



Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London. SW1P 4DF

Tuesday 26th January 2010

Dear Home Secretary,

On Saturday 23 January the Muslim Council of Britain convened a public consultation following numerous requests from the Muslim community to address the growing trend of anti-Muslim hatred in this country. In 2009 alone, several Muslim institutions, centres and persons have been attacked and denigrated.

Amongst many British Muslim communities, there is a growing disenchantment at the lacklustre response from our political leaders to speak out against anti-Muslim hatred. Whether this exists in explicit form through the actions of far-right groups, or implicitly with hysterical headlines in our media, the policy response to any of these has been far from satisfactory.

We are mindful that you have resolved to tackle the issue in December of last year. But we hope, as Home Secretary, you can redouble your efforts and show leadership in this matter, especially in a year where divisive elements may well flourish in the run-up to the next general election.

I draw your attention to three events that took place only in the last month to illustrate our point. On 16 December 2009, the Open Society Institute published their report charting the high degree of patriotism felt by British Muslims. Contrast this to the British Social Attitudes Survey that said that only one in four people felt positive about Islam and Muslims. The effect of such a chasm in perception was found, tragically, in the latest round of arson attacks on our institutions when the Cradley Heath mosque in the West Midlands was set ablaze.

We therefore look forward to a schedule of policy options that may well include an official inquiry into anti-Muslim hatred. Though this threat may be tackled in the extended Prevent agenda, flawed as it may be, it will not be enough to challenge what may well be a pervasive scourge.

We hope it is not, and we were encouraged to find at our meeting the implicit faith many Muslims had in our traditions of fair play and decency. The meeting resolved that it should seek common cause and tackle this issue with people of all faiths and none. And it is to this end that I reach out to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'mabari'.

Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari MBE
Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain

Encl.

CC: Rt Hon John Denham MP

Facing up to Anti-Muslim Hatred

On Saturday 23 January, a coalition of British Muslims met in Birmingham met to discuss the growing trend of anti-Muslim hatred taking place in Britain.

This Meeting notes:

- That a growing trend of anti-Muslim hysteria and hatred has been exacerbated over the last year. In 2009 alone, scores of Muslim institutions, centres and persons have been attacked and denigrated
- This hatred has been fed by a failure by our political leaders who on balance have remained silent or have ridden the wave of this disturbing trend by failing to effectively stand-up or challenge the rhetoric from the far-right.
- Their inaction is facilitated by the insatiable appetite of a hysterical media, keen to paint a picture of a British Muslim community that is somehow foreign, suspect and disloyal.
- British Muslims are none of these. Muslims have made a positive and enduring contribution to the social, economic, political and cultural fabric of this nation.
- British Muslims have consistently spoken out against all forms of extremism and against all those who claim through their extremism to speak for British Muslims.

This meeting resolves:

- To call upon all political parties to recognise and condemn the dramatic increase in anti-Muslim hatred, and to be at the forefront to counteract this scourge.
- To recognise that this issue of anti-Muslim hatred doesn't just affect the British Muslim community alone. Our traditional British values of celebrating differences while seeking common cause is being eroded by those who wish to stigmatise the Muslim community.
- Urges the Muslim community to seek coalitions with people of faiths and none to challenge anti-Muslim hatred wherever it maybe.
- Encourages the British Muslim community and its institutions to be fully engaged in our civic and democratic traditions to challenge the hysteria of anti-Muslim sentiment and to improve the lives of all people.
- To lobby our media to be more responsible as they report on British Muslims. We as a community must challenge where we are unfairly reported and praise where praise is due.