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EAST LONDON MOSQUE





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From the Editorial Team

As 2013 drew to a close, the Mosque's management got time to reflect how fast the year had gone by and the many achievements of the past year.

The opening of the Maryam Centre in July 2013 had been the pivotal point of the year. Together with the help of the community we were able to deliver the new Centre. Yet, a bigger struggle does lie ahead, to fundraise the remaining £5 million to pay for the build. The support from the community and worshippers has been paramount, although now we need the extended support of the wider community to pay the debt and focus on providing services for women.

Our fundraising officer has been working hard with our volunteers, to come up with innovative ways to raise new funds. As ever we rely on the

communities support to organise events. Recently our volunteers helped organise a football tournament and a winter bake sale, which both raised thousands of pounds.

Ramadan 2013 was busy as usual. We saw a surge in worshippers from 5,000 to 7,000 for Jumu'ah. The atmosphere was incredible during the whole month and the climax of spiritual replenishment was felt during the last ten days of Ramadan, especially in search of Laylat al-Qadr.

Another big community success in September last year, was defeating the English Defence League, who for the third time running have not been allowed into Tower Hamlets. The community successfully united together under the banner of the 'United East End' (UEE) and rallied to keep the far-rights group

out. Dr Glyn Robbins, Chairman of UEE has written an article based on all our collective experiences tackling the EDL threat.

We saw a significant rise in Islamophobia over the course of 2013, exacerbated by the Woolwich murder. A Mosque in Muswell Hill was burned to the ground and a pensioner murdered in Birmingham by a neo-Nazi. Azad Ali, Head of Community Development at Engage writes about the issues surrounding Islamophobia, and how the Muslim community should work to stave off further attacks.

Lastly, Imam Abdullah Hasan who recently helped found Imams Against Domestic Abuse has written a feature article about domestic abuse.

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My Vision for the Trust

Habibur Rahman, Chairman of the East London Mosque Trust.



The East London Mosque (ELM) and London Muslim Centre (LMC) serve as beacons to the communities of London and beyond. My involvement with the mosque goes back to the early 90s when I became a member of the Trust. I recall the days when the mosque was but a portakabin, and we would struggle to keep the place warm during winter. But today, by the grace of Allah things have changed and our community has evolved.

I never imagined I would one day become the chairman of the institution we have all worked so hard together to build. Our outgoing chairman, Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, made great contributions to the Mosque and Centre, ensuring our voice was heard in mainstream society, and I hope to take on the numerous challenges we face today, as the new chairman.

I worked as the lead person for the development of the LMC. We fought hard with the support of the community to first obtain the empty land adjacent to the Mosque, and then to raise necessary funds to begin building works, leading to what would become the LMC. Today, the LMC serves a diverse community, including Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The success of the LMC inspired us to build the Maryam Centre. Not long ago, it would have been difficult for women to find prayer space, back then in the 80s the Mosque led the way, by building the women's prayer facilities. Today the Mosque continues to lead the way, especially for women. It is my hope the Maryam Centre will make a lasting difference to lives of women, and many of those who find it difficult to access services will at least have a port of call.

The Mosque's trustees are constantly looking for ways to improve ourselves and the services our staff provide to the community. We undertook a strategic organisational review last year by commissioning an external consultant. He has made a list of recommendations to help us become even more efficient, and we are implementing those so we can become resourceful in times of austerity.

As part of the strategic review, our organisational vision and

mission were re-evaluated and subsequently updated. I am proud to present to you our new vision, which is 'to see a world of God consciousness, respect, dignity and justice', and our new mission statement that is 'to Serve, Educate and Inspire.'

Our priorities for this year will focus on getting the Maryam Centre operational and some of the core projects up and running. We have recruited a new female projects manager. Another top priority for us this year is to make the Mosque debt free. The Maryam Centre has strained finances and the building costs are still outstanding to the tune of £5m. We are continuously looking for innovative ways to fundraise and require more support than ever.

We continue to work with our partners to help protect the community from recent threats of Islamophobic attacks. Anti-Muslim hatred has seen a steady rise throughout the UK, but we must ensure we work actively to demystify misconceptions about Islam and challenge Islamophobia.

I will end by saying it is our collective duty to help change perceptions for the better; whether that is our perceptions of others; or others' perceptions of us. It is my hope to see Muslims in the UK flourishing and overcoming barriers that limit our community from moving forward. It is my wish that the East London Mosque Trust should always be at the forefront of our community, as a shining example of what it means to be part of society; to engage with others, to influence and change negative stigmas, so that one day when history is written about our time, we can be described as being instrumental to positive change that affected the lives of others constructively.



