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For Immediate Release

Working Together for Peace and Unity

We, the Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF), a voluntary body of Luton's different faiths and cultures, are again deeply shocked following Sunday evening terror attack while Muslim worshippers were leaving the Ramadan prayer in the Finsbury Park area in London. It has caused numerous casualties and has left one dead.

We strongly condemn such vile, revengeful, barbaric and cowardly act which is fuelled by hate. Targeting people because of their faith is a betrayal of British values of tolerance, respect and kindness which is the foundational base of our society. "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind!" Hats off to the Imam who handled this difficult situation promptly and bravely protecting the perpetrator and handing him over to the Police despite he said he wanted to kill Muslims. In the eye of the storm, he stopped the cycle of violence and hate, while Muslim community has stayed calm and cooperated with the Police.

This attack coincided with Jo Cox MP's first death anniversary. In Luton many of us were invited at Medina Mosque yesterday evening to celebrate her life remembering her famous quote "...We are far more united and have more in common that which divides us". This was followed by the breaking of fast with our Muslims friends. It is such continuous acts of kindness, friendship and mutual support that help us stay firm and resolute in stopping the forces of division. We need to nurture values and good character in our communities to combat extremism while staying vigilant.

We call upon authorities and media to deal with such matters justly. We also urge the government to apply the same determination to combat extremism, incitement to hate and radicalisation by Far-right groups, who are openly spreading hate on social media and intentionally causing tensions and creating hate videos in front of the East London Mosque at a time when worshipers were preparing for prayers and busy in service to their neighbourhood following the tragic Grenfell Tower Fire.

With a rise of hate crime Bedfordshire Police alongside communities urges anyone who experiences racist, verbal or physical abuse to call 101 or 999 in an emergency. People can also report online via www.report-it.org.uk.

As Luton Council of Faiths, we therefore reaffirm our hope, pledge and strong resolve, to continue playing an active role in creating an environment of understanding and respect amongst the many religious and culturally diverse communities, locally and where possibly influencing globally. We continue to stay in solidarity. Too many lives have been lost- enough is enough!

Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) is an independent voluntary group of members and leaders from different faith communities, constantly seeking to engage with communities and individuals, of faith or of no faith, to strengthen community cohesion in Luton. It works in partnership with GRASSROOTS, a Christian ecumenical charity, which is supported by different Christian denominations and organisations.

For Interviews please call Zafar Khan, Chair, Luton Council of Faiths on 07944 722 901