



CoEJ & Hyderi Jamaat express concerns in a **letter to the Secretary of Justice** regarding the detainment of Fatema Zainab Rajwani





To

The Rt. Hon. Shabana Mahmood MP
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice

Cc Natasha Irons MP Croydon East

Dear Ms Mahmood,

We write to you to express our concerns about the detainment of Fatema Zainab Rajwani at HMP Bronzefield following her arrest on 6th August at Elbit Systems UK site in Filton.

Fatema Zainab is a young 20-year-old woman, who is an active member of Hyderi Islamic Centre in Croydon. She is known by all to be loving, caring and compassionate and regularly volunteers at events in the centre, serving our congregations. She is currently pursuing a degree in Media Studies at Goldsmith's University, where she is a very active part of the university culture, illustrated by the fact that she is a student ambassador and she formed the poetry club at Goldsmith's. On top of this, she is also a tutor at Clever IQ.

Fatema Zainab values and cherishes community work immensely, enjoying opportunities to help others and improve the society around her. Importantly, she has no criminal record or previous history of criminal activity. As such, her prolonged detention in HMP Bronzefield is deeply distressing to our mosque's congregation and the wider community.

Like many members of the British public, she is horrified by the genocide taking place against the Palestinian people and felt powerless to stop the death and destruction being meted out against innocent Palestinian civilians, particularly the high number of children. Fatema Zainab allegedly took part in direct action against Elbit to protest the use of arms – such as the quadcopter drones, manufactured at the Filton site being exported for use by the Israeli military.

Fatema Zainab was arrested under the provisions of the Terrorism Act, following which she was kept in solitary confinement, interrogated day and night for one week and not allowed a single phone call for 2 weeks. Finally, 3 weeks after she was arrested, she was allowed visitors. This was a very distressing time for Fatema Zainab & her family, and we as a community are very saddened by the manner in which Fatema Zainab and her family were treated by the Police and the Justice system.



Fatema Zainab has been charged with non-terror offences (namely aggravated burglary, violent disorder and criminal damage). Despite this, she has been held in prison on pre-trial remand since her arrest and is still being subjected to greater restrictions upon her rights and freedom than those faced by regular prisoners, on counter-terrorism grounds.

These include non-association orders, restricted and infrequent time for activity and visits as well as her religious rights as a Muslim woman not being upheld. Fatema Zainab has reported that male prison guards have entered her cell without any notice preventing her from wearing the hijab in time. She has also been denied access to religious resources, not granted regular access to a Muslim Chaplain and has restrictions on communication with the outside world. We have further experienced that letters from her family, friends and the wider community are withheld by security citing that they are not appropriate for her (some of these are paintings and postcards from children) and were further alarmed to hear that she has been randomly tested for drugs multiple times in the space of 8 weeks. While we appreciate prisoners can be randomly tested for drugs, it is not normal for it to be done multiple times in such a short period.

To date, Fatema Zainab has been denied bail twice despite fulfilling all the conditions normally required. To reiterate, she has no previous criminal record, several character references have been submitted testifying to her good character and reputation, and her family have raised a hefty financial sum to secure her release on bail.

We are deeply alarmed by the prospect of Fatema Zainab being held in prison pre-trial, on remand until November 2025. To hold an individual under such provisions for 15 months is of grave concern.

We sincerely hope that you will take action to ensure Fatema Zainab will be treated justly and released on bail immediately. We also wish to request a meeting with you and Fatema Zainab's family to discuss the unjust measures that were exacted upon Fatema Zainab following her arrest and how her conditions in prison can be improved in line with prisoner's rights.

Yours sincerely,

Aliasgar Khimani
President, Hyderi Islamic Centre

Arifali Hirji
President, The Council of European Jamaats



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