



Eid with **PARLIAMENTARIANS**

2nd May 2023

6pm to 8pm

AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT
EDINBURGH

www.mcscotland.org
MuslimCouncilScot

Co-sponsored by
Foysal Choudhury, MSP
& Kaukab Stewart, MSP

Contents

| | |
|---|--------------|
| MCS Convenor Message | 3 |
| Eid Message from Anas Sarwar, MSP & Leader of Scottish Labour Party | 4 |
| Eid Message from Douglas Ross, Leader of Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party | 5 |
| Eid Message from Foysal Choudhury, MSP | 6 |
| Eid Message from Kaukab Stewart, MSP | 7 |
| Elected Team Muslim Council of Scotland | 8 / 9 |
| History of Muslim Council of Scotland | 10 / 11 / 12 |
| Muslim Council of Scotland | 12 |
| Muslim Council of Scotland Interfaith & Community Cohesion Activities | 13 |
| Islam a Brief Introduction | 15 |
| Significance of Eid for Muslim Community | 16 |
| The Role of the Ulama (Muslim Scholars) in a Multicultural Society | 17 |
| The Contribution of Muslim Scholars to a Multicultural Scotland | 18 |
| Equality of Male & Female and Additional Protected Rights of Women in Islam | 19 |
| Muslim Council of Scotland is a Democratic Organisation | 20 |
| Finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) | 21 |
| Scottish Muslims in Business Community | 22 / 23 |
| COVID-19 & Role of Muslim Council of Scotland | 24 / 25 |
| Muslim Council of Scotland | 24 / 25 |
| The Special Occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr | 25 |
| The Social, Health & Financial Benefits of Fasting | 26 |
| Muslim Council of Scotland Media Engagements | 27 |
| Organ Donation, Circumcision, Death Certification & Burial Facilities | 28 |
| MRI or CT Scan of Deceased Body to Find Out Cause of Death | 29 |
| Sufism | 30 |
| NHS Scotland: Shared Values & Challenges | 31 |
| Eid Message from Alex Cole Hamilton, Leader of Liberal Democrat Party Scotland | 32 |
| Islamophobia: Definition & its Adoption | 33 |
| Scottish Muslim Community Stress & Concerns | 34 / 35 |
| Eid Message from Emma Roddick, Equalities Minister | 35 |

MCS Convenor Message

Muslims across the globe celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr to mark the end of Ramadan (the month of fasting), when Muslims refrain from food or drink between the hours of dawn and dusk as an act of worship and obedience to Allah almighty (God). During Ramadan, the reward of every good deed is multiplied and Muslims pay particular attention to undertaking charitable deeds and donations. The act of fasting is also a reminder of being grateful that there is food on the table for opening the fast when there are many people who go hungry.

There are more than 90 Mosques (and Islamic centres) throughout Scotland. They are open not only for five times daily prayers; but in addition, during Ramadan there are additional congregational prayers that are performed at night, preferably at the mosques. To accommodate this mosques are open to a very late hour. On behalf of the Muslim community I thank Police Scotland for being more vigilant and increasing patrolling around the mosques to keep the worshippers safe.

Eid-ul-Fitr is first day of 10th lunar month of Islamic calendar. This is the day of gratitude to Allah almighty for awarding us the month of Ramadan and rewarding us for all our good actions during this blessed month.

The Eid celebrations commence immediately following sighting of the Hilal (new crescent moon). As soon as the moon sighting is announced, we use all the modes of communication to say Eid Mubarak (Blessed Happiness) to our families, friends, neighbours and almost everyone we can reach out.

“

On behalf of Muslim Council of Scotland, wishing all Muslims a very happy Eid Mubarak; may Allah (SWT) shower his blessings upon you and your family members.

Eid celebrations are marked by attending the mosque, followed by lavish family dinners, and the exchanging of gifts, and especially for children it is a day for presents and money from family friends. I would like to thank all our affiliates for their continued support.

I also thank Foysol Choudhary MSP and Kaukab Stewart MSP for co hosting Eid with Parliamentarians event.

On behalf of Muslim Council of Scotland, wishing all Muslims a very happy Eid Mubarak; may Allah (SWT) shower his blessings upon you and your family members.

With best wishes and Regards

Dr Muhammad Adrees
Convenor Muslim Council of Scotland

Eid Message

Anas Sarwar

MSP & leader of Scottish Labour Party

On behalf of myself and the Scottish Labour Party, I would like to wish Muslims across Scotland, across the UK and across the world **Eid Mubarak**, may Allah SWT accept all your efforts during this blessed month.

Ramadan is a time of reflection, it's a time of charity, and it's a time of giving thanks. We think of all those right around the world, who are suffering at the hands of poverty, of oppression, of injustice, or inequality. And we hope that in the coming months and years, we can defeat those challenges.

There are too many across our world, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who live with those challenging consequences every single day. And I reaffirm my commitment to challenge those injustices every day. Because ultimately, that is what our faith, but also our politics must be about.

I also reflect on the many challenges we face here in Scotland. As we continue to challenge Islamophobia and other forms of prejudice and hate.

There are too many in our communities who suffer every day due to that prejudice. That's why I will continue to work across political parties to defeat Islamophobia and to make sure everyone can live in peace, dignity, and with equality.

I hope you enjoy a peaceful Eid with your family. Once again, Eid Mubarak.



Eid Message

Douglas Ross

Leader of Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Muslim communities across Scotland and the rest of the world, a very happy Eid al-Fitr.

Eid is a time for families and friends, joy and happiness. Peace and unity are the spirit of Eid - and in these testing times internationally, this message could not be more powerful.

As communities come together in celebration, it is important to recognise the immense contribution that British Muslims make to Scotland and to the whole of our United Kingdom. And whatever our politics, we are all united in this celebration and in our support for diversity across Scotland.

On this very important day of celebration, I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Eid.



