

Christian Muslim Forum

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Statement on the doubling of hate crime against mosques, 9 October 2017

[ITV reported today](#) that hate crime against mosques has doubled in the last year.

Arson, graffiti, assault, threats, vandalism and intimidating & threatening behaviour were recorded. Greater Manchester and London saw the biggest rise.

In response to the shocking figures, Bishop Toby Howarth, Julie Siddiqi and Imam Qari Asim of the Christian Muslim Forum issued the following statement:

[The Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth](#) said, "We need to be able to pray and to practise our religions without fear. As Christians, we are called to be good neighbours. When a man was stabbed outside Altrincham Mosque, the Rt Rev Libby Lane was one of several church leaders to send a message of support. The Bishop of Wolverhampton has spoken out against those who intimidate Muslims in the name of Christianity. An attack on any place of worship is an attack on the values of our country."

[Imam Qari Asim](#) of Leeds Makkah Mosque said, "It is extremely troubling that hate crimes against Muslims have doubled during 2017. Mosques are seen as the visible symbol of local Muslim communities and are therefore specifically targeted by bigots and Islamophobes.

Due to differences in how police forces record their statistics and the fact that not all forces are included in the figures, the true number of hate crimes directed at mosques are likely to be higher.

I am deeply concerned about the rise in anti-Muslim sentiments year on year. The current spike in anti-Muslim sentiments shown online, on public transport, on mosques, and on our streets, is sobering and affecting the future of community cohesion in Britain. In multi-belief and multi-cultural Britain, no one should feel intimidated or threatened because of their faith or lifestyle.

The inflammatory rhetoric used by the far right and parts of the media plays a key role in promoting hatred towards Muslims and demonising them.

Some of the recent political events have also given legitimacy and a newfound voice to a section of our population which probably held Islamophobic views but didn't voice them before.

Trustees:

Rt Revd Paul Hendricks
Anjum Anwar MBE
Qari Muhammad Asim MBE

Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra
Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth
Canon Anthony Ball

Founding Patron:

The Archbishop of Canterbury

Director:

Catrina Robertson

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We live in a multi-belief and multi-ethnic community, united by our shared values. It is more important than ever that all communities forge closer bonds of solidarity within and between themselves to deter continued extremist violence and hatred. The Christian Muslim Forum's work of church-mosque twinning has been significant in building bridges of friendship and solidarity. If an anti-Muslim attack occurs, Christians act in solidarity with their Muslim neighbours.

The government must continue to monitor the rise in anti-Muslim hate crimes as a key priority, to review existing legislation regarding hate-crime towards Muslims, and security measures in place with respect to mosques around the country.

It does not need to be said that the potential consequences of the demonisation of an entire community, hostility, racism and social division are catastrophic for us all. As Brits, we all need to display a dynamic spirit of open mindedness, co-operation and tolerance. We must join hands and heads to eliminate prejudice, bigotry and intolerance from our society. There should be no place in Britain for any kind of prejudice and hatred. To allow otherwise is to hand victory to the extremists."

[Julie Siddiqi](#) said, "These figures will surprise and worry people, especially as the actual figures are likely to be even higher. Now more than ever the good people of our country need to come together. We need to work out what more needs to be done and go beyond just condemning. Reports like these remind us we can't be complacent. Mosques are places of prayer and sanctuary and it is important for Christians and Muslims to be good neighbours to each other."

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