

# ISLAMIC SCHOOLS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The horrific world of Islamic madrassas -- and who pays for them.

May 30, 2011 Frank Crimi



(/sites/default/files/uploads/2011/05/pakmad.jpg)

Recently released American diplomatic cables have revealed (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/22/us-pakistan-saudi-uae-idUSTRE74L0ER20110522>) Saudi Arabian and United Arab Emirate donors to be spending \$100 million a year to fund a Pakistani network of jihadist religious schools. While these Islamic schools -- known as madrassas -- are better known as places to recruit and train young boys and girls as terrorist fighters and suicide bombers, they have other equally disturbing uses.

Madrassas have been cited as major links to terrorist organizations, providing (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/analyses/madrassas.html>) militant groups juvenile recruits, organizational bases, transit points and military training. While wealthy Arab donors have long been suspected of funding them, the diplomatic documents also pointed (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/22/us-pakistan-saudi-uae-idUSTRE74L0ER20110522>) to direct active support by both the Saudi Arabian and UAE governments.

Most of the funds in question were sent (<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/05/22/us-pakistan-saudi-uae-idUSTRE74L0ER20110522>) to madrassas in Pakistan's Punjab province. Despite a reputation as the most moderate of Pakistani provinces, reports ([http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2009/09/jihad\\_in\\_pakistans\\_south\\_punja.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2009/09/jihad_in_pakistans_south_punja.php)) from 2008 have claimed anywhere from 5,000 to 9,000 Punjab children to be fighting in Afghanistan.

In either case, the Pakistanis, according to the cables, reportedly turned a fearful blind eye to the issue, stating ([http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/05/pakistani\\_government\\_2.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/05/pakistani_government_2.php)) "The provincial and federal governments, while fully aware of the problem, appear to fear direct confrontation with these extremist groups."

According (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-india-cables/the-cables/article2038018.ece>) to the cable the juveniles -- as young as age 8 -- were being recruited from mostly large, poverty stricken families. As such, each child's family would receive a \$6500 compensation as well as "God's favor," if the child happened to be martyred along the way.

Once enrolled (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/the-india-cables/the-cables/article2038018.ece>) in the madrassa, children would then be isolated from direct contact with the outside world and "taught sectarian extremism and hatred for non-Muslims." After several months of indoctrination, they would then be sent to more established training camps before going on to wage jihad, either as combat insurgents or as suicide bombers.

So successful (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers15%5Cpaper1487.html>) are madrassas as jihad producers that it has been reported (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers15%5Cpaper1487.html>) that all the leaders and cadres of the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT); 90 percent of the Taliban's leaders and cadres; and 70 percent of the leaders and cadres of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM) and the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) are madrassa alumni.

As centers of anti-Western hate, madrassas litter the entire Muslim world, but the ones in Pakistan are the most extensive and well organized. While Pakistan's government accounts (<http://ipripak.org/journal/winter2005/madrassas.shtml>) for 11,221 registered madrassas, the estimates of unregistered madrassas range from 20,000 to 45,000 with a student population between 1.1 and to 1.9 million.

Moreover, Pakistan's Islamic jihadist schools are home to the largest contingent of foreign nationals, hailing (<http://www.modernghana.com/newsp/208749/1/pagenum5/madrassa-breeding-ground-of-jihadists.html>) from such places as Afghanistan, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, Chechnya, Yemen, Somalia, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Australia, Western Europe and North America.

Of course, not all madrassa graduates go back to their respective countries as motivated jihadi terrorists. Instead, they utilize a clerical role in the mosques of their respective countries to preach hatred against the West and the killing of Jews and Christians.

However, one former madrassa graduate said that there are distinct differences (<http://www.modernghana.com/newsp/208749/1/pagenum5/madrassa-breeding-ground-of-jihadists.html>) between the types of graduate the madrassas actually produce. To that end, a madrassa is more prone to graduate “cannon fodder for the Taliban and local sectarian thugs” and not technically literate terrorists who “plan al Qaeda operations around the world.”

Part of that result comes from the economically and technology stagnant background of most madrassa recruits. Unfortunately, the other part comes from the fact that many madrassas have less to do with promoting jihad than in promoting the sexual predilections of its leaders.

Despite its reputation as a jihad incubator, many argue that madrassas are nothing more than fronts for a serial collection (<http://articles.latimes.com/2005/oct/09/news/adfg-abuse9>) of sexual predators and pedophiles, places where beatings, rape and imprisonment are common.

For example, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan claimed one 11-year old boy was routinely beaten with iron rods at a madrassa in the northern Pakistani city of Faisalabad and was chained when he tried to escape. While the madrassa teacher denied the torture allegations, he did admit “it is a practice to chain students.”

Disturbing recent reports (<http://www.indianmuslimobserver.com/2010/07/madrasah-madrassa-and-rogue-sharia-law.html>) from some of Pakistan’s madrassas include a 12-year old boy scarred with a hot iron for refusing sexual advances by a teacher; a 14-year old boy drenched in acid for refusing sexual intercourse with a cleric; and a 3-year old sexually assaulted by a teacher.

Compounding the horrific issue is that some of the children’s parents often don’t know the true intent of his child’s madrassa. One man recently sent his 16 year old to the Qayum Jan madrassa in northwest Pakistan thinking (<http://www.indianmuslimobserver.com/2010/07/madrasah-madrassa-and-rogue-sharia-law.html>) he was going to graduate as a “Muslim service provider” only to receive news that his son had gone off to kill himself as a suicide bomber.

One illiterate father had thought (<http://www.indianmuslimobserver.com/2010/07/madrasah-madrassa-and-rogue-sharia-law.html>) he had signed a document giving his family “charity money” but instead had signed a marriage certificate betrothing his 9-year old daughter to the head cleric of her school.

While Asma Jehanghir, chairwoman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, has said “The mullahs think they are above the law... We have to break this wall of silence,”

it’s much easier said than done. As one Pakistani official said (<http://articles.latimes.com/2005/oct/09/news/adfg-abuse9>), “It’s often easier to tackle Islamic militants than to confront the cultural taboo on publicly airing alleged sex crimes and challenging influential clerics.”

To illustrate that point, one 13-year old Pakistani boy who had complained (<http://www.indianmuslimobserver.com/2010/07/madrasah-madrassa-and-rogue-sharia->

*law.html*) of being sodomized for several weeks by an instructor, reported the incident when doctors found signs of sodomy on his body. However, when the cleric in question was taken into custody, several hundred of his supporters stormed the jail and secured his release.

While Arab fundamentalists believe that their financing of madrassas constitute a well-placed investment in the destruction of the West, it has also sustained the corruption and destruction of an entire generation of their own children. Sadly, it's a price they are more than willing to pay.

**Frank Crimi is a writer living in San Diego, California. You can read more of Frank's work at his blog, [www.politicallyunbalanced.com](http://www.politicallyunbalanced.com) (<http://www.politicallyunbalanced.com/>).**

## **ABOUT FRANK CRIMI**

Frank Crimi is a San Diego-based writer and author of the book *Raining Frogs and Heart Attacks*. You can read more of Frank's work at his blog, [www.politicallyunbalanced.com](http://www.politicallyunbalanced.com).