

## Islamist leader in call for revolution

Natalie O'Brien | September 26, 2007

**THE mysterious sheik behind the Australian chapter of Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir has revealed the organisation's support for military coups and revolutions to overthrow non-Muslim governments worldwide.**

Ismail Al Wahwah, who was little known until last month when he was banned from a Hizb ut-Tahrir conference in Indonesia, spoke out on an Arabic radio program that revealed him as the "active member" of the group in Australia.

In an interview conducted in Arabic on SBS radio last month, he attacked the West's lack of values and backed the use of suicide bombings in Iraq and Palestine, even if they killed Australians.

"I say any occupied people have the responsibility to defend their country," he said in the interview, which The Australian had translated into English. "The victim ... should not be asked how he is defending himself."

Sheik Wahwah is understood to be the unofficial leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Australia. The Australian has obtained the first pictures of the man widely known in the Muslim community as Abu Anas.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's media spokesman, Wassim Doureihy, denied the sheik was the group's leader in Australia, saying Sheik Wahwah was a senior member and that his brother, Ashraf, a civil engineer at North Sydney Council, was the official leader.

But Sheik Wahwah is sent to address senior members of the Islamic community in Sydney on behalf of Hizb ut-Tahrir, and he was Australia's representative for the Indonesian conference.

On the radio program, he was introduced as the "active member" of the party - a statement he did not correct.

Hizb ut-Tahrir is a secretive organisation known as the Party of Islamic Liberation, which advocates the destruction of Western civilisation and the overthrow of governments and their replacement by Islamic rule.

The group is banned in Europe, China and Saudi Arabia, but remains legal in Britain and Australia, actively pushing the idea of a Muslim rule.

It has been investigated by ASIO but there is not enough evidence to proscribe it as a terrorist organisation. Five years ago, most Western observers did not consider Hizb ut-Tahrir a serious threat, but its influence has grown and it now has a presence in about 45 countries.

Sheik Wahwah has refused to speak to the mainstream media in Australia.

In his radio interview, he said the allegations that the failed London bomb plotters were linked to Hizb ut-Tahrir was another example of the clash of civilisations and the West's dropping of one of its most basic values - the presumption of innocence until proven guilty.

Sheik Wahwah expressed support for violent means to overthrow governments to achieve the group's aim of a caliphate.

He said if nations did not respond to the wishes of their people, the people should use all the powers they had, including the army, to usurp the rulers.

"It is up to the Ummah (community) to sort out its own matter with these rulers and remove their ruler in a public manner," he said.

"It could be such as a public revolution, public disobedience or a military coup ...

"We are in the front line with the Ummah. We don't engage in militant activities. Our case is to make the case of Islam the case of the Ummah."

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