

# Mosque, Paediatrician and Radical Islamists

Contrary to the assurances of the president of Muslim League in the Republic of Poland, the Ministry of Interior and Administration (MSWiA) does not know who finances the building of the Centre of Islamic Culture in Warsaw.

In this year's spring, Samir Ismail became very popular after it had turned out that the organisation he presides – the Muslim League in RP – has been building a mosque in Warsaw's Ochota district.

The media took an interest in Ismail, who told them about himself and his family. He came to Poland from Kuwait in 1986 to study medicine. He works as a paediatrician.

In 2004, together with 100 other Muslims he registered the Muslim League in RP. The authorities of the organisation consisted mainly – apart from Ali Abi Issa, the Imam from Wrocław – of Arabian doctors. The League operates independently of the Muslim Religious Union in Poland, which unites mostly Polish Tatars.

As Ismail explained, the new organisation was established due to the differences in various sects of Islam. The statute of the organisation determines that the members will follow the hanefian sub-sect, but the League is also open to maliki and shafi sub-sects.

Having about 5 thousand members, the Muslim Religious Union in Poland has strived for years to take back the plot in Ochota district, where it had planned to build a mosque as far back as before the war.

The Muslim League in RP, which in Warsaw has approximately 300 members, decided to take another way – they have purchased a new plot from a private investor.

The building permits were granted quickly, and the organisation soon commenced the development of the 3-storey Centre of Muslim Culture.

The 1030 m<sup>2</sup> building, consisting of lecture halls, a shop, a cafe as well as a mosque with 18m high minaret – is being erected at the *Rondo Zesłańców Syberyjskich* street.

## How to be a decent citizen

After the outbreak of protests against the mosque development, the opponents accused the League of links with Islamic fundamentalists.

Samir Ismail argued in *Gazeta Wyborcza*: “If any links with the blacklisted people have been revealed, we would be disbanded.”

During the interview with *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s journalist, Ismail talked about his involvement in the international organisations. He mentioned years 2001-2002, when he had a seat on the Federation of Students and Youth Organisations, and years 2004-2005, when he was a member of the citizenship committee in the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe (FIOE).

- My duty was to promote how to be a decent citizen – he said.

However, from what *Rzeczpospolita* has established, it appears that as early as in January 2009, Samir Ismail's name was on the FIOE list as the chairman of the educational division. The three-person work-group consisted - apart from him – of Walid Abu Shewarib, who was described as “the chairman of educational division in Islamic Congregation for Germany.”

The 47-years-old Abu Shewarib, born in Gaza Strip, is a stateless person. He runs a travel agency in Berlin. Among other trips, he offers pilgrimages to Mecca.

The prosecutor's office in Munich as well as the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Berlin shows his links with Hamas. According to *Der Spiegel*, in Islamic circles he is considered the chairman of Hamas in Germany. Shewarib firmly denies these accusations.

However, in February 2009, the prosecutor's office in Munich launched an inquiry into Shewarib's activity, its subject being “frauds, money laundering, forgery as well as supporting the organizations listed on the EU list of terroristic organisations.”

From the documents, possessed by *Rz*, it appears that Shewarib, commissioned by the chairman of the Islamic Community of Germany (IGD) - Ibrahim El-Zayat, was to collect hundreds of thousands euro and “pass them through the Belgian branch of al Aksa foundation to Islamic extremists.”

Shewarib has been an influential member of IGD for many years.

“It appears that the suspected El-Zayat and Abu Shewarib transferred considerable amounts of money. There is a well-grounded suspicion that through the suspected Shewarib the money went to terroristic organisations abroad” – the documents show. The prosecutor's investigation continues.

- For the sake of the investigation, we cannot reveal the details. We are also unable to determine when it will end – said Barbara Stockinger, the spokesman of I Division of Prosecutor's Office in Munich.

## Our mission – world domination

El-Zayat is regarded to be the main representative of Muslim Brotherhood in Germany. The Brotherhood, which was banned in Egypt, has its branches in 70 countries and fights against secular tendencies in Muslim states.

Its members promote the Holy War against West. On the cover of brotherhood's monthly magazine *Rissalat-al-Ikhwān*, issued in London, up to 2001, there was a slogan: “Our mission, world domination!”

The slogan disappeared after 9/11.

