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EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR FATWA AND RESEARCH (ECFR)

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- Seeks to make the teachings of Islamic scholars in Europe consistent with Sharia Law
- "Martyrdom operations are not suicide and should not be deemed as unjustifiable means of endangering one's life."

The European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) was [established](#) in March 1997 by the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe, an [umbrella](#) group for more than 30 [Muslim Brotherhood](#) affiliates on the continent. [Chaired](#) by Global Muslim Brotherhood leader (and [Hamis](#) spiritual adviser) [Yusuf Al-Qaradawi](#), ECFR [seeks](#) to [bring](#) together European-based Muslim scholars and reconcile their various opinions regarding Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), so as to make them consistent with [Sharia Law](#). Toward that end, the Council regularly issues [fatwas](#) (religious legal rulings) that teach European Muslims how to properly abide by the precepts of Sharia. One ECFR fatwa states explicitly that Muslims everywhere [should](#) live not under laws enacted by legislators and democratic institutions, but under Sharia, which "cannot be amended to conform to changing human values and standards," and which represents "the absolute norm to which all human values and conduct must conform."

The [Gatestone Institute](#) notes that "the fatwas issued by the ECFR reflect the Muslim Brotherhood's fierce opposition to the separation of church/mosque and state." For example, a fatwa issued by Yusuf Al-Qaradawi [states](#) that "the acceptance of secularism means abandonment of Sharia, a denial of the divine guidance, and a rejection of Allah's injunctions," and thus "is a downright apostasy."

Additional examples of ECFR fatwas include the following:

- In the aftermath of a 2003 Palestinian suicide bombing in Israel that killed twenty people, including five Americans, one of ECFR's leaders, [Sheik Faysal Mawlawi](#), issued a fatwa [asserting](#) that "martyrdom operations are not suicide [which Islam purportedly prohibits] and [thus] should not be deemed as unjustifiable means of endangering one's life." Explaining that such acts are "a sacred duty carried out in self-defense," Mawlawi added: "Whoever is killed in such missions is a martyr, may Allah bless him with high esteem." At a [conference](#) in July of that same year, ECFR president Yusuf Al-Qaradawi agreed that "martyrdom operations ... are not in any way included in the framework of prohibited terrorism, even if the victims include some civilians."
- A fatwa on the notion of [equal rights](#) for women [says](#) that only "lame arguments ... tend to give both males and females equal shares of inheritance."
- A fatwa regarding a variety of [women's issues](#) says that female [rape victims](#) should be punished if they were dressed "immodestly" at the time of their violation.

- A fatwa on [religious freedom](#) states: "All Muslim jurists [agree](#) that the apostate is to be punished. However, they differ regarding the punishment itself. The majority of them go for killing; meaning that an apostate is to be sentenced to death."
- Reflecting ECFR's uncompromising rejection of Israel's right to exist, Al-Qaradawi in 2004 issued a fatwa [describing](#) the Jewish state as an "evil" "colonialist," "occupational," "racist," "[plundering]," "military" society of "tyrants," "oppressors," and "invaders" who "came from outside the region ... to occupy Palestine and settle in it." Characterizing Israeli soldiers and civilians alike as members of "the army of the sons of Zion," Al-Qaradawi added: "Those who are invaded [i.e., the Palestinians] have the right to fight the invaders with all means at their disposal ... This is a Jihad of necessity, as the clerics call it, and not Jihad of choice."

A *Wall Street Journal* [reporter](#) who attended ECFR's annual meeting in 2004, quoted one of the event's guest speakers – a pro-Sharia religious figure from Sudan – as having said that "extremist fundamentalist powers based on aggression on the part of the Crusader and Zionist alliance in the West are now preparing their cultural strategy according to a new wave of secular tendencies." The reporter also said that, at the same meeting:

- "members, speaking in Arabic, explained how European Muslim family life was under attack";
- "traditional norms that directly contradict Western law and society, especially regarding women and marriage," were promoted;
- one Council member warned that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an infamous 19th Century anti-Semitic forgery written in czarist Russia, "was evidence of a Jewish plot to undermine Muslim moral values through sexual permissiveness."

To [promote](#) its Islamic supremacist ideology as much as possible, ECFR makes "relentless efforts with the official authorities in European countries to officially recognize the [C]ouncil, and [to] refer to it to see the provisions of Islamic Sharia." The Council also holds seminars "to discuss some issues of jurisprudence." And it produces bulletins, advisory opinions, and research studies on Sharia's positions regarding a variety of moral issues, and translates these documents into European languages.

Though ECFR regulations [stipulate](#) that no more than 25 percent of the Council's members can be non-European, it has been reported that somewhere between one-third and one-half of all ECFR members currently hail from non-European nations, mostly in the Middle East.