



**6<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **Decisive action needed to combat anti-Muslim hatred**

Muslim Women's Network UK is alarmed by the rapid escalation of the riots that have erupted across the UK over the past week. The open Islamophobia and racism expressed is deeply troubling. We are very concerned about the safety of Muslims and other minority communities.

It has been a week since young girls were murdered and injured in Southport by a Wales born 17-year-old male of Rwandan heritage, a tragedy which the English Defence League (EDL) hijacked for its own purposes. Their actions do not represent the British values that they claim to uphold. Far-right extremists and racists have subjected people to violent assaults which has included stabbings. They have looted shops, set buildings on fire and vandalised homes, mosques and police stations. We express our solidarity and support for the police officers who, while trying to stop the violence, have themselves been attacked and injured.

We appreciate the statements made by the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, who have condemned the violence, promised firm action, and recognised how frightening it must be for Muslims. However, a decisive and comprehensive, cross-departmental government approach is needed to tackle far-right extremism and protect Muslim communities. We suggested the following actions are taken:

- 1) Use police powers to ban further gatherings and marches by the far right
- 2) Government Ministers engage with representatives from diverse Muslim communities across the UK to provide reassurance
- 3) Strengthen MP and peer behavioural codes to prevent them from inciting hatred
- 4) Strengthen hate crime legislation
- 5) Appoint an Islamophobia / Racism Envoy who is able to work across government departments
- 6) Determine the most appropriate terminology (i.e. Islamophobia or anti-Muslim hatred / prejudice) and legally define it
- 7) Proscribe the EDL as an extremist / terrorist organisation
- 8) Hold social media companies to account for allowing misinformation to proliferate
- 9) Hold media companies to account on language used in their reporting about minority communities and the disproportionate air time given to particular views
- 10) Make more funding available to improve the safety of Muslims
- 11) Establishing a number of well publicised and accessible anti-Muslim hate crime monitoring hubs to increase reporting, particularly by Muslim women
- 12) Develop a national dashboard that provides up to date statistics and transparent information on hate-motivated crimes and incidents to Muslim and other communities
- 13) Launch a new education campaign aims to reduce hate-motivated crimes
- 14) Display information materials in police stations, government and council offices, and local organisations

Baroness Shaista Gohir OBE, CEO of MWNUK said: *“Muslims in Britain are currently deeply anxious and do not feel safe in public spaces, online, in schools, in the workplace and in colleges and universities. Muslim women are at increased risk because their often more visible Muslim identity. We will be launching a survey in the coming days to capture feelings and experiences of Muslims so we can share them with policy makers.”*

If you are affected by the recent incidents and / or have experienced hate crime, please contact the Muslim Women’s Network Helpline on 0800 999 5786 / [info@mwnhelpline.co.uk](mailto:info@mwnhelpline.co.uk)

**Additional information**

- Media enquiries can be directed to: [contact@mwnuk.co.uk](mailto:contact@mwnuk.co.uk) or 0121 2369000
- MWNUK is a national charity and more information can be found on the website: [www.mwnuk.co.uk](http://www.mwnuk.co.uk)
- MWN Helpline can be contacted on: Tel: 0800 999 5786 / E: [info@mwnhelpline.co.uk](mailto:info@mwnhelpline.co.uk) / Text: 07415 206 936 and further information can be found at: [www.mwnhelpline.co.uk](http://www.mwnhelpline.co.uk)