

## UK Muslims stand with other religions in condemning terrorism



(Vatican Radio, 5 June 2017) Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox and other Church leaders in Britain have offered **prayers for the victims of the London terror attack**, which left seven people dead and dozens of others injured. Eighteen people remain in critical condition after three men drove a van into pedestrians on London Bridge and then began stabbing passers-by in the Borough Market district on Saturday night.

Muslim leaders have also strongly condemned the attack, with many gathering close to the scene of the attack on Sunday to pay tribute to the victims.

Among those speaking out against this latest atrocity is **Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, co-chair of Britain's Christian Muslim Forum**.

He told Philippa Hitchen his community is working together with all sectors of British society to combat extremism and uphold the country's democratic values...

Mogra said he was sickened and "devastated that some Muslims, in the holy month of Ramadan, when all the rest of the Muslims were filling in mosques all around the UK in prayer", could carry out such a brutal attack on innocent people.

The Muslim leader said he was "grateful to God Almighty and to faith leadership in our country" that the religious communities are standing together, as they did in the aftermath of July 2007 attacks and the more recent Manchester bombing. He said he has received messages of solidarity from all faith communities, ranging from umbrella organizations to individual messages from the Chief Rabbi and from Catholic leaders in London.

### **Don't blame community for individual actions**

On Monday evening, Mogra said, the East London Mosque is hosting a press conference where "religious leaders from across the spectrum have been invited [...]to express condemnation in unison, and also their solidarity for one another, reminding people that a whole faith community cannot be tarnished and blamed for the action of a few individuals belonging to that faith group".

### **Anti-Muslim hatred plays into terrorist hands**

He added that after every attack, Muslim communities in the UK have suffered a backlash which plays into the hands of the terrorists: "that's exactly what they want, to divide us and to sow discord between our diverse community and if we turn on each other, then the terrorists win." Mogra said Muslims are "very grateful" to police and security services, as well as members of the British public "who will not stand for any of this anti-Muslim hatred to take root in our society."

### **Muslims are part of British society**

Responding to Prime Minister Theresa May's statement following the attack, Mogra said it's important to avoid "knee jerk reactions" but rather to analyse events and "with the help and cooperation of all our communities to come up with a plan which will be effective in eradicating this scourge of terrorism" British Muslims, he added, are "fully signed up" to the "common, universal" values that the Prime Minister outlined in her speech. He also noted that "poll after poll suggests that British Muslims are integrated, they feel very much part and

parcel of being British”, contributing to the economy, arts, education, health, and every sector of public life.

### **Working together to protect democracy**

Finally, Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra stressed that it’s important to “acknowledge that Islam as a religion condemns these atrocities” and that “the Muslim community cannot be held to account as a whole and be expected to solve this on its own”. He said British Muslims believe they are “part of the solution” and are willing to work with all sectors of society, including religious organisations, “to ensure that our country is safe and remains free and democratic”.