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The recruits train in Kashmir, claimed by Pakistan and India

The UK Government is being urged to investigate claims that young British Muslims are being trained and armed to fight abroad.

An extremist religious organisation is believed to be targeting young men in cities such as London and Birmingham to fight a holy war (jihad) in Chechnya and Kashmir.

The recruits are trained in all aspects of warfare, with advanced training available abroad.

Adi Ya Ya, a 25-year-old from north London, spent four months at a military training camp in Kashmir.

He returned to the UK to recruit others to fight for independence in Kashmir.

"I learned everything with respect to fighting - making bombs, using artillery, using a Kalashnikov, how to ambush," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

Sakina Security Services, an international organisation funded by wealthy individuals, ran the course.

Its website says it specialises in "high risk jobs in the former Soviet Union and in the civil war arenas of the world".

Adi Ya Ya says the recruits trained to defend fellow Muslims.

"If that means that we learn how to make bombs, then we learn

“
It's not difficult to make bombs these days, you can pick that up off the net
”

Adi Ya Ya

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how to make bombs. If that means that we learn how to kill, we learn how to kill."

"In Britain we do everything that is necessary in order for us to defend ourselves in this country in case there ever was any fighting taking place in this country, but we don't do anything that's against the law.

"We do everything except using artillery. It's not difficult to make bombs these days, you can pick that up off the net."



Islamic rebels are among those fighting the Russians in Chechnya

Sakina's website advertises a two-week course in the US called the Ultimate Jihad Challenge. It states: "Due to the arms laws of the UK, all serious firearms training must be done overseas.

"The course emphasis is on practical live-fire training. You will fire between 2,000 and 3,000 rounds of mixed calibre ammunition."

The police say they are aware of the organisation, and it is not an offence to run the training camps, so long as the techniques taught are within the law.

Holy cause

Adi Ya Ya says he thinks of himself as "a soldier of Islam".

The Muslim peer, Lord Ahmed of Rotherham, is disturbed that organisations are exploiting religion for their own purposes.

"If somebody is doing any training for activities that are illegal, then obviously Islam should not be used - or misused - in that context."

High unemployment and racism means young British Muslims can be vulnerable to fundamentalists, he told BBC News Online.

"When you have young people born in this country, bred in this country, who see the lack of opportunities, they start searching for their identity.

"They are vulnerable to groups and dissidents looking for recruits. I'm confident that there isn't a big number involved, but never the less, it's worrying."

Dr Ghayasuddin Siddiqui, leader of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain, says there is no evidence that young men are

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“
When you have young people born in this country who see the lack of opportunities, they start searching for their identity
”

Lord Ahmed of Rotherham

signing up for the holy war.

"We are a law-abiding community. But 80% of the Pakistanis living in this country come from Kashmir. The people being killed are their kith and kin."

'Not terrorist organisation'

Professor Paul Wilkinson, the director of the centre for the study of terrorism at St Andrews University, said although Sakina was not involved in terrorism, other groups operating in the UK could well be.

Sakina's operational head is Muhammad Jameel, a British-born Muslim linked with the leading fundamentalists Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed and Sheikh Abu Hamza al-Masri.

Egyptian-born Sheikh Abu Hamza runs north London's Finsbury Park mosque. He has lived in London for 20 years, and has a long history of support for Islamist causes.



Sheik Abu Hamza al-Masri

His son, Mohammed Mustafa Kamel, was among 10 British and French citizens jailed in Yemen for a terrorist plot last August.

Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed, judge of the Sharia Court of the UK and founder of the Muslim party Al-Muhajiroun, has said he wants the UK to become an Islamic state.

The party holds talks on campuses, and reports say students joining up are later told of the possibility of engaging in military struggles "for the sake of Islam".

Lord Ahmed says young Muslims concerned for their people should resist such overtures.

"There is no need for them to fight an armed struggle. There are other ways to fight for what you believe in."

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