

BIRMINGHAM FAITH LEADERS' GROUP



Monday 19th June 2017, 14:00

For immediate release

A Statement from Birmingham Faith Leader's Group IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ACT OF TERROR NEAR FINSBURY PARK MOSQUE, LONDON

Our prayers today are with all those affected by the act of terror perpetrated by a lone individual, it appears, specifically against the local Muslim community in the immediate environs of Finsbury Park Mosque and Muslim Welfare House, late last night.

Tragically, we have found it necessary, along with many others, to condemn terrorist acts, over a number of years. At a time of particularly high public tension, we believe our unequivocal condemnation of the act and our prayers for those impacted by it, are necessary. But, there is an important additional point we wish to make.

In the midst of the despair we might feel about yet another example of man's senseless inhumanity, there is hope and there is reason to be positive.

The immediate response of those caught up in the attack gives real cause for hope. Muslims, faced with verbal abuse by the attacker, and with no knowledge of whether further injury might be caused, appear to have overcome the lone attacker and held him, unmolested, until the police arrived to arrest him. Their restraint and the reported heroism of Imam Mohammed Mahmoud is something for which we should all be thankful.

From the Executive Secretary

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As leaders of Birmingham's faith communities, we believe and know that goodness will overcome evil, and we see evidence of that every day in our own communities here.

Over recent days, as the Holy Month of Ramadan draws towards its conclusion, we give thanks for the many Iftar meals in which we have participated both in Mosques and in non-Muslim settings, sharing together at dusk as our Muslim brothers and sisters end their daytime fast.

Across the city, the Great Get Together in memory of the late Jo Cox MP, was celebrated in joyous events which showed people of very different backgrounds and beliefs coming together to celebrate what they share in common and celebrating what they learn and gain from their differences.

Over many months the 'Love Your Neighbour' message has been emblazoned outside the worship places of all faiths, proclaiming our shared belief in the common good.

All this, and much else, gives the lie to the all-too-easy and lazy conclusion that 'religion lies at the root of many of the ills in the world'. We cannot and must not allow anyone to shift the responsibility for evil acts, onto some vague and misunderstood view of religion. Religion, faithfully practiced through worship, prayer and, most of all, through loving, sustaining service and action, is not the cause of evil but a powerful and effective response to it.

In the face of cruel acts of terrorism, let our response be to find strength in one another, strength in our communities, and strength, creativity and new friendships in our differences.

Ends.....