Picture: Newly elected Board of Trustees (2013-2015)



United East End 3 English Defence League 0

Dr Glyn Robbins, Chairman of United East End.



In September 2013 the people of east London came together to keep the English Defence League (EDL) out of Tower Hamlets, just as we did in June 2010 and September 2011. By completing a hat-trick, we also triggered a crisis in the leadership of the EDL that led to the resignation of its leading members. There can never be any complacency about the threat of the far-right and it would be naïve to think that even if the EDL has gone, the bigotry it represents has gone too. Some politicians and sections of the media continue to demonise Islam and scapegoat immigrants, but our experience proves what Prince Charles once said at the LMC – we have more in common than divides us.

When the EDL first threatened to march through Tower Hamlets in 2010, United East End (UEE) quickly formed a powerful alliance to oppose them. Working with the national anti-racist campaign Unite Against Fascism (UAF), local trade unions, campaigns, faith, community, and youth organisations, we resolved to build peaceful, non-party political opposition to the EDL's message of hate. In an echo of the 1936 Battle of Cable Street, our message was 'No Pasaran!' – They Shall Not Pass.

Working with such a wide range of forces wasn't always easy, but we recognised the need to stand together, and

confounded some of the prejudices that have circulated about our community in general and the LMC/ELM in particular. Atheist, Christian, Jewish, female and gay people were key members of the UEE partnership, nailing the lie that Tower Hamlets is a haven for religious

“...our experience proves what Prince Charles once said at the LMC – we have more in common than divides us.”

intolerance, sexism and homophobia. By working together, we also learnt more about each other and we've developed a mutual trust and understanding that will survive long after the EDL are forgotten. Our dealings with politicians and the police were sometimes tricky too. At times it was suggested that we should 'ignore' the EDL, or that our mobilisation was no different to theirs, but we held firm to the principle that we have a right to defend our community and mosques – whether we are Muslim or not.

The rising tide of far-right and neo-Nazi organisations in mainland Europe is a symptom of the despair and anger caused by mass unemployment and economic injustice. As cuts and austerity bite, we must not allow groups like the EDL to re-grow. The people of Tower

Hamlets have played a significant part in seeing off the Blackshirts, the National Front and the British National Party, but we shouldn't wait until the thugs threaten our streets before we celebrate and defend them. Our solidarity may have put a final nail in the EDL coffin, but can also help us build the kind of place where the bigots always lose, while tolerance and mutual respect triumph.



President of Bosnia Herzegovina Visits the ELM



We were recently honoured to host the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bakir Izetbegović, the son of former Bosnian President, the late Alija Izetbegović.

President Izetbegović visited the Mosque and Centre on the 28th of October. He later spoke at an evening dinner reception, which was attended

by politicians, business personalities and interfaith leaders. He talked about his country's struggle for recognition and that Muslims are not alien to Europe.

The Mosque and its management have also worked hard to raise awareness of the Srebrenica massacre through our work with the former Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Mustafa Ceric. We have campaigned

alongside Bosnians to get European recognition for the 11th July as the official day of remembrance for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide.

The visit has further strengthened our relationship between the largest Muslim institution in the UK and the Muslims of Bosnia, and President Izetbegović recognised our efforts.

Maryam Centre Fundraising Update



The Maryam Centre opened its doors just before last Ramadan. Since then, the community has enjoyed using its facilities, especially women who now have significantly more space for prayers. However, whilst the building may be complete, there is a huge £5m deficit left on the development costs.

We are urging donors who have pledged to donate to make good on their commitments and help this house of Allah.

(*Qard Hasanah is an interest free loan.)

Fundraising update for the development is as follows:

Donations Pledged: £5,954,390

Donations Received: £4,508,142

Commitments

Outstanding: £1,446,248

Development Cost: £9,500,000

Shortfall: £3,545,610

Donating to the Mosque is easy and there are several ways to do this. To find out more, please visit: www.eastlondonmosque.org.uk

Local Women Flock to the Winter Bake Sale

Over £3000 was raised for the Maryam Centre at the Winter Bake Sale, which took place on Saturday 21 December. The event was attended by over 500 women who took to the stalls buying and selling baked goodies, hot drinks, mocktails, as well as offering henna arts and massage services on the day. The special highlight of the day featured an exclusive 'Children's Bake-off' competition, with over 20 children competing to win. The entries were tasted and marked by judges and three lucky winners were crowned 'Star Bakers'.

