

Muslim youths counter Islamic State with #NotInMyName Twitter campaign

by [Harry Bruinius](#)

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([The Christian Science Monitor](#)) Muslim youths around the globe have been using #NotInMyName on Twitter and other social media sites the past few days to denounce the well-publicized atrocities of Islamic State.

Launched by the British community organization Active Change Foundation, based in east London, the social media campaign urges young Muslim Twitter users to “fight back against ISIS,” as the rogue terror organization sweeping through Iraq and Syria has been called, and “denounce their violent actions in your own words.”

“I was appalled and sickened,” said Hanif Qadir, Active Change’s founder, on a video posted on the organization’s website. “There’s no rationale, there’s no religious understanding that these guys are applying to justify what they’re doing.”

Qadir started his community organization in 2003 to worked to help prevent violent street crime, community tensions, and violent extremism on east London streets.

The social media campaign comes as Islamic State has proven to have its own sophisticated social media campaign. Using what observers have called a “well-oiled” team of media and public relations experts, the group, also known as ISIL, has produced slick videos, well-timed tweets, and even developed an Arabic-language Twitter app called “The Dawn of Glad Tidings,” an official Islamic State product used to keep its users up-to-date on its latest posts and news.

But for the past few days, nearly 20,000 Tweets have used #NotInMyName to denounce the terror group on social media. This includes more than 3,000 messages posted Sunday evening to Monday morning Eastern time, according to Topsy, a social media metrics company based in San Francisco.

And the local British-based campaign has begun to go viral as users across the globe begin to post messages under the hashtag.

Mustafa Abu Bakr, a user in Nigeria, tweeted:

ISIS, Boko Haram, Taliban, Al-Qaeda...none of these represent #Islam.
#NotInMyName campaign is long overdue to educate people about Islam.

— Mustapha Abu Bakr (@Mustyblax) September 22, 2014

Ahmad Salkida, a user in the United Arab Emirates, tweeted:

True Islam teaches that forgiveness is the highest level of strength, and
revenge is the highest level of weakness #NotInMyName

— Ahmad Salkida (@ContactSalkida) September 22, 2014

But even as thousands tweet such messages, others have used the hashtag to taunt the message, and even to post Tweets supporting IS.

The social media campaign was launched last week with a video of young Muslims denouncing the terror group, which the Central Intelligence Agency has recently estimated has up to 31,500 fighters at its disposal, including 2,000 Western volunteers.

And experts say its media campaign on social media has helped recruit many of these fighter from the West, including as many as 100 Americans, officials say.

"No one else in extremism is using social media as effectively as the Islamic State right now," J.M. Berger, editor of INTELWIRE.com and author of the recent study "How ISIS Games Twitter," told the *Los Angeles Times*. "I am sure many are watching what they do with the intention to emulate it."

Organizers of #NotInMyName are hoping to fight back with a widespread campaign of their own.

"Young British Muslims are sick and tired of the hate-filled propaganda the terrorists ISIS and their supporters churn out on social media," said Qadir of Active Change to Huffington Post UK. "They are angry that the criminals are using the platforms to radicalize young people and spread their poisonous words of violence in the name of

Islam.”

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