

23rd May 2017

MEDIA STATEMENT

Manchester - An attack on the most vulnerable and on fundamental human values

We at Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) are deeply saddened, shocked and angry about the attack that took place at the Manchester Arena last night, Monday 22nd May 2017. Senseless violence was meted out to children and young people from diverse backgrounds who were enjoying a night out with family and friends. This devastating attack has now shattered many lives, leaving (at the time of writing) 22 dead and over 50 injured.

We send our heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of the victims and especially those who have lost children. Muslim women stand in solidarity with you - this could have happened to any one of us; it was an attack on all of our children. In the aftermath of this most profound bereavement, MWNUK reiterates and confirms its commitment to working with government, opposition parties and other organisations to challenge extremism and to keep us safe.

MWNUK Chair, Shaista Gohir, said: *"This is the most deadly attack in the UK since the London bombings of 2005; another indiscriminate and deliberate attack - this time targeting the most vulnerable in our society. We must continue not only to be vigilant but to also actively work together to challenge extremism."*

She added: *"To those who criticise counter extremism work while offering no solutions we say clearly - that doing nothing is not an option. We can do both - seek improvements to the 'Prevent' programme so that it does not target innocent people and also to work together to challenge those who promote hatred and intolerance. Those who do not want to help find solutions must stop trying to deliberately disrupt and demonise those actively working to defeat extremists and terrorists; otherwise the cost will be the loss of more innocent lives."*

MWNUK applauds the people of Manchester who in the midst of carnage came together in solidarity to support each other, from the emergency services that worked through the night, to the taxi drivers who took people home without charge, to those simply offering cups of tea. Their efforts are a positive example of how we #StandTogether and defy those who seek to divide us.

MWNUK urges anyone who has any information about those who seek to harm us to contact the police. The Muslim Women's Network Helpline can also be contacted on 0800 999 5786 to talk about any concerns.

Ends

For further information contact:

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Muslim Women's Network UK (www.mwnuk.co.uk) is the national leading Muslim women's charity working to improve the social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls