# Islamic youth camp cancelled after security fears and accusations of Islamophobia



An Islamic summer camp due to run in Hertfordshire has been cancelled amid a swirl of accusations that it risks exposing children to extremist views and counterclaims that the decision was driven by Islamophobic hostility. Organisers Ahlulbayt Islamic Mission (AIM) said the weekend residential, known as Camp Wilayah, was called off after what it described as serious threats from far‑right activists and political lobbying that made the event unsafe for participants. Reporting on the row, national titles and community organisations set out sharply contrasting accounts of both the camp’s purpose and the motives for its removal from the calendar. (Sources: Express; AIM statement; Jewish Chronicle)

Organisers’ promotional material presents Camp Wilayah as a four‑day outdoor retreat combining adventure activities with faith‑based talks and discussion circles. The AIM website lists climbing, abseiling, archery and team‑building alongside nightly lectures and structured discussion for girls aged nine to 14 and boys aged nine to 13, and sets out practical details for parents including packing lists, catering arrangements and a cancellation policy. Media coverage has also cited the advertised cost for the event — figures reported vary between outlets. (Sources: AIM camp page; Express; Jewish Chronicle; Middle East Forum)

AIM’s public information stresses safeguarding measures: volunteers checked under Disclosure and Barring Service procedures, first‑aid provision and a stated no‑phones policy for the residential. The charity’s promotional text also makes clear expectations of participants, including a requirement for girls to wear the hijab and separate accommodation and activities by gender aside from joint prayers and talks. Organisers present these rules as part of the retreat’s religious ethos and safety arrangements. (Source: AIM camp page)

Opponents point to the charity’s wider online footprint and public posts as the grounds for concern. Campaigners and some politicians have highlighted social media content in which AIM has, according to reports, praised Iran’s supreme leader and shared imagery linked to figures such as Qassem Soleimani; critics say other posts have suggested a refusal to condemn the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023. Those complaints have been used to argue that the camp could be used to symbolically connect young children with political or revolutionary causes. AIM and its supporters reject those characterisations. (Sources: Express; Jewish Chronicle; UK Lawyers for Israel; Iran International; Middle East Forum)

The practical trigger for the cancellation appears to have been logistical and security concerns. Hertfordshire Scouts, which had been providing the Phasels Wood activity centre as the venue, told organisers that securing the site perimeter against potential disruption was not workable and the booking was subsequently withdrawn. Media reports say camp organisers were then told that the combination of protests and threats presented an unacceptable risk to families and children. (Sources: Jewish Chronicle; Express)

AIM has framed the decision as a forced postponement and decried what it calls a campaign of “Islamophobic” hostility. In a statement posted on its website the charity said: “No evidence of wrongdoing has ever been found at Camp Wilayah, yet our children are being punished simply for their faith,” adding that the move followed “threats” and mobilisation by political groups. The charity said it would continue its community work while condemning “a broader climate of hatred.” (Source: AIM postponement statement)

Legal and campaign groups that had flagged the event welcomed the cancellation and urged formal action. UK Lawyers for Israel publicly called for councils to refer the matter to Prevent, to open child‑protection inquiries and to consider whether statutory public‑order or counter‑terrorism legislation is engaged, citing social posts they say glorify martyrdom and praise Iran’s leadership. That group argued the closed, immersive setting of a residential retreat makes it particularly vulnerable to embedding ideological allegiance at a formative age. (Sources: UK Lawyers for Israel; Iran International)

Commentators and think‑tanks have placed the row in a wider context of anxiety about foreign influence and radicalisation on the one hand, and rising Islamophobia and the curtailment of religious community spaces on the other. Some organisations that have examined AIM’s materials describe deliberate political messaging; others — including AIM itself — insist the event is a decade‑long community tradition that is wholesome and focused on faith and outdoor education. The dispute underlines the difficulty of reconciling child‑protection concerns with the right to religious education and association in contested public space. (Sources: Middle East Forum; Iran International; AIM statement)

The controversy has prompted responses from elected representatives and parties across the spectrum. Conservative MP Robert Jenrick has said children should not be allowed to attend events run by backers of the Iranian regime, while local Reform UK figures had signalled they would mobilise opposition. At the same time, AIM and its supporters say families are being unfairly targeted for practising their faith. Local authorities have been urged to consider referrals and safeguarding inquiries, but there has been no public announcement of a criminal investigation. For now, the retreat remains cancelled and the debate over how to assess risk, protect children and respect faith communities is likely to continue. (Sources: Express; Jewish Chronicle; UK Lawyers for Israel)

