

## A Sharia Financier in the TN Governor's Office

Posted By [Arnold Ahlert](#) On December 4, 2012 @ 12:40 am In [Daily Mailer,FrontPage](#) | [5 Comments](#)

In Tennessee last May, Republican Gov. Bill Haslam [appointed](#) Samar Ali as international director of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD). Attempts to connect her to stealth jihad have been [ridiculed](#). Yet when one connects the dots between Ali and several organizations and individuals, a number of troubling relationships arise, especially regarding the phenomenon known as Sharia-compliant finance (SCF).

SCF is best [explained](#) by Derooy Murdock in a 2008 column: "Turn your clock back 70 years. Imagine that Wall Street banks and brokerages sold Nuremberg-compliant bonds and stock funds in 1938," he writes. "American Nazi sympathizers bought financial instruments certified by Berlin-based advisors as free of 'Jewish profits' from, say, Salomon Brothers and Bloomingdale's."

That's the first half the equation. Then comes the far more important second half. "In turn, a percentage of such funds' gains underwrote pro-Nazi charities, like the German-American Bund, and similar organizations in the Fatherland, like the Hitler Youth." In short, Murdock is using an apt analogy to illuminate the true nature of SCF: it is a money-laundering operation used to underwrite international terrorism.

Samar Ali was appointed as a member of the 2010-2011 class of White House Fellows. Her bio [noted](#) that she was an associate with the firm Hogan Lovells US LLP, responsible for counseling clients on mergers and acquisitions, cross-border transactions and Sharia-compliant financial transactions. In fact, the Hogan law firm [specializes](#) in SCF, calling it "one of the fastest growing financial sectors" in the world, with projections reaching more than \$2.8 trillion by 2015. "Robust demand has led to new challenges for the Islamic finance industry...Indeed, many eminent Sharia scholars commonly recommend us to financial institutions that approach them for advice," the firm reveals.

The White House press release also noted that Ali is "a founding member of the first U.S. Delegation to the World Islamic Economic Forum" (WIEF). The Shariah Finance Watch blog [noted](#), "[I]t was at the World Islamic Economic Forum where key leaders declared Shariah finance to be 'dawa' (missionary) activity to promote Islam and Shariah."

Listed as a [member](#) of the WIEF's International Advisory Panel is Saleh Abdullah Kamel, who is also a [founding member](#) of the Al Shamal Islamic Bank. The Al Shamal Islamic Bank was established by Osama bin Laden to [fund](#) jihadists and terrorism across the globe. Furthermore, the WIEF is a subsidiary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The OIC is a bloc of 57 Muslim countries currently [pressuring](#) Western countries to make criticism of Islam or Mohammed an international crime. Such suppression of free speech is another integral part of Sharia law.

Ali also worked as a [legal intern](#) for the Islamic International Arab Bank (IIAB) where she "rotated through various banking units," gaining exposure to SCF products and related contracts. According to its website, the IIAB [commenced](#) its banking operations in accordance with Islamic Sharia rules" in 1998. According to *Der Spiegel*, the bank [offered](#) a type of life insurance payable to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. "The funds take a circuitous route to the accounts of those families that prove the death of their son by showing a death certificate at the Arab Bank branch in the Palestinian Territories," the article states.

When Ali was appointed, several GOP county organizations [criticized](#) Gov. Haslam for allowing her to work in his administration, with at least two passing resolutions asserting a link between Ali and SCF. Like others, they were undoubtedly concerned that Ali's appointment might make Tennessee an attractive place to conduct Sharia-compliant financial transactions.

Yet for making such information known, and opposing her appointment, Ali's critics were attacked. "In Tennessee, A Rising Star Targeted By Anti-Muslim Smears," is the title of an [article](#) that completely dismisses such concerns, especially those made by the "Frank Gaffney-led Center for Security Policy—a hub of Islamophobia," as completely without merit. Another article refers to any criticism of Ali's appointment as "McCarthy-esque dot-connecting" similar to "the paranoia in Washington, D.C." regarding charges made against Hillary Clinton's aide, Huma Abedin, and her association with the Muslim Brotherhood. (That Huma Abedin's mother [belongs](#) to the Muslim Sisterhood is apparently irrelevant.)

Also apparently irrelevant are the questionable associations of Samar Ali's father, Dr. Subhi Ali. From 2005 until the present, Dr. Ali has [served](#) as the Chairman of the Jerusalem Fund. On its [website](#), the Jerusalem Fund claims it is "an independent, non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian organization based in Washington, D.C." Yet the language used to describe its programs reveals a distinctly anti-Israeli slant, emphasizing such concepts as the Palestinian "Right of Return," and referring to Israel as "the Occupied Territory." Articles on the site also refer to Israel's occupation of Palestine, Israeli "apartheid," and how the two-state solution is "morally debased" and "antiquated." The site attempts to obscure its biased agenda with a disclaimer at the bottom of each article, stating that such views "do not necessarily reflect those of The Jerusalem Fund."

Yet the Fund has also been associated with several people and organizations with links to terrorism. Its founder, Dr. Hisham Sharabi, PhD., was on the Board of Trustees of World and Islam Studies Enterprise (WISE), an organization incorporated by Sami Al-Arian as an Islamic think tank. Al-Arian was [sentenced](#) to 57 months in jail for conspiracy to "make or receive funds...for the benefit of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad" (PIJ). Tarik Hamdi, identified as an officer/staff member of WISE, is listed in a federal affidavit as providing material support to Al-Qaeda, Bin Laden and the PIJ.

Other WISE board members include Taha Jabir al Alwani, an unindicted co-conspirator in the same Holy Land Foundation case that resulted in Al-Arian's conviction; Basheer Nafi, who was charged with "conspiracy to murder, maim or injure persons outside the United States;" Ramadan Abdullah, aka Ramadan Shallah, on the FBI's Most Wanted List as a "Specially Designated Terrorist;" and Mazin an Najjar, a founding member of WISE, arrested on secret FBI evidence revealing his support for terrorism.

Yet as far as "see no Islamic evil" politicians, both Democrats *and* Republicans, Americans in general, and Tennesseans in particular, are supposed to believe that Samar Ali was either completely unaware of these associations, or that none of them are germane with regard to her position as a director of Tennessee's ECD. Moreover, none of these associations should be questioned, criticized or investigated — lest one be branded Islamophobic for daring to do so.

In the prevailing political climate, such an attitude is to be expected. During the presidential campaign, Americans were [told](#) by President Obama that al-Qaeda is "on the run," even as four Americans were murdered in Benghazi, and the ensuing disinformation campaign blaming it on a video was perpetrated by a willing media. The "Arab Spring" has been an equally enduring myth that is rapidly coming undone, as Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi brutally [consolidates](#) his Muslim Brotherhood-dominated dictatorship. The administration now considers it "feasible" to [move](#) Guantanamo Bay terrorists to U.S. prisons, even as potential terror attacks to free them are ignored. Thus, for the true believers, the potential of Sharia finance occurring in Tennessee, or anywhere else in the country for that matter, is nothing more than the stuff of overwrought imaginations "Islamophobia."

In an essay entitled "Islamic Finance or Financing Islamism," Alex Alexiev, senior analyst with the national security division of the Rand Corporation, contends that if Western banks endorse Sharia finance, they will "end up becoming what Lenin called useful idiots or worse to the Islamists. And it is a very thin line between that and outright complicity in the Islamist agenda." When the only reasons for endorsing Sharia finance come down to willful blindness, or outright collaboration with Islamic terror, America's political priorities are seriously out of whack.

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