Eid Message

Foyso Choudhury

MBE, MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament. Shadow Minister for Culture, Europe & International Development



Co Sponsor Eid with Parliamentarians

It is my pleasure to be co-sponsoring the “Eid with Parliamentarians” event with Kaukab Stewart MSP. Since being elected as the first Bangladeshi Muslim MSP in 2021, it has been a true honour to be involved in hosting such multicultural events that gather people from various communities from across Scotland to celebrate such festivities that create greater interfaith and community cohesion. I truly believe that by sharing our diversity we can genuinely foster respect, mutual understanding and create lasting friendships and harmony. I would like to wish Eid Mubarak to everyone in Scotland, across the UK and around the world.

Eid Message

Kaukab Stewart

MSP, Glasgow Kelvin
Co Sponsor Eid with
Parliamentarians



“I am delighted to be co-hosting this auspicious event alongside my colleague Foyso Choudhury MSP. As the convenor of the CPG on Pakistan and being the first Pakistani Muslim female to be elected to this parliament it is a great honour to host events that support and encourage all of our diverse communities in playing their full part across Scotland and beyond.”

Elected Team Muslim Council of Scotland



Dr. Muhammad Adrees
CONVENOR



Azzam Ali Mohamad
VICE CONVENOR



Fariha Thomas
HEAD OF MEDIA &
COMMUNICATIONS



Naeem Ahmed
TREASURER



Dr Muhammad Rafiq Habib
HEAD OF MASAJID &
ISLAMIC CENTRES



Muhammad Ashraf Sheikh
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER



Kaiser Habib
EXECUTIVE BOARD
MEMBER



Nasim Azad
HEAD OF PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE



Shaukat Sultan
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST



Tehmina Mohammed
EXECUTIVE BOARD
MEMBER

Ex-Convenors



Bashir Ahmed Maan (Late)
CBE (22 Oct 1926 –
20 Dec 2019)



Dr Javid Gill
CONVENOR
from 2013 to 2017



Dr Salah Beltagui
CONVENOR
from 2009 to 2013

History of Muslim Council of Scotland

By **Dr Muhammad Adrees**

This umbrella body was founded in 2007 by the community visionaries and the first meeting was held in Glasgow Central Mosque chaired by Mr Bashir Maan (Late). He was nominated the first Convenor of the Muslim Council of Scotland. In September 2007 MCS held its inaugural General Meeting where the first Executive Board of Muslim Council of Scotland was elected.

A delegation of the founding members visited the various mosques and Islamic centres to raise awareness about the aims and objectives of this voluntary organisation. The founding members wrote up the constitution and main aims and objectives of the organisation are as follows:

The advancement of the education, health and wellbeing of the Muslim communities within Scotland for the betterment of racial understanding and harmony between the various communities in Scotland. In addition furtherance of

- a) To promote cooperation, consensus and unity on Muslim affairs in Scotland.

- b) To encourage and strengthen all existing efforts being made for the benefit of the Muslim community.

- c) To work for a more enlightened appreciation of Islam and Muslims in the wider society.

- d) To establish a position for the Muslim community within the Scottish society that is fair and based on due rights.

- e) To work for the eradication of Islamophobia, disadvantages and forms of discrimination faced by Muslims.

- f) To cooperate with other faith communities on matters of common interest.

- g) To foster better community relations, amicable contacts with other faith communities and work for the good of society as a whole.

In November 2009 the Scottish Government released a statement recognising the Muslim Council of Scotland as an important representative body for Scottish Muslims. The then Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said "I am pleased that this government has developed such constructive links with the Muslim Council of Scotland, working to promote consultation, co-operation and co-ordination on Muslim affairs in Scotland."

Forty mosques, Islamic centres and Muslim organisations were registered as affiliated members and participated in MCS first affiliate members meeting in 2010 where the constitution was unanimously passed and first election was conducted to elect

eight executive board members. Following their election, the eight elected board members elected the following office bearers: Convenor, Vice Convenor, Secretary, Treasurer. Dr Salah Beltagui was the first elected Convenor of MCS

Over the last fifteen years this organisation has worked with Scottish Government, Police Scotland, and Interfaith organisations on number of issues impacting Muslim community in Scotland.

In order to encourage the main community engagement with mosques, MCS hosted a series of Open day events with Iftar during Ramadan in fifteen Mosques across Scotland. These events were well attended by local communities and number of MSPs.

Recent and Current issues the Muslim Council of Scotland has been working on:

Government Policy

As a Charity MCS does not engage in or comment on party political affairs, but does engage with the process of Government consultations and proposals on social issues in Scotland.

As part of this MCS is a member of the Scottish Government's Faith and Belief Representatives Group, and contributed to the development of the recently launched Faith and Belief engagement strategy.

Life is a gift of God and MCS has been deeply concerned about the End of Life Assistance Bill 2010: MCS submitted both oral and written presentations, highlighting our opposition to the Bill as a matter of the principle of the sanctity of human life and the prohibition of suicide in Islam. This is a good example of working with other faith groups in publicising the issue and lobbying MSPs to reject the Bill. Similar concerns are being raised about the current proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill.

To simplify the death registration and certification for the speedy completion of the burial process of the deceased loved ones, (swift burial is required in Islam, as

with Judaism), MCS contributed as a member of the Scottish Government review leading to the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016. The Bill aim was to improve provisions for death registration procedures and burial/cremation. Since then Muslim community deceased registration and burial is prioritised and the burial is done on the day of death in the majority of cases.

MCS fed in a range of concerns on the Gender Recognition Bill recently passed by the Scottish Parliament.

MCS has been in the forefront to promote organ donation and has led a campaign involving Scholars and management of the affiliate organisations, to encourage the Muslim community to donate organs, and emphasising the impact it has to save human lives.

Covid 19

MCS played a vital role in raising awareness about vaccination for COVID 19 to achieve the best health outcomes. During the pandemic MCS affiliates worked in hand in hand with Scottish Government, to ensure their communities understood and followed the Government rules on COVID 19. Many of the affiliate organisations were also actively involved in the charitable work, to support vulnerable people across Scotland; from organising food donations, delivering hot food and essential supplies to communities who were in dire need.

