

6th August
2024

Greater Manchester Faith Community Leaders After Southport

As Faith Leaders in Greater Manchester, we deplore the violence on our streets perpetrated since, and supposedly in response to, the stabbings in Southport last Monday. As this statement below, from our colleagues in Merseyside, indicates, those who planned and carried out the street-protests had neither the support nor the sympathy of the people whose lives were so brutally attacked last Monday. We add our voices to those from Merseyside for a time of reflection, remembrance, recovery and rebuilding.

With them, we affirm that the streets of this nation are for the safe enjoyment of every member of our richly diverse society. In the shadow of this mob violence, we are now seeing an increase in general racist abuse and aggression against visible minorities. Such words and deeds are also abhorrent. We call on all members of the public to support anyone they see being victimised in this way.

We are stewards of this country, accountable beyond ourselves to the values that define each of our communities of faith. We find no excuse or justification for the hatred, violence and opportunism on display in these events. We deplore all violence, criminal behaviour and racism, in any form.

We endorse wholeheartedly the statement that follows from Merseyside Faith Leaders, issued on Sunday 4th August.

Greater Manchester Faith Community Leaders, including

Christian

From the Church of England: Rt Revd David Walker (Bishop of Manchester); Rt Revd Mark Davies (Bishop of Middleton)
Very Revd Rogers Govender (Dean of Manchester)

From the Catholic Church of England and Wales: Rt Revd John Arnold (Bishop of Salford)

From the Methodist Church: Rev Catherine Bird (Deputy Chair of Manchester & Stockport Methodist District)

From the Salvation Army: Major David Taylor (Divisional Leader, North West & Isle of Man Division)

From the United Reformed Church: Revd Clare Downing (Moderator, North Western Synod)

From the Baptist Church: Revd Tim Presswood (Regional Minister for Church Life, North West Baptist Association)

From the Apostolic Pastoral Congress: Archbishop Doyé Teido Agama (Senior Pastor, Christian Way of Life Churches, and Former Presiding Prelate and Executive Director, Apostolic Pastoral Congress); Rt. Rev. Edmund Akyea-Mensah (APC Regional Bishop of the North of UK)

From the Christhouse Bible Church: Bishop Dr Theophilus Akano (Presiding Bishop, and Principal Rhema Theological College UK)

Jewish

The Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester and Region

Sara Radivan (Community Engagement Manager (North West), Board of Deputies of British Jews)

Rabbi Jonathan Guttentag

Muslim

Rabnawaz Akbar (Makki Masjid, Longsight)

Imam Rashid Musa (Faith Adviser, Chaplain, Lecturer, University of Salford)

Nilofar Siddiqi (Sufi representative)

Aftab Ahmad (Shi'a representative)

Hindu

Dr Kaushik Chakraborty (Hindu Faith & representative from The World Council of Hindus)

Nidhi Sinha (she/her), Founder, Sangha (Connecting People, Building Community)

Dr Saraswati Sinha, Community Representative

Sikh

Jagtar Singh Ajimal

Jain

Suresh Mehta (Trustee, Jain Samaj Manchester)

Buddhist

Jill Brennan, Soka Gakkai International

Faith Network 4 Manchester

Rev Canon Charles Kwaku-Odoi DL (Trustee, Faith Network for Manchester)

Rabbi Warren Elf MBE (Faith Network for Manchester and Manchester Reform Synagogue)

GM Networks Connect

Revd Ian Rutherford, City Centre Minister, Methodist Central Hall, Manchester

The below is issued on behalf of faith leaders across Merseyside:

The terrible murders of Alice Dasilva Aguiar, Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe shocked and appalled people of every faith – and those of no faith – across Merseyside, and indeed the country.

As we approach one week since that terrible day, they and their families should remain very much at the forefront of all our thoughts.

While this should be a time for quiet reflection and remembrance, since Monday, too many people have sought to use the tragedy to create division and hate.

Division can destroy the very relationships and environment that we depend upon every day of our lives and there is no place for hate in our communities.

It can – and has – left communities in fear and has put people in danger.

At this difficult time, let us remember that there is far more that unites than divides us. The people of all faiths and none who came out to sweep the streets, to rebuild walls and have so generously donated money in memory of those three girls: that is the spirit that will help us through this incredibly challenging time.

While the events of this week may continue to shake our belief in humanity, it remains intact.

We need to remain calm and peaceful at this time and as faith leaders, we are united in our desire for peace and justice.

Now is the time to take pride in our community spirit again.

Within our different communities we pray for all those affected.

And for all those injured to make a good recovery.

The Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath, Bishop of Liverpool
The Rt Revd Thomas Neylon, Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Liverpool
Dr Badr Abdullah, Chair of Liverpool Muslim Society
Ibrahim Syed, Liverpool Region Mosque Network
Barry Levene, President of the Merseyside Jewish Representative Council
Hardev Singh Sohal, Liverpool Sikh Community
Dr Shiv Pande, Liverpool Hindu Community

[It can be found here: <https://www.merseyside.police.uk/news/merseyside/news/2024/august/faith-leaders-issue-statement-on-events-in-mersyeside/>]