

Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary compares himself to Kevin Keegan at terror trial

From [Sky News](#) and the [London Evening Standard](#)

Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary has compared himself to Kevin Keegan, telling his trial that he is so famous he will be forever associated with leading a banned terrorist group.

Choudary, 57, from Ilford in east London, said he suffered from the “Kevin Keegan effect”, in a reference to the former England and Liverpool footballer.

Choudary is accused of directing a terrorist organisation called al-Muhajiroun (ALM) before and after his release from prison and for encouraging support for ISIS.

He is accused of delivering online lectures to a branch of the organisation in New York, which were recorded by undercover officers in the US between 2022 and 2023.

In one lecture he boasted of being labelled the “number one radicaliser in Britain” while in prison, where he was kept in a separation unit.

Paul Hynes KC, defending, asked if being the “naqib” or administrator of al-Muhajiroun was “what you were famous for” before he went to prison.

“Oh yes of course, it is the Kevin Keegan effect,” Choudary replied. “I have never moved on from him playing for Liverpool. If you ask people about Kevin Keegan, people say he plays football for Liverpool. They look at me as al-Muhajiroun.”

Choudary told the jury he had endorsed ISIS in 2014, but never joined the group, unlike many of his associates.

Later, he told the court that, before al-Muhajiroun was banned, he wanted to seek as much publicity as possible, adding “the more high profile the better.”

“Our methodology was based in the methods of the time to stand on the mountain and shout as loudly as you can. We used the BBC, CNN, ITV, and Sky or go to Trafalgar Square,” he added. “Our structure was very sophisticated – a top-down pyramid with committees and we would meet together. We had a very well-oiled dawah [proselytising] machine, it was very, very effective.”

“We had a big rally in Trafalgar Square, roads shows, at least 70 people became Muslim on the day. The publicity we garnered was very, very significant. We had presence on many, many university campuses.”

During an online meeting on September 11 2022, Choudary laughed while telling listeners that Omar Bakri Mohammed, who founded ALM, once advised charging members of the British media £9.11 to enter a place of worship where a press conference on the anniversary of 9/11 was held.

In hindsight, it probably wasn't a good joke, people say things when they're tired or relaxed – it was just a funny thing about the Japanese paying £9.11

In the passage, which has been shown to jurors during his trial at Woolwich Crown Court, Choudary could be heard saying that Mohammed also suggested starting the conference at the time the first plane went into the North Tower.

He also joked that some members of the press from Japan paid to attend, saying “irony is completely lost on the Japanese ... My joke was about the Japanese, saying they don't understand sarcasm or irony.”

Prosecutors said the “sickening” joke may tell jurors about the “collective mindset” of those attending the lecture.

ALM was proscribed as a terror organisation in the UK in 2010, though it is said the group has continued to exist under various names. Choudary has previously said that ALM was disbanded in 2004 because Mohammed had a shift in ideology.

Mr Hynes asked Choudary if he has ever directed a proscribed terror group, to which the defendant replied: "No, never."

Choudary told jurors that he has "always made sure that I abide by the laws in this country".

He denied inviting support to ALM through lectures to ITS because the group "didn't exist".

Choudary denies directing a terrorist organisation, membership of a proscribed organisation and addressing meetings to encourage support for a proscribed organisation over the internet from his home between June 2022 and July last year.

Khaled Hussein, 29, from Edmonton, Canada, denies membership of a proscribed organisation.

The case continues.