Islamophobia

Sadly, Islamophobia is a persistent issue, with direct hate crime perpetrated by a small, but active, section of Scottish and British society. MCS dedicated elected executive board members team has been working tirelessly on Islamophobia, and hate crime, participating actively in the former Cross Party Group (CPG) on Tackling Islamophobia and its Report. MCS actively promotes Islamophobia Awareness Month each autumn, arranging events and encouraging affiliates to participate.

Continued...

Continued:

History of Muslim Council of Scotland

Media

The CPG on Tackling Islamophobia identified issues of biased Media creating and reinforcing negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. Media response is therefore an important and on-going task which is dealt with all the time especially on occasions of problems whether in Scotland or worldwide. MCS Media team both liaise with mainstream media e.g BBC and overseas channels and use our social media to promote both our work and engagement on current issues.

Human Rights

We stand for human rights of all wherever they are oppressed in the world, including standing for people of Kashmir, Palestine. For the past two years, during Ramadan, MCS has organised Human Rights Iftar (fast opening) events with Amnesty International and our affiliates in both Edinburgh and Glasgow.

During fifteen years, Muslim Council of Scotland elected board members and office bearers have always worked for the betterment of the community; and will continue to do so in future. Our work has been acknowledged by number of MSPs across the different Political Parties, Ministers and First Ministers of Scotland. MCS will continue to work tirelessly in the years to come – InshaAllah.

Muslim Council of Scotland

By **Dr Muhammad Adrees**

Muslim Council of Scotland (MCS) is a membership based, OSCR registered, charity and is a voluntary organisation of more than 100 mosques, Islamic centres and Muslim organisations throughout Scotland. Muslim Council of Scotland is an umbrella organisation, and its executive board members (EBM) are elected democratically every two years. An independent election Commission is appointed to conduct the fair and free election. The election is conducted on the day of the biannual general meeting. For in-between years, the Annual General Meeting provides members with an update on activities and the financial affairs of MCS and provides an opportunity for members to meet, and to feed into policy.

While currently a Scottish Charity, MCS is currently in the process of converting to become a Scottish Incorporated charitable Organisation (SCIO).

MCS is a volunteer-based organisation, and board members work tirelessly, with very limited resources. Our ambitions are to grow a bigger stronger organisation able to take on more projects, that can meet the needs of our expanding Muslim communities across Scotland.

Muslim Council of Scotland Interfaith & Community Cohesion Activities

Diversity in religion, race and colour is the beauty of Scotland. In this beautiful country the majority of the people are caring and respectful to their fellow citizens.

Muslim Council of Scotland was founded to achieve advancement of the education, health, and wellbeing of not only Muslims, but also to work towards the betterment of racial, religious, interfaith understanding and harmony between the various communities throughout Scotland. In furtherance of these objective MCS participates in activities of all faith followers.

MCS actively cooperates with other faith communities on matters of common interest to foster better community relations, amicable contacts with other faith communities and work for the good of society.

MCS is an active member of Interfaith Scotland and is also representing the Muslim community in Freedom of Religion and Belief Cross Party Group at the Scottish Parliament.

Through our interfaith work MCS has been attending various conferences and round

the table meetings in Scotland where we participate in the common ground dialogue. We do stand with all the communities during challenging times.

Doors of Mosques and Islamic centres are open for all, and special open days are organised so that neighbouring communities can freely visit the centre to help improve mutual understanding.

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Diversity in religion, race and colour is the beauty of Scotland. In this beautiful country majority of the scots are caring and respectful to the fellow citizens.

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*Eid
Mubarak
from
around the
world*”

Islam a Brief Introduction

by **Dr Muhammad Rafiq Habib**

The word 'Islam' is derived from the Arabic word salama or salima which means peace, security, safety and protection. Even by its name and literal meaning, Islam is a religion of peace and security. As a religion it is peace incarnate. It encourages its adherents and all humankind to be moderate, peaceful, kind, balanced, tolerant, patient and forbearing. This essence of Islam can further be appreciated by the following statement of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) in which he stated, 'The Muslim is he from whose tongue and hand all people are safe'. Hence, Islam being the religion of peace and security, always promotes love, peace and harmony and has nothing to do with mutual hate, disintegration, extremism and terrorism.

As a complete code of life, Islam comprises of three major elements; Iman (beliefs), Islam (practices) and Ihsan (Morality and Spirituality). The fundamental beliefs of Islam which every Muslim has to believe in include the belief in the oneness of Allah (God), in the Angels, the divinely revealed Books, the Prophets and Messengers, the Judgement Day, the Life after Death and that the creator of every good and bad is Allah.

The obligatory practices of Islam are: Shahadah, the declaration of faith; Salah, praying five times a day; Sawm, fasting during the month of Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar; Zakah, the obligatory charity which a Muslim has to pay annually at the rate of 2.5% if s/he possesses a certain amount of savings; Hajj, a pilgrimage to the holy sites in Makkah and Madinah in Saudi Arabia if one can physically and financially afford to do so once in a lifetime.

Finally, the Ihsan is the moral and spiritual aspect of Islam which ensures the inculcation of good values such as the honesty, truthfulness, generosity, selflessness, sacrifice, love, patience and forbearance and the elimination of the evil habits such as lying, backbiting, hatred, greed, selfishness, theft, fraud etc. from one's life to elevate the human character morally and spiritually to its highest and also to establish a heartfelt spiritual relationship of a person with his/her Creator.

Islam, as a whole, is a code of life and a system of beliefs, practices and moral values and ethics which, on the individual level, urges its followers to observe and promote mutual love, peace and harmony and, on the communal level, it strives to foster interaction, integration, peaceful co-existence and social cohesion among all segments of the society. Furthermore, it encourages a positive, healthy and fruitful dialogue among the people of different faiths and also with those of no faith.