The volunteer organiser, Nacima Khan commented, "It

was such an inspiration to see the enthusiasm and spirit of all who attended and donated to the Bake Sale. We were especially blown away by the wonderful entries we received for the children's competition. This event has been a great start in bringing the local female community together. The overwhelming feedback from the day has been to hold more similar events in the future, insha'Allah!"



New Board of Trustees 2013-15



Picture: Trust members attend 54th Annual General Meeting

The East London Mosque Trust held its 54th Annual General Meeting on 29th September 2013. At the AGM, Trustees were elected to serve a new two-year session. The new Board of Trustees for 2013-15 session are:

1. Muhammad Habibur Rahman, (Chairman)
2. Muhammad Siddique (Vice-Chairman)
3. Ayub Khan (Honorary Secretary)
4. Mohammed Abdul Malik (Treasurer)
5. Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari
6. Sirajul Islam
7. Hasan Sirajus Salekin
8. Ismail Jama Salah
9. Mohammed Abdur Rahim Kamaly
10. Rahela Choudhury
11. Hira Sirajul Islam
12. Shafur Rahman
13. Sayeda Anzumara Begum
14. Baqa'ullah ibn Faiz

LMC Hosts Channel 4's Niqab Debate

The Mosque and Centre welcomed a debate on the topic of the Niqab (face veil) worn by some Muslim women. The debate was hosted in the London Muslim Centre and was broadcasted live on Channel 4 news. The broadcaster invited Muslim women along to express their views on the topic.

The panel included writer Shalina Litt, activist Sahar Al-Faifi, writer Douglas Murray, Islam lecturer Khola Hasan, broadcaster Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and lecturer Fatima Barkatullah, to debate the

niqab in Britain.

Many of the women in attendance argued for their right to wear the veil, as part of their human rights, even though only a few thousand women in the Muslim community wear the veil.

They also made clear, government should not have to dictate what people wear.



The Mosque's Honorary Secretary, Ayub Khan, was in attendance as part of the management and eagerly listened in on the debate.

Mosque Renovation Works

As the Maryam Centre is gradually used more and more, we continue to outfit new areas and enhance the facilities. In the meantime, the availability of the new centre allowed us to close the Mosque basement and ablutions for refurbishment.

The basement now has a major new ventilation system to keep it warm in the winter and, more importantly, cool in

the summer. As part of the works, new lighting has been installed into a new suspended ceiling, and the surrounding areas redecorated. Finally, new underlay was laid before putting the carpets back in place.

The Mosque ablutions had gradually seen water penetrate the tiles, so the area was closed to dry it out, re-tile some of the walls, and replace some of the sinks.

Over the next few months we aim to install signage throughout the Maryam Centre, as we have been managing so far with temporary signs.

Finally, as more names will soon be added to the Alhambra donors' wall, we intend to protect the names and patterned tiles by installing thick glass, which should also make it look nicer, insha'Allah.



ELM Football Tournament raises over £6,000

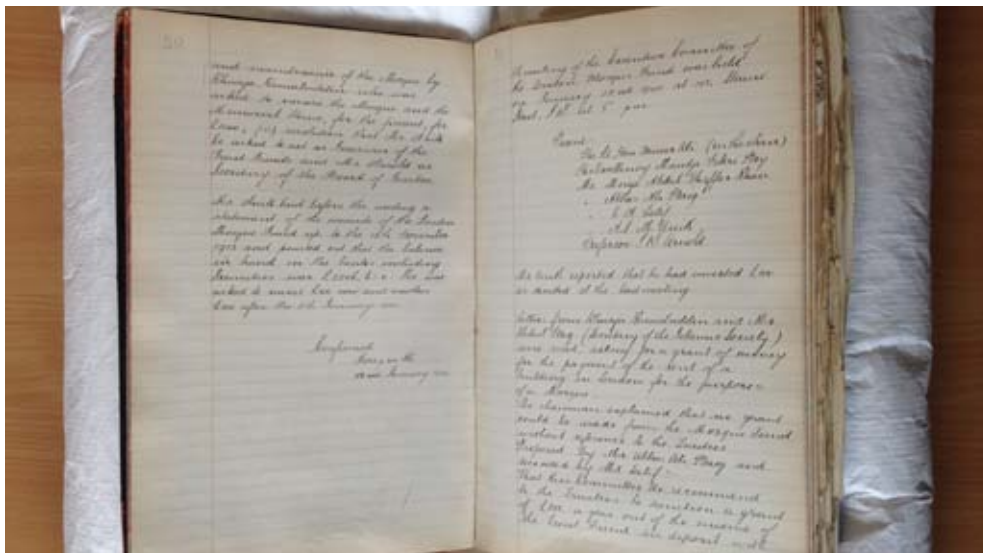
The East London Mosque held its football tournament for second year running. It took place on Saturday 19 October 2013, ending with a tense final match between the teams 'Workhouse', who were the winners of the 2012 tournament and 'JFC'. JFC team won the final match with Workhouse taking the runners up position.