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2095135/Pro-Iran-summer-camp-for-kids-cancelled-amid-extremism-fears), [[3]](https://www.aimislam.com/camp-wilayah-postponed-amid-threats-of-protests/), [[5]](https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/iranian-children-summer-camp-cancelled-scouts-iyjv12lx)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.aimislam.com/camp/), [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2095135/Pro-Iran-summer-camp-for-kids-cancelled-amid-extremism-fears), [[5]](https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/iranian-children-summer-camp-cancelled-scouts-iyjv12lx), [[7]](https://www.meforum.org/fwi/fwi-news/pro-iran-islamists-running-summer-camp-outside-of-london)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.aimislam.com/camp/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2095135/Pro-Iran-summer-camp-for-kids-cancelled-amid-extremism-fears), [[5]](https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/iranian-children-summer-camp-cancelled-scouts-iyjv12lx), [[4]](https://www.uklfi.com/calls-for-extremist-childrens-summer-camp-to-be-cancelled), [[6]](https://www.lranintl.com/en/202507138314), [[7]](https://www.meforum.org/fwi/fwi-news/pro-iran-islamists-running-summer-camp-outside-of-london)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/iranian-children-summer-camp-cancelled-scouts-iyjv12lx), [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2095135/Pro-Iran-summer-camp-for-kids-cancelled-amid-extremism-fears)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.aimislam.com/camp-wilayah-postponed-amid-threats-of-protests/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[4]](https://www.uklfi.com/calls-for-extremist-childrens-summer-camp-to-be-cancelled), [[6]](https://www.lranintl.com/en/202507138314)
* Paragraph 8 – [[7]](https://www.meforum.org/fwi/fwi-news/pro-iran-islamists-running-summer-camp-outside-of-london), [[6]](https://www.lranintl.com/en/202507138314), [[3]](https://www.aimislam.com/camp-wilayah-postponed-amid-threats-of-protests/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2095135/Pro-Iran-summer-camp-for-kids-cancelled-amid-extremism-fears), [[5]](https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/iranian-children-summer-camp-cancelled-scouts-iyjv12lx), [[4]](https://www.uklfi.com/calls-for-extremist-childrens-summer-camp-to-be-cancelled)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2095135/Pro-Iran-summer-camp-for-kids-cancelled-amid-extremism-fears> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.aimislam.com/camp/> - AIM’s Camp Wilayah page advertises a residential four‑day youth retreat held at Phasels Wood Activity Centre in Kings Langley. It presents activities such as climbing, abseiling, archery, team building and nightly talks alongside faith‑based discussion circles. Age groups are listed as girls 9–14 and boys 9–13, with rules requiring physical and social hijab, gender‑segregated accommodation and joint prayers or talks only. The page emphasises safeguarding measures, DBS‑checked volunteers, first‑aid provision and a no‑phones policy. It includes logistical details, packing lists, catering arrangements and a cancellation and refund policy for registered participants. The site invites registration and parental consent information online.
3. <https://www.aimislam.com/camp-wilayah-postponed-amid-threats-of-protests/> - The AIM statement titled 'Camp Wilayah Postponed Amid Threats of Protests at Children’s Event' announces that the planned Phasels Wood weekend will not proceed following discussions with Hertfordshire Scouts and serious threats to participant safety. AIM frames the decision as forced by Islamophobic hostility from political lobby groups, media and far‑right activists, and rejects allegations of wrongdoing. The statement defends Camp Wilayah as a decade‑long wholesome tradition and accuses Reform UK and UK Lawyers for Israel of campaigning to disrupt children’s events. It stresses child safety priorities and vows to continue community work and condemns a broader climate of hatred.
4. <https://www.uklfi.com/calls-for-extremist-childrens-summer-camp-to-be-cancelled> - UK Lawyers for Israel urged authorities to halt Camp Wilayah, arguing the Ahlulbayt Islamic Mission presents safeguarding and counter‑extremism risks. The group cites social posts it says glorify martyrdom, praise Iran’s Supreme Leader and depict Israel as genocidal, and asks Brent and Hertfordshire councils to refer the matter to Prevent, open child protection inquiries and consider criminal investigation. UKLFI warns the camp could embed ideological allegiance in young children and references sections of the Public Order Act, the Counter‑Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Children Act 1989 to support its demands. The statement called for immediate multi‑agency safeguarding action.
5. <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/iranian-children-summer-camp-cancelled-scouts-iyjv12lx> - The Jewish Chronicle reported that Hertfordshire Scouts cancelled Camp Wilayah’s booking at Phasels Wood over a perceived safety risk. The piece states Camp Wilayah, organised by Ahlulbayt Islamic Mission, was due to run for children aged nine to fourteen and charged £225 per child. The Jewish Chronicle cites AIM social posts praising Ayatollah Khamenei and a clip suggesting ‘Zionists brought this disaster on themselves’ after October 7, 2023. It quotes UK Lawyers for Israel and notes images of Khamenei and clerics at past camps. The Scouts said securing the site perimeter against disruption proved unworkable. The article includes AIM responses.
6. <https://www.lranintl.com/en/202507138314> - The Iran International report summarises concerns raised about Camp Wilayah and the Ahlulbayt Islamic Mission, referencing a Telegraph story and warnings from legal and political figures. It says UK Lawyers for Israel argued the camp promotes revolutionary ideology aligned with Ayatollah Khamenei, and that girls must wear hijab while being segregated from boys. The piece notes AIM’s social posts praising Khamenei and Qassem Soleimani and reproduces UKLFI’s call for councils to refer the matter to Prevent and to investigate safeguarding risks. Iran International frames the controversy within broader anxieties over Iranian influence in the UK. It quotes officials and commentators.
7. <https://www.meforum.org/fwi/fwi-news/pro-iran-islamists-running-summer-camp-outside-of-london> - The Middle East Forum article examines Camp Wilayah and the Ahlulbayt Islamic Mission, arguing the charity acts as a pro‑Iran platform. It cites social media imagery glorifying figures such as Qassem Soleimani and others, reports promotional material showing Khomeini and Khamenei references, and notes past speakers accused of extremist rhetoric. MEF details camp activities including climbing, archery and faith discussions, highlights payment of around £225, and warns of closed, immersive settings being vulnerable to ideological influence. The piece references think‑tank findings and media reports to support its contention that the camp may serve political rather than purely recreational purposes locally.