Significance of Eid for Muslim Community

By **Maulana Abu Bakar** Cumbernauld

Eid al-Fitr, also known as the Festival of Breaking the Fast, is one of the most important celebrations in the Muslim community. It marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan, a time of fasting, spiritual reflection, and self-discipline for Muslims. Eid al-Fitr is a time for Muslims to celebrate and express their gratitude to God for the blessings and strength they received during Ramadan.

As the moon of Eid is sighted and the announcement is made, there is a bitter-sweet feeling within the hearts of the Muslim community as it is known that the blessings of Ramadan have ended. However, happiness and joy of celebration commences – Eid al-Fitr. This is the time when new clothes are ironed and hung up, while traditional food and sweet dishes are being prepared for the arrival of friends and family. Traditional Mendhi (Henna) is placed on the hands of women who meet up and enjoy the festivities with each other's company. This is all happening the night before Eid!

The importance of Eid al-Fitr in the Muslim community can be seen in the many rituals and traditions that are associated with it. Muslims gather for the Eid prayer, which is typically held in large open areas, such as parks or mosques. The prayer is led by an Imam, and it involves a series of supplications and praises to God.

After the prayer, Muslims exchange greetings and hugs, and share gifts and food with family and friends. Traditional sweets and dishes are also prepared and shared during this time. Many Muslim families also decorate their homes and dress up in new clothes to mark the occasion.

Eid al-Fitr is also a time for charity and giving back to the community. Muslims are encouraged to give Zakat al-Fitr, a donation of food or money that is distributed to those in need. This helps ensure that everyone can enjoy the celebrations and have enough food to break their fast.

The importance of Eid al-Fitr in the Muslim community is further underscored by the role it plays in strengthening bonds of family and community. Eid al-Fitr brings together family, friends, and neighbours, and it provides an opportunity to share food, gifts, and laughter with one another. The festival helps create a sense of belonging and unity within the community, and it fosters a spirit of generosity and compassion towards others.

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Eid al-Fitr is a deeply significant festival for Muslims around the world.

The Role of the Ulama (Muslim Scholars) in a Multicultural Society

By **Sheikh Zuber Karim**

The multicultural diversity in our society has not only reshaped the landscape of ideas and values but in its midst, it has brought about arts, creativity and a plethora of contributions in different facets of our life here in Scotland and elsewhere in Britain. When one visits a supermarket, for example, one is stunned to find a variety of food items from across the globe, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Jamaican, Polish food items, to name a few. That luxuriant diversity was not that rife twenty years ago. And the shelves are still being filled with new recipes each week.

If one walks on the high street; one may find an Indian dental practice, a Chinese pharmacist, a Nigerian optician, a Pakistani bank teller. This is not a reality that is only found on the high street alone, but it is a beautiful tapestry found in all walks of public life and places, such as schools, universities, colleges, and places of worship including mosques.

At our mosque, for example, one may encounter more than twenty-five different ethnicities and races from all over the world! On the days of Muslim festivity, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, one is stunned to meet different colours of clothing and various attires worn by Muslim worshippers from a diverse cultural background, all adorned with smiles, displaying happiness for the occasion and greeting each other with hugs. That scene truly resonates a globe wherein a multicultural and multiracial family harmoniously co-exists under one roof.

This unity of humanity is also evident during the Hajj pilgrimage where people from across the world gather to fulfil the rites of an important pillar of Islam, the Hajj.

It was during the Hajj, Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) delivered his last sermon before departing from this world reminding the humanity that “an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, neither a non-Arab has any over an Arab; nor a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except through God consciousness.”

The companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were from different racial backgrounds, his muezzin (caller to prayer) was an Ethiopian called Bilal. Other foreign companions were Salman al-Farsi from Persia and Suhayb ar-Rumi (the Roman).

It is this legacy of multicultural and multiracial diversity since the time of Prophet Muhammad until today that is celebrated within the Muslim community, hence, the Ulama (Muslim scholars) are more conversant with that fact and can play a great role in enhancing the quality of that fabric of diversity within the wider community. The Ulama are best placed to play a crucial role in a multicultural society, where people from diverse backgrounds, religions, and cultures coexist. Their role is multifaceted, and they can contribute to fostering peace, understanding, and harmony among different communities.

The Contribution of Muslim Scholars to a Multicultural Scotland

Some of the ways in which Muslim scholars can contribute to a multicultural society are:

1. Promoting interfaith dialogue: Muslim scholars can function as a bridge between different faith communities by promoting dialogue and understanding among them. They can organize interfaith events, conferences, and seminars where people from different faiths can come together, share their perspectives, and learn from each other.
2. Educating the public: Muslim scholars can educate the public about Islam and its teachings, dispelling myths and misconceptions that may exist about the religion. They can also educate Muslims about other faiths and cultures, promoting understanding and respect for diversity.
3. Advocating for social justice: Muslim scholars can advocate for social justice and equality, working to promote the rights of marginalized and vulnerable communities. They can use their influence to speak out against discrimination, prejudice, and injustice, and work towards creating a more equitable society.
4. Providing guidance and support: Muslim scholars can provide guidance and

support to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, helping them navigate the challenges of living in a multicultural society. They can provide advice on how to maintain their faith and cultural identity while also being respectful and tolerant of others.

5. Religious Guidance: Muslim scholars provide religious guidance and support to Muslims living in multicultural societies. They can provide guidance on how to practice Islam in a way that is compatible with the local culture and laws. This is important because Muslims living in multicultural societies may face unique challenges and may need guidance on how to navigate them.

The Muslim Council of Scotland has an advisory panel of Muslim scholars to help them understand contemporary issues and respond to issues that arise in Scotland today and into policy issues e.g. at Scottish Government level.