32 teams took part from all over London, and all played on top form. Over 250 players were engaged in the competition; from diverse backgrounds including non-Muslims.

A group of dedicated volunteers helped organise the tournament, which was enjoyed by many and attracted spectators to cheer the teams on. Prizes were handed out to the winners. This initiative raised over £6,000 for the Maryam Centre.



Archive's Document of the Month



The entry records the minutes of a meeting of the Executive Committee of the London Mosque Fund on 22 January 1914. The Executive Committee was made up of Trustees of the Fund and was responsible for administering the Fund and making decisions on the best use of the Fund. The list of Committee members present is recorded at the beginning of the minutes.

The Fund was created in 1910 with the aim to establish a Mosque in London. However by 1914 it was recognised that a more short-term solution was needed to provide a place

of worship for the Muslims of London. In this entry the minutes record a request by Khawaja Kamaluddin and Abdul Haq for "a grant of money for the payment of the rent of a building in London for the purposes of a Mosque". A motion was then proposed that a grant of £120 be made for these purposes and the motion was carried.

It was also decided that a committee be formed to administer this grant and report annually to the Executive Committee of the London Mosque Fund.

Recruitment of Projects Manager

The ELMT has successfully recruited a female Projects Manager for the Maryam Centre. Sufia Alam joined the Mosque in January 2014. In the past Sufia successfully, led the Jagonari Centre and worked with the Wapping Women's Centre. She is also currently the chair of the Muslim Women's Collective and commissioner to Tower Hamlets Fairness Commission. The Maryam Centre will feature a number of projects specially dedicated to women in the community.

We pray Allah grants Sufia every success in this role.



New Reception

The opening of the Maryam Centre has meant that the new reception of based at the Centre is now functional. Enquiries can be made there and at the Mosque reception.

Alhamdulillah over **50,000** likes on facebook!




Help the Mosque by setting up a regular £3 a month standing order.

Donate online: justgiving.com/maryamcentre

Imam Abdullah Hasan offers insight into the different types of domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse: Forbidden in Islam!



Domestic abuse, or more precisely IPV (Intimate Partner Violence), occurs across all societies, and in many couples, regardless of age, gender, race, sexuality, wealth or geography. Technically then, although women can perpetrate domestic abuse (IPV) against men, studies show that domestic abuse is mostly carried out by men against women.

Home Office figures reveal that, on average, 100 women and 30 men a year die due to domestic abuse. While most of these women are killed by men, the statistics reveal that approximately one third of the men are killed by other men and a little under one third are killed by women against whom they have a documented history of abuse. Furthermore,

children in such relationships are often affected — whether directly, or indirectly. There also exists a strong correlation between domestic violence and child abuse, suggesting overlap rates between 40-60%.

Whatever form it takes, domestic abuse is rarely a one-off incident, but a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour through which the abuser seeks power over their victim. Typically, the pattern of abuse only tends to get worse over time.

Domestic abuse can begin at any time, in the first year or after many years of two partners living together. It may also begin, continue, or escalate after a couple have separated. Domestic abuse may occur at home or in a public space.

Continued

Understanding the Qur'anic Paradigm

Under no circumstances is such abuse against women, in its various manifestations, encouraged or allowed in Islam. There are many examples in Qur'an and Hadith that describe the sort of loving, respectful, and kind behaviour that husbands and wives ought to exhibit to one another.

The Qur'an eloquently describes the reciprocal marital relationship stating "... *they (your wives) are your garment and you are a garment for them...*" In the Qur'anic paradigm, marriage is represented as a means of tranquillity, protection, encouragement, peace, kindness, comfort, justice, mercy, and love (2:187 & 229-237; 4:19 & 25; 9:71; 30:21). It indicates that marriage is a sharing between two halves of society and that its objectives, besides perpetuating human life, are emotional well-being and spiritual harmony. In fact, an entire chapter exclusively entitled "Women" describes guidelines of behaviour, a code of ethics and conflict resolution in all aspects (e.g., care, inheritance, marriage, divorce, conflict resolution, etc.) that relate to women.

