

Joint Interfaith Statement by Faith Leaders in Buckinghamshire

To be given on 26 October 2023, 9am

The Oculus, Aylesbury

Statement introduced by:

The Countess Howe, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire

Statement read by:

Rabbi Neil Janes (Rabbi of South Bucks Jewish Community)

Imam Abdul Dayan (Head of Chaplaincy, HM Prison and Probation Service)

The Rt Revd Dr Alan Wilson (Bishop of Buckingham)

Revd Canon Rosie Harper (Chaplain to the Bishop of Buckingham)

Kevin Piper (Clerk of Trustees for the Chiltern Area Quaker Meeting)

Muthu Mardawan (President of the Aylesbury Hindu Temple Trust)

Gerald Knight (Vale of Aylesbury Bahá'ís)

Statement Begins:

"As faith leaders in the British Bahá'í, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Quaker communities here in Buckinghamshire, we make this statement as a first step in affirming the importance of maintaining our relationships – even, and indeed especially, in troubled times. We have so much in common; there are many friendships between us, and we have stood together through both peaceful and challenging days. We will sometimes have different loyalties, yet it is essential that we live together across Buckinghamshire as neighbours and fellow citizens in peace and with respect. We can disagree respectfully and without resorting to violence or hate. At this critical time, we share deep concern for the welfare of everyone. We are determined to do our utmost to prevent violence and intimidation across our county, whether on the streets, in places of worship, in schools, in universities, or in any other institutions.

"It is wrong that the Jewish community here has been the target of hate crimes. It is unacceptable that there has been a more than five-fold rise in antisemitism. It is wrong that the Muslim community here has been the target of hate crimes and Islamophobia. It is unacceptable for any Muslim to be targeted. We condemn all these attacks, and including attacks against Hindus, targeted with Hinduphobia, and we call on all fellow citizens to stand up and speak out against every form of hate.

"We share our prayers for an ultimate end to war. We feel compassion with and we pray for all who are caught up in this horror, for all those who are hurt and grieve, and all who long for the safety and wellbeing of their loved ones.

"We are all on the side of life. We share deep concern for the welfare of everyone and pray for a better future for all. Here in Buckinghamshire we want to be "patterns and examples" for a shared

society. Let us allow our prayers to permeate our local communities together - in person and online - to model the type of society that we all wish to live in - one of love, respect, tolerance, justice and peace."

ENDS

Notes:

The faith leaders thank Buckinghamshire Council and the staff for their logistical and behind the scenes support.

The faith leaders extend their deep gratitude to the Lord-Lieutenant for her support and presence reflecting the significance of this moment.

The Lord-Lieutenant is appointed by His Majesty The King to be his personal representative in the Historic County of Buckinghamshire which includes Milton Keynes. As His Majesty's representative in the County, it is the Lord-Lieutenant's first and foremost duty to uphold the dignity of the Crown. The Lieutenancy follows the example of the Royal Family in promoting a good atmosphere and a spirit of co-operation in the County through the encouragement it gives to the voluntary service and charitable organisations, and by the interest it takes in the commercial, business and social life of the County. The role is strictly non-political and the Lord-Lieutenant is unpaid. The Lord-Lieutenant remains strictly neutral in political matters, both national and local.

For More Information:

Photograph and video recording available on request

Rabbi Neil Janes rabbi@sbjc.org.uk