Equality of Male & Female and Additional Protected Rights of Women in Islam

Islamic teachings about the equality and role of women and men in building families and developing communities within Scotland and around the globe. We are aware of that Islam has given rights and duties to every human beings so that a caring and respecting environment created could lead to more and more prosper and progressive society. Islam not only guide us about our duties and responsibilities but also provide us rules to look after all creatures of Allah Almighty. There are number of verses of Holy Quran and Hadeeth of our beloved the Final Prophet Muhammad PBUH. The Sunna of Prophet Muhammad PBUH is the part of our faith to be respectful and caring to all creations of Allah almighty.

Islam has assigned extremely high status to women ensuring no discrimination in any way in this regard. Reminding men and women of their origin, Almighty Allah said in Holy Quran; (Chapter al-Hujurāt, 49 verse 13). O people! We created you from a male and a female, and (then) made you into different races and tribes, so you may know each other. Surely, the most honourable amongst you in the sight of Allah is the most mindful of Allah, the Knower and Aware. Origination from the one couple (male and female) indicates the equality of both men and women.

Most often, the Holy Quran mentions men and women together, such as (Chapter An-Nisā', 4 verse 124) A believer whether male or female, who does good work will enter paradise and will not be wronged in the least. (Chapter Al-Ahzāb, 33 verse 35) The Men and the women who submit (to the will of Allah) are: believers, devout, truthful, patient, humble, charitable, keep fast, are chaste and (pure) and remember

Allah frequently. Allah has prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward for them.

In these verses, Almighty Allah has mentioned men and women together without any discrimination which clearly shows their equality in the society.

Holy Quran and Sunnah of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) have guaranteed equal and equitable rights and duties for both men and women.

Highlighting the equality and equity of mutual rights and duties of men and women, Holy Quran describes. The teachings of Islam on women, protects the rights of women as mother, sister, daughter and wife. It also pays much attention to ensure the dignity, respect and safety of women and to what extent it safeguards their rights. Furthermore women financial protection is guaranteed by putting responsibility on father, brother, son and husband. These all relations are religiously bound to pay their share in the welfare of women at the stages the various stages of life.

Muslim Council of Scotland is a democratic organisation



Muslim Council of Scotland is an umbrella organisation, and its executive board members (EBM) are elected democratically every two years. An independent election Commission is appointed to conduct the fair and free election. The election is conducted on the day of biannual general meeting.

The affiliate members throughout Scotland attend the meeting and nominate their potential candidate and following are important aspects of the election process. A candidate shall not be eligible for election/appointment to the EBM unless nominated by their own organisation that is a full member of the MCS, who has paid their fees and the person nominated is eligible to stand in accordance with the constitution. Each organization's delegate can vote up to eight members candidates.

Eight board members are elected by MCS affiliate by costing their votes in a biannual general meeting. Eight candidates who got highest vote will be declared as Executive board member.

The elected Executive board selects three Co-opt members on the bases of their professional qualifications, dedication to community care and track record of working for the community. These co-opted members work alongside the elected EBM for two years according to MCS constitution.

The maximum number of members of the EBM shall be 11 consisting of 8 elected and 3 co-opted members.

Following first phase of election the EB members shall elect from among themselves a Convenor, Vice Convenor, Treasurer and Secretary, and such other office bearers (if any) as they consider appropriate.

Delegation to Committees: The EBM may delegate any of their powers to any committee consisting of one or more EBM and such other persons (if any) as the EBM may determine; they may also delegate to the holder of any other post such of their powers as they may consider appropriate.

MCS resources are very limited but all board members contribute well and never claim any of their travelling or other expenses but contribute financially as well for various project from their own pockets. MCS has no paid staff working in the office at all, but board members try their best to spare some time to do their volunteer work with passion. MCS rented a hot desk in the ARK at Coplaw Street Glasgow to hold its meetings and other office work.

Our ambitions are to get our own office one day with paid staff to take an initiatives to start more projects to empower Muslim community to enhance integration and cohesiveness. MCS is reviewing its constitution to increase its tenure duration, improve regional representation, increase number of EBM and more flexibility to work in partnership with other organizations.

Finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Islam is an Abrahamic religion based on the fundamental belief of monotheism and believing in the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him, as the final Prophet of Allah almighty and no other Prophet in any form can be born after him. According to Islam's tenets any belief in any entity as a messenger after the Prophet Muhammad PBUH removes one from the boundaries of Islam. According to the basic foundations of the Qadiani / Ahmadiyya / Mirzai cult theology, Mr Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani is their prophet. This belief of theirs is in direct contradiction with the Muslim declaration of faith being dependant in the belief that Muhammad PBUH is the final messenger of Allah almighty. Just as the Christians believe in Jesus PBUH as their Prophet and the Jewish community believe in Moses PBUH as their Prophet, the Muslims across the world believe in Muhammad PBUH as the final Prophet of Allah almighty. Despite the Muslim community believing in Jesus PBUH and Moses PBUH as Prophets as well, Muslims do not claim to be representatives of the Jewish or Christian community. Likewise, just as we have a religion and identity independent from other monotheistic Abrahamic religions, the Qadiani / Ahmadiyya / Mirzai community should also coin their own religion and identity in line with their own prophet Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani and separate from the Muslim community.

Note: Muslim Council of Scotland has incorporated the views of its affiliates throughout Scotland and the Muslim world in this IDENTITY clarification article on the Finality of our beloved Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him.

Due to the fundamental difference in the beliefs of the Qadiani / Ahmadiyya / Mirzai community and the Muslim community, the Muslim world and the Muslim Council of Scotland cannot recognise this cult as a part of the Muslim community. We recognise them as an independent faith group separate from the Muslim community and they should not be discriminated in any shape or form.

Muslim Council of Scotland believes in equality, respect and dialogue with interfaith organisations.

Our member organisations have a unanimous policy that if the Qadiani / Ahmadiyya / Mirzai community,

- 1) Declare that they are non-Muslim and an independent cult.
- 2) Stop calling true Muslims, Non-Muslims.
- 3) Apologise for blaspheming against Jesus PBUH.

