

Scots Koran revisionist offered police guard

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A SCOTTISH publisher who has published a new translation of the Koran that challenges many of its accepted statements on issues including violence, polygamy and female dress has been offered police protection amid fears for his safety.

Paigham Mustafa, who remains the only person to be issued with a fatwa by religious leaders in the West, was visited at his home by detectives following the release of his new book, *The Quran: God's Message to Mankind*.

In it he claims that Islamic leaders in the UK are perpetuating falsehoods about the religious text, including the belief that Islam condones violence against non-Muslims, domestic violence and polygamy, that it requires women to cover their faces, and that murder, including honour killings, can be justified.

Last week *The Sunday Times* reported that Mustafa has spent more than a decade researching the book to highlight what he sees as widespread misrepresentation, despite the 2001 fatwa still being in place.

Issued jointly by 15 imams, the fatwa accused him of spreading "sedition" and "satanic thoughts" in magazines he produced. Some UK Muslims compared him with Salman Rushdie, who was the subject of a fatwa declared by the Iranian government in response to his book, *The Satanic Verses*.

Mustafa was ostracised by family and friends, and forced

to withdraw from social life, even missing his father's funeral, because he feared violent repercussions. With the help of his then local MP Des Browne, a former Labour defence secretary, he sought, unsuccessfully, to have the fatwa withdrawn, and it remains in place.

The 58-year-old father-of-three, who was raised a Sunni, discussed safety arrangements with CID officers at his home, amid fears of possible reprisals by extremists.

Earlier this year Asad Shah, a Glasgow shopkeeper, was killed by a fellow Muslim who accused him of disrespecting Islam. Jalal Uddin, an imam from Rochdale, was murdered by an Isis-supporting Muslim who accused him of practising a form of healing he deemed blasphemous.

Mustafa said: "The police visited my home after reading about my book in the media. They are concerned about the security risks that I and my family face after the book's publication, and I fully understand that. Family and friends also contacted me following the media coverage to say they had seen negative comments on social media.

"The police wanted to offer security advice, and I told them I thought that was a good idea, so I'm meeting them next week to discuss the matter in more detail."

Mustafa said he has received messages of support for his stance and that he has no regrets. "I'm doing this because I believe in the word of the Koran and it troubles me that it's being used falsely to justify, not only terrorism and violence, but a whole range of



Mustafa faces security risks

practices that are harmful and unnecessary, and that are destroying people's lives on a daily basis," he said.

Mazhar Khan, a spokesman for the Muslim Council of Scotland, said: "The claims of this person are known and are rejected by mainstream Muslims. He appears to be repeating his views, now to possibly gain some publicity for his book.

"We are, however, unaware of anyone in Scotland threatening him. We live in a free society and he's entitled to his opinions. If he is being threatened by anyone, he should report it to the police."

Mustafa is hosting a number of speaking events to discuss issues raised in his book. The first is being held on November 23 at 6.30pm at The Coffee Pot, on Woodlands Road in Glasgow.

For tickets, visit [facebook.com/pg/thequrangodsmessagetomankind](https://www.facebook.com/pg/thequrangodsmessagetomankind)