

Friday Sermon (Khutbah) on Recent Attacks - Solidarity, Safety, Speaking and Steadfastness

PART ONE:

Dear respected brothers and sisters,
As-salaamu Alaykum, Peace be with you

Khutba Haja

As you may know, recent days have seen horrible attacks towards Places of Worship in the UK. Such un-Godly and unjust crimes have sadly taken place at buildings which are meant to be places where God is remembered and we make Him central to our lives again.

Peacehaven Mosque near Brighton suffered an arson / firebomb attack while two individuals were inside, fortunately nobody was hurt. And the senseless attack on the Jewish community at Heaton Park Synagogue in Manchester sadly resulted in two fatalities.

And before these incidents, there are many more such hate crimes which we don't hear as much in the news, from individuals being punched in the streets, shop keepers being harassed, places of worship being vandalised with graffiti and ladies having their headscarf pulled off. The UK Government recorded nearly 10,500 religiously-motivated hate crimes in 2023/24, compared to about 6,300 in 2021/22.

Of course such hate-filled, unjust and disgusting crimes do not happen in a vacuum. We must be aware of the forces in society who benefit from these hateful attacks and sowing division in society, which is harmful to all British citizens. But at a more practical level, how should we be responding as a community? The Muslim Council of Britain has shared the following guidance:

👉 **Solidarity** - Reaching out and offer kindness. Where you know Muslim, Jewish or other individual in your network who have been impacted, a simple message of solidarity with them can go a long way.

👉 **Safety** - Be vigilant & take precautions. Advise your families to stay in well-lit areas and avoid walking outside alone at night. For institutions like masājid, schools or our homes, ensuring security systems like CCTV or locks are working, and you proactively get in touch with your local Police to let them know your concerns and support needs.

👉 **Speaking** - When we speak in a unified voice, it is more powerful. Our institutions should have appointed media spokespersons, and join forces with other local organisations to co-ordinate initiatives like public statements.

👉 **Steadfastness** - We should continue our work and day-to-day activities with confidence. This includes advocating for justice, both here at home in the UK, as well as abroad where the injustices, genocides and war crimes continue to be many.

What these hate-filled offenders want is to disrupt our lives and make us live in fear. But by working together and taking on board the advice above, we can make sure they don't win.

PART TWO

From tomorrow, **11th - 18th October 2025** is Hate Crime Awareness Week. According to this awareness campaign, in the UK hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's disability, gender, race or ethnicity, religion or belief or sexual orientation.

Before we touch on Islamophobic hate crime when the target is a Muslim brother or sister, we know in Islam, the Final Messenger Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) taught us that *"None of you will believe until you love for your brother what you love for yourself."* (Hadith related by Bukhari & Muslim).

Therefore, we should first ask ourselves, am I unintentionally expressing hostility or prejudice towards someone, because of something I don't like about them? For example, if I am an Arab, do I treat a White or Black person differently, because of their different skin colour? Someone from a different religion, have I discriminated against them?

So first, we have to become an active community that leads by example and make sure we ourselves are not sources of oppression towards other people. And when it comes to defending our local Muslim community from Islamophobic attacks and hate crimes, one of the key ways to do this is not to stay silent, but to use the proper channels of reporting hate crime:

- **Immediate threat:** Call 999 directly. If you are afraid, speak to your friend or family member who can call the Police on your behalf.
- **Non-Emergency:** Report to the Police by phoning 101 or online at www.report-it.org.uk
- **Non-Emergency:** You can also use a 3rd Party reporting service. For Islamophobic hate crimes, these include:
 - Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU) - www.theiru.org.uk
 - British Muslim Trust (BMT) - www.britishmuslimtrust.co.uk

Many crimes go unreported, but if we see something wrong our faith teaches us that we should act. Not only to gain justice for those who are being wronged, but so there is a better chance for the criminals to be arrested and taken off our streets, so they do not cause harm to anyone else.

In another hadith, the Final Messenger Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) said:

“Whoever among you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand [by taking action]; if he cannot, then with his tongue [by speaking out]; and if he cannot, then with his heart – and that is the weakest of faith” Sahih Muslim.

Finally, for those who have been victims of crime, let us ensure they are supported, physically, emotionally and spiritually. There are helpline services run by Muslim community members who can also provide specialist support, for example:

- Muslim Women’s Network Helpline: www.mwnuk.co.uk/mwn-helpline / 0800 999 5786
- Muslim Youth Helpline: www.myh.org.uk / 0808 808 2008

I ask Allah for forgiveness for you and me, for He is All Forgiving and All Merciful.

Ending duaas

Muslim Council of Britain

Unite | Empower | Serve

Sign up for regular updates: bit.ly/mcbwhatsappchannel

Checked by BBSI and senior Imams