

Judge allowed to sit on sharia court set up by Hebdo protest cleric

From the [to double as “presiding judge” at the Muslim Arbitration Tribunal](#) (MAT). The MAT was established in 2007 by a hardline cleric, Sheikh Faiz-ul-Aqtab Siddiqi, who led an anti-Charlie Hebdo demonstration after 11 of the magazine’s staff were murdered by terrorists.

Unlike most sharia councils and tribunals, MAT has legal status under the 1996 Arbitration Act and its rulings can be enforced by the courts.

About four-fifths of its work is family and matrimonial disputes, where it has on occasions issued rulings that discriminate against women. In an inheritance dispute between three sisters and two brothers, the tribunal gave the men double their sisters’ inheritance.

MAT has handled cases of [quoting an Old Testament passage against homosexuality](#).

He fined Mike Overd £200 and threatened to jail him unless he paid £250 compensation to a man offended by the remarks. The conviction was quashed on appeal last month.

Mr Overd has always insisted he never read the offending words and said he was “amazed that the judge sees it as his role to dictate which parts of the Bible can and can’t be preached”.

A spokesman for the Judicial Office said Judge Qureshi had received permission for his sharia work, which was done on a voluntary basis. MAT could not be contacted for comment.