



**31st July 2024**

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Far right extremists exploit Southport tragedy**

Our thoughts and prayers are with victims of the stabbings and their families. Sadly, three young girls have been killed with many others with life threatening injuries. The Muslim Women's Network UK (MWN UK) also extends its heartfelt prayers to the entire community of Southport during this incredibly difficult and sorrowful time.

During this sensitive time the grieving families and local communities need to be shown solidarity and the police supported to carry out their investigations. Instead, far-right extremists have deliberately sought to exploit the situation for their own political agenda. Yesterday they gathered outside Southport Mosque and shouted Islamophobic chants even though the mosque was not linked to the incident. The extremists also clashed violently with the police, set vehicles and wheelie bins on fire, and attacked a local shop. Those involved appear to be linked to the English Defence League (EDL) a group known for inciting hate against Muslims. It is important that such groups are prevented from reinforcing harmful stereotypes, promoting hatred and deepening divisions within communities and wider society.

MWN UK CEO, Baroness Shaista Gohir OBE said: *"These far-right rioters don't actually care about the poor little girls and their grieving families. It is fake rage, deliberately exploiting a tragic situation so they can use it as an excuse to spread hatred and target Muslims. Selfish thugs who made it all about them and not the victims"*.

We urge the Government take stronger action to tackle knife crime and of publishing and promoting misinformation that fuels hatred and violence.

### **Additional Information**

- Media enquiries can be directed to: [contact@mwnuk.co.uk](mailto:contact@mwnuk.co.uk) or 0121 2369000
- Muslim Women's Network UK is a national charity and more information can be found on its website: <https://www.mwnuk.co.uk>
- MWN Helpline (national specialist faith and culturally sensitive helpline) can be contacted on: TEL: 0800 999 5786 / Email: [info@mwnhelpline.co.uk](mailto:info@mwnhelpline.co.uk) / Text: 07415 206 936 and further Information can be found here: <https://www.mwnhelpline.co.uk/index.php>