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LABOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MITCHAM AND MORDEN

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

05 April 2016

Dear Home Secretary,

Re: Murder of Ahmadi Muslim in the UK – urgent request for meeting

As I am sure you are aware, on 24 March an Ahmadi Muslim was brutally killed in Glasgow by an extremist from Bradford. Mr Asad Shah is the first Ahmadi Muslim to be killed in the UK for his beliefs. He was brutally murdered just hours after he posted a peaceful message on social media stating, 'Good Friday and a very happy Easter, especially to my beloved Christian nation'.

Whilst the Ahmadi community has faced severe persecution and violence in other countries, most notably Pakistan, we are extremely shocked that this brutal murder has happened on UK soil. The community has been seeing the signs of increasing extremism in the UK and have been alerting Government and the authorities of their concerns for 30 years. **What this murder shows that the Government needs to do more so that extremism is not allowed to take root and result in such barbaric killings.**

The support from the general public of Glasgow has been amazing but what shocks the community further is that the murder was celebrated on social media by some in the UK. The Khatme Nabuwwat organisation posted a 'congratulations' message on its facebook page and this was liked by its followers, including some in the UK. Indeed its UK website still uses derogatory language labelling Ahmadis as 'fraudulent', 'unrighteous', 'kafir' and a 'cult'. **Khatme Nabuwwat in Pakistan is a violent organisation that regularly calls for the elimination and killing of Ahmadis – and worryingly it has branches in the UK and is also a registered charity.**

The Ahmadi community has repeatedly expressed concern about how this organisation and other preachers of hate have been creating disharmony in the UK and **we repeat that these issues need urgent investigation, as they represent a clear case of hate speech and**



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incitement to violence. Furthermore we have seen other instances of hate speech online that add to our concern about the rising tide of radicalisation in the UK. It is the same radicalisation that has seen Imams and others in the UK praise the murder of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer and seen the growing acceptability of intolerance of Ahmadi Muslims in the UK. It is worthy of note that the Imam of Glasgow Central Mosque praised the murderer of Salman Taseer, yet no action has been taken against him.

Our concern of the overspill of extremism from Pakistan to the UK has now also been noted by the media in various articles. We urge the Government to take swift action to nip the issue of extremism in the bud and where individuals or organisations are using freedom of religion to promote hate – **especially where such issues have clear links to Pakistan and other countries where the call to violence is direct and explicit** – then the Government needs to act without hesitation before anyone else is murdered in the UK simply on grounds of faith. We hope that the police will investigate and check thoroughly the links of Mr Shah's killer and his accomplices had both in the UK and abroad in Pakistan so that there is no hiding place for those responsible.

The news that two other members of mosques in Glasgow and Edinburgh have been exposed this week to be supporters of Sipah Sahaba (a terrorist group in Pakistan) is shocking and we hope that they too are held to account for their views.

We do not make these points lightly and this centres on the fact that we have seen issues surface repeatedly in the UK. From anti-Ahmadi sermons preached in mosques, to posters calling for boycott of Ahmadi business and customers, to intolerance being promoted by deeming us to be apostates (with the underlying message that such apostates should be killed), there is constant undercurrent of hostility being pushed out against the Ahmadi community. The murder of Mr Shah should serve as a wake up call for the Government and the authorities to not let preachers of hate – be they in universities, prisons, schools, on satellite television, the internet or in mosques – masquerade behind freedom of expression. The action taken by Ofcom against some channels provides further evidence of this hate, which, if unchecked, will spread to targeting other faith groups as well.

We know that the vast majority of Muslims in the UK and indeed in Pakistan reject outright the poisonous ideology that such groups promote, **but it cannot be denied that a tiny minority of extremists are taking root here. They must not be allowed to spread and must have no hiding place and in that regards the UK authorities have every right to ensure**



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that no hatred and extremism is preached in UK mosques. We also hope that the police and authorities will take every step to provide protection not just to Ahmadi Muslims but to all communities as we do not want anyone else to be targeted by terrorists and extremists. **Sadly we also know that death threats have been issued including to Aamer Anwar, a (non-Ahmadi) human rights lawyer in Scotland, simply because he stood with us to condemn this murder and to condemn extremism. This is outrageous and must be dealt with forthwith.**

As Chair of the APPG for the Ahmadiyya Community, I would be grateful if you could meet with us and our representatives as soon as possible, to discuss the swift and decisive action we need to tackle the scourge of extremism in the UK.

The Government must send a clear message that it will deal with such issues with full vigour so that the UK can remain a country of freedom and peace.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Siobhain McDonagh MP

Chair of APPG for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community