Moreover, several verses specifically enjoin kindness to women in contexts of marriage and inheritance where they may have the upper hand (2:229-237, 4:19, 4:25), or in the context of the marital home where there ought to be a spirit of love and kindness (30:21; 9:71). In other verses, God calls men and women "protecting friends of one another". Still other verses express God's disapproval of the oppression or ill treatment of women.

Understanding the Prophetic Example

The Prophet ﷺ exemplified a model of a marital relationship based on care, mercy, kindness, mutual consultation and justice. This is well-documented in the books of Hadith. The Prophet said, "The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best behaviours, and the best of you are those who are best to their wives."

In reference to the relationship between husband and wife, the Prophet said: "A believer should bear no malice to his wife, if he dislikes one of her habits, he [ought to remember that he] likes another of them."

It is well-established that the Prophet never hit his wives, although they argued with him and held different opinions to

him. He strongly reprimanded men who hit their wives and later had intimate relations with them [as though nothing had transpired]. When asked about a husband's responsibility towards a wife, the Prophet said, "*Give her food when you take food, clothe when you clothe yourself, do not revile her face, and do not beat her.*"

In his farewell pilgrimage sermon, the Prophet further asserted the importance of the kind treatment of women, equating the violation of women's marital rights to a breach of God's covenant. Additionally, he discouraged women from marrying men who are known for their harshness, as evidenced in the story of Fatimah bint Qays, narrated in Muslim: "*She said: When my period of 'iddah (3 month waiting period after the death or divorce of a husband) was over, I mentioned to him that Mu'awiya b. Abū Sufyān and Abū Jahm had sent proposal of marriage to me, whereupon God's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: 'As for Abū Jahm, he does not put down his staff from his shoulder; and as for Mu'awiya, he is a poor man having no property; marry Usāma b. Zayd.' I objected to him, but he again said: 'Marry Usāma'; so I married him. God blessed me therein and I was envied (by others).'*"

Ā'isha, the wife of the Prophet also narrates that, "*God's Messenger never beat anyone with his hand, neither a woman nor a servant, but only in the case when he had been fighting in the cause of God (in battle) ...*"

In the following five sections, I present an Islamic response to various aspects or types of domestic abuse, one which takes into account the higher objectives of Islamic law (maqāsid).

Physical Abuse

Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad was sent by God as a mercy to the worlds. He never raised his hand against another human being. The Prophet's wife Ā'isha reported that he never struck any of his wives. The Prophet was also reported to have asked his companions incredulously and admonishingly: "*Could any of you beat your wife as he would a slave, and then lie with her in the evening?*"

Emotional Abuse

The Qur'an emphatically prohibits vilifying others. Emotional neglect on the part of the husband could also be considered a legal shortcoming in fulfilling his responsibilities. This sort of abuse has

been strictly discouraged and prohibited.

Verbal Abuse

The Prophet forbade the cursing of others and using obscene language. He likened cursing to killing. He said, "*The worst form of usury is the violation of the personal honour of a Muslim.*" No Muslim should curse or use foul language against another human being. A wife is someone to be loved, respected and honoured, not abused.

Sexual Abuse

The Prophet encouraged both husband and wife to fulfil each other's sexual needs. Both need to consider the emotional and physical state of each other and neither should be 'pressured' or 'forced' into having sexual intercourse. Islam prohibits all forms of harm. The Prophet said: "*There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm.*"

Financial Abuse

The scholars of Islam agree that it is obligatory for husbands to financially support their wives—regardless of their wives' financial position. God describes husbands as protectors and [financial] maintainers of their wives. A husband must fulfil the financial needs of his wife without policing his finances in any way that could be considered degrading or demeaning. Furthermore, because the wife is considered financially independent, it would be an abuse of power for the husband to try to control or spend her income, gifts, or inheritance—which are exclusively at her disposal. The husband cannot demand that his wife, regardless of her financial position, bear any part of the financial responsibility in the family or the home.