We would be happy to accept them into interfaith events. No group / religion / organisation has the right to claim the identity of another or speak on their behalf as a representative. We believe that our true doctrinal identities must be respected to maintain mutual harmony, care, respect, and peace.

Prophet Muhammad Peace be upon him is the final prophet of Allah almighty and no prophet can be born after him.

Scottish Muslims in Business Community

By **Naeem Ahmed**

Scottish Muslims have been an integral part of the business community throughout history, making significant contributions to economic development and growth in Scotland and the United Kingdom. This essay will explore some of the ways in which Muslim business community has contributed to Scottish society through their entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and social responsibility.

One of the most important contributions of the Muslim business community is their role in promoting economic

development. Many Muslim entrepreneurs have established successful businesses that have created jobs and contributed to the growth of their local economies. This is evident from the numerous food places, local grocery shops to large supermarkets. They have also helped to diversify economies by introducing new industries and products including Islamic banking, Islamic law practices and Islamic weddings sector, thereby expanding the range of opportunities available to people in their communities.

Furthermore, Muslim business people have a strong tradition of giving back to their communities through philanthropy. Zakat, one of the five pillars of Islam, requires Muslims to give a portion (minimum 2.5%) of their wealth to those in need. This practice is encouraged among Muslim entrepreneurs, who often contribute significant amounts of money and resources to charitable causes. In addition to zakat, Muslims also engage in various forms of charity such as Sadaqah and Lillah, which is voluntary charity. Through their philanthropy, Scottish Muslim business people have supported numerous initiatives that benefit the less fortunate, such as building hospitals, schools, and other community infrastructure worldwide.

Moreover, the Scottish Muslim business community has also been known for its social responsibility. This involves using their businesses as a platform to promote ethical business practices, sustainability,

and community development. All business and trade practices that do not result in a free and fair exchange of goods and services are considered haram (not permissible) such as gambling and Riba (usury), hence many Muslim-owned businesses are committed to supporting fair labor practices, environmental conservation, and social justice. By prioritising social responsibility in their business practices, Muslim entrepreneurs can positively change their communities and contribute to a more fair society.

Lastly, the Muslim business community has also played a key role in promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding. Through their business dealings, Muslim entrepreneurs have had the opportunity to interact with people of other faiths and cultures. By fostering positive relationships and mutual respect, Muslim business people have been able to break down barriers and promote understanding between different groups. This is evident with Scottish Muslim business community recognising a need for better understanding of all Scottish faith groups; organising Muslim mosques to have open days and inviting people of all faiths to come and visit and visiting other faiths places of worship in return,

thus promoting understanding amongst faiths and then acceptance.

In conclusion, the contributions of the Scottish Muslim business community are numerous and diverse. From promoting economic development and philanthropy to social responsibility and interfaith dialogue, Muslim entrepreneurs have made significant contributions to society. Their commitment to ethical business practices, sustainability, and community development has set a positive example for others to follow. It is important to acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of the Muslim business community, as their efforts have helped to create a more just and equitable Scotland and United Kingdom for all.

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the Scottish Muslim business community has also been known for its social responsibility.

COVID-19 & Role of Muslim Council of Scotland

By **Dr Muhammad Adrees**

COVID 19 and Muslim Community work during COVID-19 Muslim Council of Scotland with Scottish Government by raising awareness about this deadly disease. Guidelines were issued by the Scottish Government and to distribute these guidelines at the grassroots level was the responsibility of the community representatives and established organisations. Scottish Government regulations were that all the worship

places must remain closed until further guidance. There was concern in the community because this had never happened before and to accept this was distressing to the Muslim community. However the Muslim Council of Scotland leadership had lengthy meetings with community representative via audio video links to discuss and explain, and passed on information and guidelines to all the affiliates by using social media and other communication modes. For prevention of spread of this disease Scottish Government strongly advised social distancing use of sanitizers and repeated hand washing along with use of face masks. The Muslim community was not used to these measures therefore the Muslim Council of Scotland designed posters explaining the needs of these measures to make it easier to understand how vital these simple measures are to protect human lives. During Ramadan COVID-19 was at its peak and many Muslims were very disturbed for the reason that they never missed attending the Mosque for opening the fast and congregation prayers, however because of the support work by Muslim Council of

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There was unrest in the community because this never happened before and to accept this was are deeply hurting to the Muslim community.

Scotland the community accepted all restrictions and a majority of congregations and religious speeches were delivered online. Immune compromised citizens of Scotland were in a lock-down situation due to COVID 19 restrictions and they were not able to go out because of the high risk of getting this disease and very poor outcome. Many affiliates across the country organised food pack deliveries to the vulnerable individuals. These services help to save a number of lives. COVID-19 was leading to unprecedented situation causing unexpected deaths.

The mortality rate was higher in the South Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and due to restrictions, traditional funerals and gatherings to console the bereaved and pray for the deceased were restricted. The Muslim Council Scotland was supported the bereaved families and supporting them emotionally and psychologically to get over this challenging situation.

Vaccination is a lifesaving invention, introduce by the Scottish Government, however social media myths were impacting the use of the lifesaving injections. it was very important to reassure the community and build confidence between health services providers and its users by promoting the benefits of vaccination and it's lifesaving function. The Muslim Council of Scotland was on the forefront in raising the awareness about the benefits of the vaccination so that the majority can get vaccination and everyone can go back to daily routine. The Muslim Council of Scotland stood with the government throughout this difficult time and worked hard to assure the community members about the vaccination. I am glad to say that by contribution of Muslim Council Scotland to the government efforts we managed to vaccinate required percentage of population and later on we were able to go back to our day day-to-day routine life.

The Special Occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr

By **Qari Majid**

Alhamdulillah this is the special occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, a time of celebration, as we know in Islam there are two Holy festivals Eid-ul-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr.

Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated after the blessed month of Ramadan where Muslims fast during the daylight hours all over the world, that one month gives us the chance to experience a similar situation with the less Fortunate people, the poor and needy who do not have much food, drink and clothing.

