

Date: 14th March 2011

MWNUK Board Condemns threats made against Dr Usama Hasan

A recent hate campaign has been waged against the London based academic and imam, Dr. Usama Hasan. He has been victimised, accused of apostasy and has been given death threats for his comments on evolution and on a woman's right not to wear hijab. The MWNUK board strongly condemns the bullying and harassment of Dr. Hasan. Diversity of opinion, *ikhtilaf*, plays an important part in keeping Muslim societies vibrant and able to respond to people's changing needs and circumstances. Verbal violence such as this is not only unacceptable but therefore also counter-productive.

Although the hate campaign has only been supported by a tiny minority of Muslims, the treatment of Dr. Hasan has wider implications for the vast majority of British Muslims. A rise in religious extremism is resulting in more anti-female rhetoric and fellow Muslims increasingly being accused of being outside the fold of Islam for not conforming. This strategy of verbal abuse and threats of physical abuse is being used as a tool by extremists within our communities to stifle debate and silence alternative opinions.

It is not fair that Dr. Hasan, his wife and children, must now live in fear. The Islamic etiquette of respecting and tolerating differences of opinions must be supported. It is important to speak out against these minority voices, who are not only inciting hatred between Muslims but are also tarnishing the reputation of British Muslims by portraying us as violent and intolerant.

(Messages of support can be sent directly to Dr. Hasan by contacting Yahya Birt on yahya@thecitycircle.com)