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Press Release: Report Highlights Bias in the Charity Commission

Claystone, a London based think-tank, will today be releasing its report 'Muslim Charities: A Suspect Sector', an in-depth study of the workings of the Charity Commission in relation to Muslim charities.

Speaking earlier about the report, author Adam Belaon said: "This report highlights how Muslim charities are disproportionately investigated and monitored. The report also highlights deficiencies in transparency and due process by the Commission. There has been no empirical evidence offered to substantiate concerns that British Muslim charities are surreptitiously operating with the purpose of supporting terrorist activities. Numerous Muslim charities we contacted privately expressed significant concern at the sudden shift in the Commission's approach and believe this is a direct result of the wider narrative on extremism and radicalisation."

He further added, "Our primary concern is the recently instated 'radicalisation and extremism' issue code which has been applied without any written criteria of how it is applied or removed, and for a quasi-judicial body, this seems wholly inappropriate. Application of this issue code appears to be a subjective judgement.

Some of the report findings include:

- 55 charities have been labelled with the 'radicalisation and extremism' issue code without their knowledge. The Commission has no written policy on how it applies or removes these labels. This label was instigated in December 2012 shortly after William Shawcross became Chairman.
- Muslim charities are concerned about the governance of the Commission. Over a quarter of Muslim charities contacted expressed concerns over public statements Shawcross had made prior to his appointment.
- A Charity dealing directly with the Syrian humanitarian crisis said although this crisis is the worst seen since World War 2, donations have fallen by 60 to 70% in the last 8 to 10 months. This is a direct result of Commission investigations and sensationalist media reporting of them.

Notes to Editors

1. A full copy of the report is attached to this email and is also available to download on the Claystone website <http://www.claystone.org.uk/publications/>
2. For more information, please contact the Claystone Press Office on **07786636691 / 020 3417 4464**, email press@claystone.org.uk or alternatively visit our website www.claystone.org.uk/press/
3. Claystone is an independent think tank formed to offer research, analysis and reasoned solutions to foster social cohesion in relation to Muslims in Britain.

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