Even though the food and drink is available but the command of God Allah Almighty is more valuable so a Muslim will wait for sunset before consuming any food or drink, also during Ramadan many mosques hold iftar events, the breaking of the fast for the local community to experience what Ramadan and iftar is. Alhamdulillah the beauty of Islam is that it's teachings do not change due to pressure, environment or any era.

Eid-ul-Fitr is the occasion to celebrate and show gratitude to God Allah Almighty who made fasting compulsory upon us and then gave us the strength and ability to fulfil that command, it is a moment to share our happiness with our fellow Muslim brothers and sisters, as well as the wider community from all different backgrounds.

So, May Allah Almighty grant me and all of us the ability to share the happiness with everyone. Ameen.

The Social, Health & Financial Benefits of Fasting

Dr Muhammad Adrees

Ramadan is the 9th month of Islamic calendar, the month when it becomes obligatory (apart from the ill, elderly, children, breastfeeding women, and those travelling) for Muslims to fast. Fasting from dawn to dusk, an average of 16 hours a day. Fasting in Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam.

In the Quran chapter 2 and verse 183, 184 it states:

Believers, fasting has been compulsory for you as it was made compulsory for those before you, so you become mindful (of Allah). (Fast) for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey then (let him fast) an (equivalent) number of days (later). The obligatory compensation on those who (do not fast), is to feed a needy person, (if they) can afford it.

There are many health benefits of fasting, it helps detoxify the body; there are also several other benefits, proven by science, including reducing insulin resistance, reducing risk of coronary heart disease by lowering cholesterol; reducing blood pressure, weight, and BMI.

During the fasting period we must refrain from getting angry, or being aggressive, or backbiting. It's a period of reflection and improving bad habits, and behaviours, such as smoking which is prohibited whilst fasting. For many smokers, Ramadan is an opportunity to break their habit.

The sense of hunger can only be fully understood by experiencing it first hand, and fasting is a time to reflect and think of those less fortunate. As charity is a key part of Islam, Muslims are encouraged to

donate, and help feed and give to the needy in this month. It is said any acts of kindness in this month, will have their rewards multiplied in the hereafter.

During fasting time smoking is prohibited and those who are heavy smokers or chain-smokers they must abstain from smoking during fasting period. Many smokers during this month found it an opportunity to stop smoking forever. Smoking does injure our health and hundreds of ways but also burn over hard-earned money.

In short fasting reduces waist size and reduce weight, blood pressure and can reverse type 2 diabetes mellitus and chances of getting heart attack and stroke.

With all these benefits by fasting we help national health services and we least bothering our GP and requiring least medicine. Fasting saves money for other needs by having one meal day, no coffee, or snacks at my work and for smokers no smoking for one month is additional saving. This one-month training motivates us to be more supportive to less well-off society members. Fasting is win, win for everyone.

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Fasting keeps us healthy physically and Spiritually.

Muslim Council of Scotland Media Engagements

Fariha Thomas, head of MCS Media Team

The Cross-Party Group on Islamophobia in Scotland confirmed what most Muslims were already aware of that the mainstream media is biased against Muslims and often feeding negative stereotypes. This is further substantiated by a range of UK research.

That is why it is so important that MCS engages with mainstream media, to raise awareness among journalists, and to take every opportunity to put across the points of view of the Muslim communities.

To this end we have engaged primarily with TV, radio and newspapers, creating and taking opportunities, where appropriate, to comment on breaking news stories, such as the hate crime trial in Fife, the films.

“Lady of Heaven and “Kashmir files”.

MCS is also often featured on international news media.

Social media is also important, and we use twitter, Facebook and Instagram to highlight and

comment on issues. We raise awareness of our own activities, and of important days and months in the calendar, such as Islamophobia Awareness month, the

16 days to end Gender based Violence and many others. We have created content on

these and many issues, reflecting what Islam really says and raising awareness.

Our affiliates WhatsApp group allows members to share information about upcoming events and comment on issues. It keeps MCS Board aware of the range of views of its member organisations.

Our quarterly Newsletter keeps affiliates and wider subscribers up to date with our, and our affiliates, activities, and alerts people to forthcoming events and issues they may wish to know about or get engaged in.

We look forward in the future to all media channels in Scotland and UK working with MCS to raise awareness about the challenges the Muslim community faces, and about our work to progress community cohesion.

MCS congratulates the Scottish Parliament on the work that the former CPG on Islamophobia in Scotland undertook, and its work on the media. Its engagement with the editorial teams of many leading broadcasters and newspaper groups made a real difference to the media understanding of the impact on how they present issues relating to Muslims. The momentum from this must not be lost, so we strongly hope that this work can be picked up in the future, through a further Cross Party Group.

Organ Donation, Circumcision, Death Certification & Burial Facilitations

Dr Muhammad Adrees

Organ donation legislation was introduced by Scottish Government and there were concerns raised by different communities regarding organ retrieval and it's appropriate use for the deserving patients. Muslim Council of Scotland worked with other communities and Scottish Government from draft stages of this legislation up to the final approval by the Scottish parliament.

Now in Scotland everyone is opted in for organ donation unless someone opts out from organ donation. Muslim Council of Scotland worked with mosques and Islamic centres to raise awareness about organ donation legislation and motivated the citizens of Scotland opt in for organ donation so that but deserving patients can get organ transplant as soon as one is available. This was a challenging task because public was thinking that organ donation is against their belief, and this is a mutilation of the deceased body. However following consultation with Islamic scholars' Muslim Council of Scotland managed to improve the understanding of the public that organ donation is life saving and you get reward by donating organ.

