [MEMRI](#))
    - a. Academic. Professor at Cairo University who claimed that a "dirty Zionist" fabricated the September 11, 2001, attacks to justify attacking Islam. Died in 2010.
    - b. Declared his support for Qaradawi's 2004 fatwa calling for the murder of U.S. civilians in Iraq. Declared that he supports Qaradawi's "Fatwa one-hundred percent, since if it were not for the occupation [the American civilians] would not be coming to Iraq..." He noted that Europeans in Iraq should be protected.
  9. [Ali al-Qaradaghi](#) ([Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Middle East Monitor](#), [Marefa](#))
    - a. Secretary-general of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS). Has publicly stated Hamas is "defending the rights of the nation" and the IUMS views Hamas "from the perspective of the Palestinian cause, which must remain the pre-eminent cause not just for the union but for all Arabs, Muslims and free humanitarians of the world."
    - b. Previously served as president of the IUMS until November 2018. Qaradawi handpicked Qaradaghi as secretary-general in 2010. Qaradaghi has defended Qaradawi from accusations of supporting terrorism, though both have been vocal advocates for the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.
  10. Ahmad Al-Raysuni [[image](#)] ([Middle East Monitor](#), [Moroccan Times](#), [Daily Sabah](#), [Al Arabiya](#), [AccessADL](#), [TelQuel](#))
    - a. Former president of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS). Citizen of Morocco who has been critical of the Moroccan government and called French a dying language. Formerly served as vice president of the IUMS before becoming its president in November 2018. The IUMS includes among its members Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain added the IUMS to its collective terrorism list in February 2017 for the group's "work to promote terrorism through the exploitation of Islamic discourse, which they use as cover to carry out various terrorist activities." Retired in September 2022.
    - b. Replaced Qaradawi as president of the IUMS in November 2018. Qaradawi first appointed Raysuni as his deputy in 2013.

## **YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS**

### **Organizations**

1. European Council for Fatwas and Research (ECFR) ([IslamIreland.ie](#), [ECFR](#), [Oxford Islamic Studies Online](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [The Journal](#), [Hudson Institute](#), [MEMRI](#))
  - a. Religious organization. Influential Ireland-based council formed in 1997 that issues fatwas (religious rulings) for European Muslims. Previous fatwas include the authorization of polygamy and domestic violence, as well as the legitimization of terrorism as righteous jihad. A council member once espoused rhetoric from the notorious anti-Semitic book “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” describing a Jewish plot to weaken Muslim moral values through sexual permissiveness. In a 2006 diplomatic cable from the U.S. Embassy in Ireland, the U.S. government expressed concern that the ECFR was attempting to supplant tenets of Western society that were incompatible with Islam.
  - b. Qaradawi is the ECFR’s founder and chairman. Qaradawi praised suicide bombings during his address to the 2003 ECFR meeting in Sweden.
2.  [Hamas](#) ([Reuters](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [Public Safety Canada](#))
  - a. Terrorist organization. Muslim Brotherhood offshoot based in the Gaza Strip and Qatar. Designated as a terrorist organization by United States, European Union, Australia, and multiple other countries. Responsible for dozens of suicide bombings, shootings, and rocket attacks that have killed U.S. and Israeli citizens. Calls for the destruction of Israel and the creation of an Islamic Palestinian state in its place. International Union of Muslim Scholars Secretary-General Ali al-Qaradaghi has said Hamas is “defending the rights of the nation” and the IUMS views Hamas “from the perspective of the Palestinian cause, which must remain the pre-eminent cause not just for the union but for all Arabs, Muslims and free humanitarians of the world.”
  - b. Qaradawi visited Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip in May 2013. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh referred to Qaradawi as “the Sheikh of Jihad in Palestine.”
3. International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) ([Middle East Monitor](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Daily Sabah](#), [AccessADL](#))
  - a. Religious organization. The Qatar-based IUMS promotes itself as a pan-Muslim organization “safeguarding the Muslim identity and bridging the gap between the peoples and their rulers in the Islamic countries.” Its membership comprises around 95,000 scholars and 67 scholarly organizations from around the Muslim world. The IUMS includes among its members Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. IUMS Secretary-General Ali al-Qaradaghi has stated on behalf of IUMS that “[W]e view Hamas from the perspective of the Palestinian cause, which must remain the pre-eminent cause not just for the union for all Arabs, Muslims and free humanitarians of the world.” Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain added the IUMS to its collective terrorism list in February 2017 for the group’s “work to promote terrorism through the

**COUNTER  
EXTREMISM  
PROJECT**

**YUSUF AL-QARADAWI'S TIES TO EXTREMISTS**

exploitation of Islamic discourse, which they use as cover to carry out various terrorist activities.”

- b. Qaradawi served as president of the IUMS until November 2018.
4. Palestinian Relief and Development Fund (INTERPAL) ([U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [BBC Panorama](#))
  - a. Charity. The U.S. government designated the U.K.-based INTERPAL in 2003 for its support of the terrorist group Hamas.
  - b. INTERPAL belonged to the Qaradawi-led global coalition Union of Good. According to BBC Panorama, INTERPAL was “at the heart” of the charitable coalition. The U.S. government designated the Union of Good in 2008.
5. Union of Good ([U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [Telegraph](#))
  - a. Charity. The U.S. government designated the Saudi Arabia-based charity in 2008 as “a broker for Hamas” that facilitated financial transactions between charitable organizations and the terror group. A group of Hamas leaders created the charity in 2000.
  - b. Qaradawi was among the founders of the Union of Good and its chairman.