A sincere and holistic reading of the Qur'an which takes into account the intricacies of the Arabic language, the Prophet's traditions, and the socio-historical context of those traditions and revelation of certain verses in the Qur'an will illustrate clearly that no form of domestic abuse is sanctioned by Islam, Qur'an, or any of the legal texts. Any form of violence that results in the shedding of blood, breaking bones, or causing wounds is of course valid grounds for a wife to annul her marriage contract, and requires the judge to assign an equivalent punishment.

To read the full paper please visit:
www.imamsagainstdomesticabuse.org



Islamophobia is REAL, help us STOP it!

Azad Ali, Head of Community Development – ENGAGE.

Islamophobia and anti-Muslim attacks are steadily rising to new and depressing levels. While dates signifying major incidents of international and domestic terrorism, like 9/11 or 7/7, are etched in our memories, incidents of far right extremism and terrorism merit much less media attention. The effects of far right extremism and terrorist incidents on Muslims' sense of security is far less appreciated.

Think of the date 29 April 2013, when Mohammed Saleem was murdered in a terrorist attack; on 5th June, a mosque in Muswell Hill was burnt to the ground, with the letters EDL painted onto its wall, and on 21st June a bomb exploded outside Masjid Aisha in Walsall. Pretty horrifying stuff but the response from the authorities was lukewarm. There were no COBRA meetings and West Midlands police took weeks to refer to the murder of Mohammed Saleem as a terrorist incident.

The Met Police Force recorded an increase in Islamophobic incidents and crimes in the months immediately following the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby on 22 May. Incidents rose 139% in May, 197% in June and 122% in July compared to the same period the previous year. The only other police force in the UK that records Islamophobia as a specific crime flag is Greater Manchester Police.

The situation Muslims find themselves in presently is pretty dire when one considers the rise in physical, verbal and online attacks. But manifestations of Islamophobia are just one facet of the threat faced by British Muslim' in their identity and freedom of religion. The Taskforce on Tackling Radicalisation report published on December 4, places further pressure on the Muslim community. Many Muslims see some of the proposals outlined in the report as further stigmatisation of an entire community with the recommendation of measures which are intrusive and an affront to religious freedoms. There is the palpable fear of eroding Muslim civil liberties, in particular freedom of speech. The human rights organisation, Liberty, has said of the report's initiatives on stifling democratic debate: "Driving those who despise diversity further underground does nothing to expose their beliefs and only acts as another recruitment tool. You cannot protect our democracy by shutting down the very freedoms that sustain it."

And we all know the role negative media coverage plays in fomenting anti-Muslim prejudice. I'll quote from the research carried out by Professors Tony McEnery and Paul Baker of

Lancaster University on 'The Representation of Muslims in the British press 1998-2009'. The research shows that "For every one moderate Muslim mentioned, 21 examples of extremist Muslims are mentioned in the British press. It is also interesting to note that so-called 'moderate Muslims' often got praised in a way which implies they are good because they aren't fully Muslim."

No need to elaborate, it is plain to see what is happening.

The final area that I would like to draw your attention to is legislation. One of the major priorities in challenging Islamophobia is tackling the issue of the disparity in legislation that covers 'incitement'. Currently, while incitement to racial hatred enjoys broad protections, incitement to religious hatred, that which covers Muslims, requires demonstrating 'intent' to secure prosecution. It is no surprise that this insurmountable threshold has meant that though the law was introduced in 2006, only a single individual has been prosecuted under it and even he was acquitted.

But, as Muslims we are no strangers to challenges, our faith demands of us patient perseverance and this is a reality that we have to deal with on a spiritual and physical level. So what can we do?

Everyone has a role to play in ensuring that the demonisation and misrepresentation of an entire community is challenged effectively. This means we have to engage with government at all levels to highlight the issues we face. We have to challenge the media every time an article is published that is inaccurate, distorting or misrepresentative. But more than that, we should engage with the debate as it happens in the media, through blogs and writing in to the Letters' pages. We have to ensure we report every hate crime that occurs no matter how trivial it may seem. No incident is too minor to report. And, we have to start lobbying for legislation that prosecutes all forms of hate equally. Should not anti-Muslim hatred be prosecuted with the same rigour as racism?

Finally, we have to raise awareness and build partnerships. First, we have to raise awareness about the severity of Islamophobia through public education campaigns. Second, we have to raise awareness of Islam and Muslims by having organised and regular outreach projects to the wider community from our mosques and community organisations. We will then be in a position to build alliances with non-Muslims who share our fear about the spread of Islamophobia in society.

Islamophobia is real, let us work together to stop it.



Photo: English Defence League member intimidates Muslims



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