

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN



31 March 2004

To: Imams, Ulama, Chairs & Secretaries of Mosques, Islamic Organisations and Institutions

Dear Respected Colleague

As salaamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullah

The last few weeks and days have been fraught with tragedies and dangers. I am sure you are fully aware of the concerns expressed by the Prime Minister and the Police Authorities about the high probability of an imminent terrorist outrage in the UK.

I have no doubt that as a leader in the community you are already discharging your Islamic duty in helping to preserve the peace of the nation as well as protecting the community against falling into any trap or provocation.

Following the criminal terrorist attack on the Madrid trains, and despite our immediate, public and unequivocal condemnation of those atrocities some, however, continue to associate Islam with terrorism by using such misleading terms as 'Islamic terrorist'. The words of the Qur'an are clear:

"If anyone kills a human being, unless it be (in punishment) for murder, or of spreading corruption in the land, it should be looked upon as though he had slain all mankind, and if anyone saves a life it should be regarded as though he had saved the lives of all mankind."(5:32)

We therefore urge you to take the following actions:

- 1) To provide the correct Islamic guidance to the community, especially to our youth, as to our obligation to maintain the peace and security of our country
- 2) To observe the utmost vigilance against any mischievous or criminal elements from infiltrating the community and provoking any unlawful activity
"And those who criminally plot evil deeds, a severe punishment awaits them; and all their plotting is bound to come to nought." (35: 10)
- 3) To liaise with the local Police and give them the fullest cooperation in dealing with any criminal activity including terrorist threat
"Help one another to virtue and God-consciousness and do not help one other to sin and transgression." (5:2)
- 4) To engage proactively with the media in order to refute any misconception about Islam and the Muslim community

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- 5) To develop active contacts with other faith communities and civic organisations in order to help maintain social peace and good community relations.
- 6) In the event of any tragic incident taking place, give the fullest cooperation to the Police and other concerned authorities.
- 7) Lastly, but most importantly, seek Allah's help and support and pray for His guidance and protection all the time.

We also urge you to convey the above message in your Friday sermon and bring awareness to our community of our duties and obligations in combating any threat to peace and stability. By doing so, insha' Allah it will help to dispel the misrepresentation.

There is no need however to be daunted or intimidated by any Islamophobic propaganda and we should continue with our daily lives – normally and in accordance with the tenets of Islam.

All of us as Muslims will have been appalled to see some of the headlines in today's newspapers (for example 'Islamic Bomb Plot Foiled' - Daily Telegraph; 'The Truck Bombers of Suburbia', The Times 2004). This kind of sensationalised reporting has done immense damage to British Muslims as well as to community relations and we assure you that the MCB's Media Committee will be taking this matter up urgently with the editors concerned.

You will no doubt recall that in November 2002 the police made high-profile arrests of six Muslims accused of plotting to release cyanide gas into London's Underground system. Yet nearly 18 months later, none of the men have been charged with any crime, let alone being convicted of terrorist activity. There are other examples of incidents that have received prominent media attention only for the individuals to be subsequently released without any charges brought against them. The impact of such ordeals on the persons concerned and their families is unbearable. Therefore we urge against hasty pronouncements of guilt. Every person is to be considered innocent unless proved guilty.

The Muslim Council of Britain is planning to organise a number of events and meetings of which we shall keep you duly informed.

"O believers, be patient and let your patience never be exhausted. Stand firm in your faith and be conscious of Allah, so that you may attain success." (3:200)

May Allah protect and guide us.

Yours sincerely

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