

Press release: Charity Commission announces investigation into the Anatolia People's Cultural Centre

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has today (19 June 2017) announced that it opened a statutory inquiry into the [Anatolia People's Cultural Centre, registered charity number 1107957](#), in April 2016. The Commission did not previously make the inquiry public to avoid any potential prejudice to a criminal investigation by the Metropolitan Police and a consequent trial of a trustee of the charity for terrorism offences.

In April 2016 information was shared with the Commission by the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command that the charity's premises were searched due to an ongoing counter terrorism investigation. As a result of the search, a trustee of the charity was arrested on suspicion of terrorism offences and the charity's premises were later closed, and remain closed, by a court order. In addition to supporting the Metropolitan Police's criminal investigation, the Commission also had concerns about the trustees' management of the charity and whether its property, including its premises, were used solely to further the charity's stated purposes. The trustees have also repeatedly failed to file the charity's accounts in default of their legal duties.

The scope of the Commission's investigation is to consider the:

- administration, governance and management of the charity by the trustees
- financial controls and management of the charity and whether its funds have been properly expended solely for exclusively charitable purposes and can be accounted for
- conduct of the trustees
- whether or not the trustees have complied with and fulfilled their duties and responsibilities as trustees under charity law

As part of its investigation the Commission has exercised a number of its regulatory powers to protect any property that may be held in the name of the charity, restrict the trustees' fundraising activities without the Commission's prior authorisation and to suspend the trustee who was the subject of the police's investigation and subsequent trial. This trial has now concluded and the trustee was found not guilty. The trustee in question remains suspended and the Commission is considering further regulatory action.

In addition, the Commission has taken action using its new powers under section 181A (of the Charities Act 2011) to disqualify the charity's 5 other trustees from being a charity trustee for a period of 10 years as a result of their misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity. Further information will be provided on conclusion of the inquiry.

The Commission is not a prosecuting authority and the investigation of criminal offences is a matter for the police and/or other authorities. If charity property or assets are at risk the Commission will take action to protect these either of its own motion or in collaboration with other agencies.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's [online charity search tool](#).

Ends

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Notes to editors

1. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
3. Details of how the Commission reports on its regulatory work can be found on [GOV.UK](#).
4. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
5. The Commission's decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence in charities.
6. Miss Ayfer Yildiz was tried for 2 counts of disseminating of terrorist publications contrary to section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006 and found not guilty on both counts on 18 May 2017.
7. The new discretionary disqualification power in section 181A of the Charities Act 2011 brought in by the Charities Act 2016 allows the regulator to disqualify a person it considers unfit from being a trustee, for a maximum period of 15 years.
8. On 2 May 2017 the Commission made an order under section 181A of the Charities Act 2011, in respect of the 5 trustees, having satisfied itself that the statutory test had been met. The effect of the order, which came into force on 13 June 2017, is to disqualify the 5 individuals from being a charity trustee or trustee for a charity in respect of any charity in England and Wales (whether registered with the Commission or not) for a period of 10 years. The order also disqualifies them from holding any office or employment with senior management functions in any such charity for the same period.