

23 May 2013

MEDIA NOTICE

Muslim Women Condemn London Attack - It was an attack on us all

Muslim Women's Network UK strongly condemns the attack that took place in Woolwich where a soldier lost his life. We convey our condolences to the family of the victim – our thoughts are with them during this very difficult time.

Shaista Gohir, Chair of Muslim Women's Network UK, said: "This attack was an attack on all of us including on the Muslim communities in Britain. Muslim men and women serve in our armed forces too. There will be opportunists both individual and groups who will manipulate this incident to fuel tensions and incite religious hatred towards Muslims, the majority of whom are law abiding citizens and who are equally appalled and horrified about what took place. It is important that we do not let a minority of extremists whether it is people like those attackers or right wing groups to divide us. We must remain united and continue building a cohesive society. I am proud that Britain is one of the most cohesive societies in the world so lets all work together to keep it that way. "

She added: I also commend the incredible bravery of the woman, Ingrid Loyau Kennet, who actually confronted the attacker while he still had a knife in his hand. Despite being in danger, she was more concerned about the safety of others and tried to talk the attacker down. This shows the important role of women in tackling extremism.

Additional info

The alleged motive of the attackers appears to be linked to Muslims being killed in Muslim countries and possibly by British soldiers. There is no excuse for terrorism on the streets of London or anywhere in Britain including the motive given. Our soldiers are risking their own lives while they are serving this country and carrying out their duties. There are also Muslim men and women that serve in the British armed forced. So my response to the motive given is this: . In these same countries abroad, Muslims are killing other Muslims in terrorist attacks. Muslim women are often treating in the most appalling manner – they suffer extreme forms of violence and also get murdered by Muslim men in these very same countries. Why are these extremists not speaking up against such atrocities? Such people have a warped sense of jutice. The double standards and hypocrisy in this type of rhetoric shows that extremists and terrorists will use any excuse and tactic to manipulate others.

The manner in which this attack was carried out appears to be a new development. Usually when police uncover terrorist plots, they are usually very underground and covert and involved hi- tech devices. However, this attack was committed using only basic tools such a cleaver and knife and carried out openly. It is difficult for the police to cover every eventuality so when they do disrupt terrorist activity, it shows they do an amazing job and keep us all safe.

This incident shows that there is not one pathway to radicalization nor one particular method of carrying attacks. It is so important that we learn from what

has just taking place – how are people like these men becoming radicalized in this manner that they think it is acceptable to carry out attacks on a fellow British citizen.

Additional Information:

1. Contacts for Media interviews:

Shaista Gohir (Chair) – 07802 225989 / contact@shaistagohir.com

2. **About Muslim Women’s Network UK:** MWNUK is the only national Muslim women’s organisation in Britain. Our aim is to gather and share information relevant to the lives of Muslim women and girls in order to influence policy and public attitudes, to raise the profile of issues of concern to Muslim women and to strengthen Muslim women's ability to bring about effective changes in their lives. The website address for MWNUK is: www.mwnuk.co.uk

3. **Membership:** MWNUK has a membership of 500 with an onward reach of 50000 women. Our membership is diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, religious backgrounds, lifestyles, sexual orientation and geographic location and members are from a range of employment sectors including: higher and further education; voluntary sector and support including services workers; health and legal professionals; the voluntary sector and support services; health and legal professions; the police and criminal justice sectors; and local and central government.