

Media Release

NSW Government Makes Schools Political Battlegrounds - Muslim Children the Casualties

On the 28th of July 2015, Premier Mike Baird announced a sweeping review of all prayer groups in NSW schools. This comes as a response to the perceived threat of “extremism” being preached in schools and is being carried out by the NSW Department of Education and NSW Police. Hizb ut Tahrir Australia notes:

1. Although presented in neutral terms, the reality of this review will undoubtedly target Muslim children and their practice of Islam at schools. With the history of Muslims being specifically legislated against with anti-terror laws and other government strategy, this is no surprise.
2. Such measures will result in Muslim children being consistently viewed with suspicion. The education system would thus be tilted to inherently discriminate against Muslim children. This would cause social fracturing and would amount to state sponsored separation of Muslims.
3. “Extremism” at schools would inevitably involve fundamental Islamic practices and concerns. Wearing of the hijab, growing of the beard and concern for the state of the Ummah worldwide would be marked signs of extremism and viewed with concern. How long before the daily prayers of Muslims are placed in the same category?
4. This review entirely plays upon an exaggerated “threat” - there are far greater issues within schools that require urgent attention. Matters such as bullying and drugs are of far greater consequence and demand far greater consideration than a deliberately politicised extremism threat.
5. The NSW government is using the structures that are to serve the population as means of monitoring and controlling. Far from exclusively being providers of education, schools may potentially be used as part of the government’s campaign to demonise Islam and Muslims. Teachers would also be forced to effectively spy on the Muslim children they’d be teaching.
6. Once again the Muslim community is being viewed through the lens of national security and moreover its most innocent and vulnerable, its children, are being dragged to the front lines of an exercise in discrimination. This is a lowly tactic that deserves nothing less than complete condemnation.

The Muslim community has thus far been commendable in its opposition to hostile government policies against it. The targeting of Muslim children is beyond reprehensible, and the community must once again find its collective voice in continuing to stand strongly against these measures.

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