

PRESS RELEASE

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BEGINS

Muslim and Christian Leaders In Scotland Unite to call for Peace and Unity

Muslim and Christian leaders have come together to call for unity, and an end to the violence and hatred seen during far-right riots across England.

The faith leaders met at Glasgow Central Mosque on Friday, as communities remain fearful of the violence spreading to Scotland.

The meeting included representatives from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow, the Presbytery of Glasgow, the Evangelical Alliance, the Scottish Association of Mosques and the Glasgow central Mosque.

Tariq Iqbal, the President of Glasgow Central Mosque said:

“Many in our communities are understandably anxious and fearful, having seen the Islamophobic and racist terror spread across towns in England and in Belfast.

We have strong community ties here in Scotland.

I hope people of all faiths and none can take heart in today’s meeting, where Muslim and Christian leaders reaffirmed their commitment to nurturing those community ties and reject the narrative of division.”

The Rev Jan Mathieson, the Moderator of the Presbytery of Glasgow, Said:

“We affirm our God given responsibility to care for others with compassion, kindness, respect and dignity and the particular duty to extend welcome to the stranger and the refugee, provide safe haven for those facing danger and persecution and meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable in society.

We call on all people to reject conflict, violence, racism and prejudice which do so much harm to human beings and grieve the very heart of God.”

Archbishop William Nolan, the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Glasgow said:

‘It is heartbreaking to see the racist violence taking place across parts of the UK in recent days.

This has caused many to be anxious and frightened, fearful of leaving their homes or going to their place of work.

I join my brothers and sisters of peace, in calling for an end to all hatred, violence and vandalism, and for a commitment to the peaceful coexistence of all people in our country.’

Reverend Shirley Berry, Executive Board Member of the Evangelical Alliance in Scotland said:

“We were hugely grateful to join this meeting on behalf of our membership because we have been deeply concerned for Muslims across Scotland following recent events.

Nobody should be targeted because of their faith and no place of worship should be attacked - there is no justification for either. We stand together as faith communities against racism and prejudice in all its forms.

We continue to pray for immediate calm and peace, that our society would move from chaos to order, lies to truth and hate to love”

Earlier in the week, Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie said:

"We continue to closely monitor the situation to ensure any potential for violence or disorder in Scotland is identified quickly and responded to immediately.

Policing in Scotland has strong relationships with the public and we are grateful for the ongoing support of our communities.

We are aware of a number of potential protests, and counter protests, over the coming weeks, which will be policed appropriately but we are not going to speculate on or add publicity to individual potential events.

I would also encourage everyone to be responsible in their use of social media and not to share speculation or inaccurate information. Please think twice about what you read, share and believe from online sources.’

A spokesman for the Scottish Association of Mosques said:

“Mosques across the country are more than just places of worship. They are centres for learning, community hubs for young and old, touching thousands of lives weekly through poverty relief programmes.

Mosques across the country have been reviewing their security and are increasing measures to reassure service users and worshippers.

We are in constant contact with Police Scotland who have increased patrols in key areas, and are liaising locally with Mosques and accommodation centres.

Our message to communities is to be vigilant but not alarmed, and call the police if you feel threatened or see anything suspicious.

We grateful for the many messages of support Mosques have received from across civil society. It is through allyship and understanding we can continue to maintain cohesive communities.”

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