Yet, the magazine still publishes the brotherhood's motto: Allah is our goal, the prophet our leader and Koran our law. Jihad is our way and death for Allah our biggest hope.”

Up to this day, El-Zayat himself denies being a member of the Brotherhood. Nonetheless, he has been proclaimed an extremist by Egyptian authorities.

In March 2007, along with 39 members of the brotherhood, he was accused of “using terroristic methods in order to achieve political goals” by the military court in Cairo. On 15 April 2008 he was sentenced *in absentia* to 10 years in prison for “money laundering on behalf of a banned organisation.”

In 1995, in one of his articles, El-Zayat presented his vision of “Muslim Germany”: I think that in 2020, a Muslim will be the German prime minister. This country is our country and our duty is to improve it. With Allah’s help we will make a paradise out of it and hand it over to the Muslim community.”

Another suspect in the investigation involving Abu Shewarib is Oguz Ücücü, the chairman of the European Mosque Building and Support Society (EMUG), which gathers funding for building mosques.

The prosecutor’s office in Munich suspects that the money, instead of financing the building, were intended for the supporting of terroristic organizations.

## Federation or a cover-up?

Samir Ismail does not hide the fact that the Muslim League is a member of FIOE. Currently, FIOE which presents itself as an independent organisation defending the interests of Muslims forms a federation of 28 member organisations from EU and Turkey. Moldavia, Ukraine and Russia. It has its headquarters in Brussels in order to lobby the institutions of the union.

According to the report, issued in 2008, of American Foundation NEFA, established after 9/11 in order to fight against Islamic terrorism, FIOE is “a cover-up” which “unites the members of Muslim Brotherhood in Europe.”

In NEFA’s view, it has profound links with Hamas, and some of its member organisations have links also with al Kaida.”

The headquarters of FIOE, founded in 1989, were until recently located in London, in the offices of Islamic Foundation, which according to NEFA, is linked to Jamaat-e-Islami, a Pakistani fundamentalist Islamic party. This party, in 2005, determined an award of 60 thousand coronas for the assassination of the two Danish cartoonists, the authors of famous caricature of Muhammad.

When, in February 2009, the prosecutor’s office in Munich launched an inquiry into Walid Abu Shawarib case; the section devoted to the educational division disappeared from the FIOE’s web page for several months. It reappeared only in May; yet, without the names of Samir Ismail and Walid Abu Shawarib.

## The mysterious sponsor

Since the information about building the Warsaw mosque went into public, the opponents of the project have pointed to the mysterious sponsors of this investment.

Samir Ismail has consistently denied revealing their names. He only disclosed the fact that the main sponsor comes from the Saudi Arabia.

In March this year, he explained to *Gazeta Wyborcza* “There are several sponsors. The main sponsor is indeed a wealthy and respected person from Saudi Arabia, well-known for his charity actions. This person’s name, as well as other sponsors’, will be engraved in the commemorative plaque, which will be unveiled during the ceremony of opening. We will not do it earlier, as this is a Muslim custom.”

Ismail has repeatedly sent the distrustful people to the Ministry of Interior and Administration: “All money transfers from our sponsors are controlled by MSWiA” – he argued in interviews.

The only problem is that the role of MSWiA comes down to gathering information about personal changes in the authorities of religious sects.

- The Ministry of Interior and Administration does not possess or gather any data concerning the sources of financing the development of the Centre of Islamic Culture in Warsaw – said spokesman of the ministry, Malgorzata Wozniak.

The regulations do not permit that. According to the law, the person responsible for controlling international monetary transactions is the general inspector of financial information. He is in charge of validating every agreement, which amounts to more than 15 thousand euro and every transaction, which he may suspect of being involved in money laundering or supporting terrorism.

However, the general inspector of financial information does not even have the authority to confirm that he performs such a validation process.

- This information is under protection and cannot be the subject of answering to press questioning – explains Magdalena Kobos, spokesperson of the Ministry of Finance, which GIFI comes under.

*Rzeczpospolita* asked Samir Ismail to take a stance on the information gathered.

We wanted to know, among other things, why he believed the Ministry of Interior and Administration checks on the League’s settlements, what the group he had been a member of in FIOE did, how long he knew Walid Abu Shewarib and if he knew that in Germany there had been an inquiry launched into him and Shewarib.

Samir Ismail asked us to send the questions via e-mail. His answers are yet to come.