

# London warns British Muslims on Shariah in schools

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LONDON (RNS) The British government has warned a network of Islamic schools in the wake of a BBC investigation that claims extremist Shariah law is being taught to thousands of Muslim students.

The televised report, by the BBC's Panorama program, said as many as 5,000 pupils are being taught that thieves should have their hands cut off as punishment and that Jews are working to dominate the world.

The investigation, which aired Monday (Nov. 22), said young Muslims are being instructed in Shariah law that also preaches that non-believers in the Islamic faith are condemned to "hellfire."

Britain's coalition government swiftly issued a statement warning that "we will not accept any proposal where we have concerns about the people behind the proposal, or if we think the school will undermine British democracy."

The Panorama report said textbooks in the schools are part of the Saudi Arabian national curriculum, which includes diagrams for where cuts should be made to the hands and feet of thieves who violate Shariah law.

The report said teachings include punishments for homosexuality

ranging from being stoned to being thrown off a cliff, and that when Jews die they are transformed into pigs or apes.

Education Secretary Michael Gove issued his own warning, that extremism, anti-Semitism and homophobia will not be tolerated in British schools.

The Panorama investigation said the network of more than 40 Muslim private schools is part of an umbrella group calling itself the Saudi Students Clubs and Schools in Britain. The Saudi embassy in London disavowed any connection to the group.

"Any tutoring activities that may have taken place among any other group of Muslims in the United Kingdom are absolutely individual to that group and not affiliated to or endorsed by the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia," the embassy said in a statement.