

# BIRMINGHAM FAITH LEADERS' GROUP



Website: [www.birminghamfaithleaders.co.uk](http://www.birminghamfaithleaders.co.uk)

From the Executive Secretary

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## **A Statement by members of the Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group on President Trump's Announcements curbing entry to the United States by citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries**

*(A majority of members of the Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group have today issued  
the following statement for immediate use.)*

The world currently faces troubling times in which the values we seek to espouse are under attack, not only from the forces of terrorism, but also, alarmingly, from some elected governments.

Members of the Faith Leaders' Group are drawn from the principal leaders of the City's six main religious communities. We find abhorrent many of the actions of Donald Trump, President of the United States of America in the few days since his inauguration. In particular, we reject his decision to summarily exclude from entry to the United States, citizens from seven nations, all predominantly Muslim in composition.

Over the weekend, Rabbis from both the Orthodox and Progressive Synagogues in this city, wrote an open letter to the Chairman of Birmingham Central Mosque, declaring their opposition to the President's action. "It is unacceptable to exclude people simply on the grounds of their religion and country of origin and we condemn President Trump's actions wholeheartedly."

The Chairman of the Birmingham District of the Methodist Church, Rev Ian Howarth, endorsed this statement, saying "that the Methodist people are appalled by these actions and we particularly wish to stand with our Muslim brothers and sisters in the face of such discrimination."

John Beard from the Buddhist community and Bhai Sahib Dr Mohinder Singh from the Sikh community also denounced President Trump's actions. "If we don't stand united and denounce such despicable matters, they will become more acceptable and a sad reflection on our society."

It has not escaped our notice that President Trump's announcement came on the day chosen in the United Kingdom as marking Holocaust Memorial Day. At Birmingham's Memorial event hosted by the Lord Mayor and held in the Council House on 22<sup>nd</sup> January before some 300 people, the Statement of Commitment made by all who attended, included this clause: "We recognise that humanity is still scarred by the belief that race or religion or disability or sexuality makes some people's lives worth less than others. Genocide, anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination still continue. We have a shared

responsibility to fight these evils.”

We believe that is a responsibility of all in Birmingham who value the richly diverse community which has been peacefully and creatively built here. Fear of difference is no basis on which to nurture a community or a nation, nor to protect its people. The President's evident fear of Islam is deeply worrying for the world because it risks giving credence to extremist views that would destroy the values we hold dear. The brutal attack on a mosque in Quebec on Sunday is but one particularly tragic illustration of this.

We stand together with communities of all faiths in Birmingham in seeking to uphold the strong, open and welcoming nature of this city, against any who would seek to destroy our values.

*Ends*

*This Statement has been endorsed by:*

- *Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi, Birmingham Progressive Synagogue*
- *Rabbi Yossi Jacobs, Singers Hill Synagogue*
- *Rev Ian Howarth, Chairman Birmingham Methodist District*
- *Mr John Beard, Birmingham Mahayana Buddhists*
- *Bhai Sahib Dr Mohinder Singh, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha*
- *Mr Abdul Rashid, Birmingham Central Mosque*

*One member has declined to sign the Statement. Three members were unavailable through illness or travel.*