

DATE: 15th November 2015

MEDIA STATEMENT

Paris and Beirut Terrorist Attacks – We Must Stand Against Hatred

“Whoever kills a person it is as though they have killed humanity,” (Quran 5:32)

We at Muslim Women’s Network UK (MWNUK) are shocked and angry at the terrorist attacks that took place in Beirut and Paris. The Paris attacks, which took place on Friday 13th November 2015, have so far resulted in 129 deaths with almost 350 injured. Those in Beirut took place a day before, claiming 43 lives and maiming 239 people. We must do all we can to reclaim Islam from extremists who purposefully manipulate religious texts to justify hatred and murder for their own political agendas and in doing so are dishonouring God and Islam. The Quran warns us about these religious zealots: Exceed not in your religion (Quran 5:77).

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of British Muslims are outraged at this brutal assault on innocent civilians. It is unfortunate that there is a minority, which has refused to condemn the Paris terror attacks because they feel ‘they should not have to just because they are Muslim’ or because ‘there is no equivalent outrage of murders of innocent Muslims such as those killed by ISIS in Beirut or those Muslims who are killed through Western bombings.’ As decent human beings we should condemn all violence regardless of faith or whether people have denounced other forms of violence or not; two wrongs do not make a right. Such critics themselves also portray double standards because they show less moral outrage when Muslims are killed by people from their own faith (such as by ISIS) and are angrier when Muslims are killed by non-Muslims.

MWNUK Chair, Shaista Gohir said: *Sadly there are others who have been circling like vultures, shamelessly using the Paris Attacks to promote their own versions of extremism and promoting hatred of Muslims. We must remain resilient in the face of all forms of extremism. ISIS wants to trigger an Islamophobic backlash to reinforce their narrative that there is a ‘war on Muslims’ and use this as a recruitment tool. Sadly the backlash may also result in the targeting of refugees who themselves are fleeing the terror of ISIS.*

She added: *“It is important to remain vigilant; it could easily have been London or any other city in the UK. We must remember that although the highest numbers of European fighters that have joined ISIS are from France, the second highest numbers are from the UK. To warn against joining ISIS, we have produced a 30 second video, Say No to ISIS.’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEdl-shHvGE> We urge that any concerns people have are reported to the police. People can also talk to us if they are worried about any Muslim women and girls who may be thinking of traveling abroad to join ISIS.*

Unfortunately, the likelihood is that the Paris attacks will also result in increased hate crimes, particularly against Muslim women and girls. It is important that these are also reported to the police. Discrimination by employers, work colleagues, fellow students / pupils and public servants may also occur. Those who have been affected can call our helpline for advice on 0800 999 5786 / 0303 999 5786.

Notes to editors

1. About US

Muslim Women's Network UK is a national charity that works to improve social justice and equality for Muslim women and girls and operates a national helpline. We find out about their experiences through research and helpline enquiries and produce resources, deliver campaigns and conduct advocacy work, regularly engaging with government.

MWNUK organisational website

MWN Helpline website

MWN Helpline contact info: 0800 999 5768 / 0303 999 5786 / info@helpline.co.uk

2. Media Contacts

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