Muslim Council of Scotland has been working tirelessly hand in hand with other communities to improve the facilities for deceased. Scottish Government introduced medical certificate of cause of death certification legislation to simplify the process of death registration and proceeding of Funeral services without any delay. MCS worked other communities including English community Christian community and other organisations to have passed possible designed medical certificate of cause of death. following a

number of meetings and details discussions the Scottish Government rolled out magical certificate of cause of death throughout the country, now this certificate is used in all the hospitals throughout Scotland and because of standards achieved the delay in the issue of these certificates is minimised. In addition our trainee doctors are well aware of the Muslim needs so that the certificate is issued as soon as someone passes away. In Scotland Muslim deceased burial takes place within 24 hours in majority cases that alleviates the pain, anxiety and stress of the bereaved family.

Male circumcision is that religious requirement for Muslims as well as other communities of Scotland. Muslim children were taken to Manchester Huddersfield and many other cities for circumcision this practise is unsafe for the child and very cumbersome for the parents.

Muslim Council of Scotland work in this area and facilities are available in Scotland where many other community children as well as adults who are requiring medically circumcision avail this service. We understand there is a long waiting list in NHS for this procedure therefore Muslim Council of Scotland is working towards having extra clinics for circumcision so that the community is requiring this procedure can be looked after as soon as possible.

Assisted dying bill has been discussed in the Scottish parliament twice and rejected due to the joint efforts of the faith following as well as those with no faith.

In short Muslim Council of Scotland has been working with Scottish government in almost all health-related legislation's and once the approval by the Scottish Parliament given this

organisation work to improve the understanding about the legislation as well as facilitate and implementing the legislation by raising awareness about the benefits and potential social achievements provided that the legislation is not against our faith and moral values.

MRI or CT Scan of Deceased Dody to Find Out Cause of Death

Dr Muhammad Adrees

According to the Muslim faith we have a duty of care to the deceased to perform funeral and burial as soon as possible. The Muslim community is the second largest faith community in Scotland.

The sudden death of a loved one is agonising and shocking to the bereaved family. The suffering family is going through intolerable loss on one hand and on the other hand they go through the torture of waiting to get the release of the body of their loved ones.

For Muslims there are 2 aspects of concern over post-mortem, which we believe new diagnostic technologies such as MRI / CT scans can help to alleviate.

- a) For Muslims, as for adherents of a range of other faiths, mutilation of the body a deceased person is specifically prohibited. While recognising that in some cases, according to the law of the land we live in, a post-mortem may be required, for Muslims it will still feel that the dissection involved in traditional post-mortems is against our religion and causes suffering to the deceased (we believe that he/she is still aware of what is happening until the burial). In many cases the use of an MRI/CT scan would provide the same information and would be far less distressing. In parts of England e.g.

Sheffield, Blackburn and Watford this is already taking place, so we feel that Scotland should not lag behind.

- b) Delay of burial. For Muslims, as for Jews, it is considered very important for the body to be buried as quickly as possible. In many areas of Scotland, we are very fortunate that our public services understand this and have arrangements to facilitate this as soon as the body is released. However, where a post-mortem is required, this inevitably delays the process. Using modern technology could speed up process of finding the cause of death. This will facilitate the release of the deceased body for burial. By using the diagnostic non-invasive techniques, the time of the state pathologist will be saved as well.

The Muslim Council of Scotland has learned that this service is available in many counties of England. The same services can be established in Scotland for the deceased body to find out the cause of death, which will reduce invasive procedures and facilitate the speedy release of the body of the loved one for funeral and burial. This will not only decrease the agony of the bereaved family but also help the family to fill their religious duty.



Sufiism

by **Qari Shakil Ahmad**
from Hamilton Mosque

The word Sufism is originally adopted from the way of life followed by a Sufi. Those who are close to Islam define Sufism as "sanctification" or "purification of the self". Tazkiyyah nafs (assanctification) is a Qur'anic term and in Hadith purification of the self and showing it in both in belief and in action is known as Ihsan. Scholars who are passionate about Sufism associate the word Sufi with the companions of Prophet.

Suffa is originally an Arabic word which means platform, so it seems that it refers to those people who lived in the raised platform area (deck) in Prophet's Mosque. They are called Companions of Suffa. Those companions of Prophet usually keep themselves busy in learning Quran and keep themselves away from worldly affairs therefore it's become the habit of the people that whoever spent most of his time in remembrance of Allah and keep himself away from people's affairs or every day life affairs called Sufi. According to Imam Qashiri, this word Sufism has been seen since 822 A.D.

In the time of the Messenger of Allah, Sahabi was a reliable name used for companions of Prophet. The next generation of followers adopted the name Tabi for themselves and the subsequent generation came to be known as Taba Tabi, but after Taba Tabi, the word Sufi was adopted for ascetics and sincere worshipers and those who shunned the world. Reasons for the initiation of Sufism Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have given different reasons for the initiation of Sufism in Islam. Louis Massignon, a French scholar on Islam, described Sufism as internalization of Islam, meaning that Sufism is born through continuous recitation, meditation and experience of Islam. To explain the beginnings of Sufism Some theorists divide this into three categories and these three categories are Physical, intellectual and spiritual and those who internalize the spiritual aspect are called Sufis Scholars described Sufism also narrate this with a reference of hadith in which three aspects of Islam are mentioned, one of which is Ihsan. Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and if you cannot see Him, He is certainly seeing you.

Concept of Esotericism and Exotericism in Sufism A word that is frequently used in Sufism is esotericism. It is adopted to give a separate identity from Exotericism. In the language of Sufism, it means that the Sufi is dead to himself and alive to Allah.

According to the Sufis, there are two types of Islamic sciences, external and internal The external knowledge refers to the Shari'ah which is meant for the people every day affairs and the inner knowledge is that which, according to them, the Messenger of Allah taught some of his companions, including Hazrat Abu Bakar, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Abu Dharr. According to Sufis, Sufism has four levels. Shari'ah (exoteric path), tariqat (esoteric path), haqiqat (mystical truth) and marifat (final mystical knowledge). A person cannot become a Sufi until all these levels are attained.

NHS Scotland: Shared Values & Challenges

By **Mehvish Ashraf** MRPharms

The core values of NHS Scotland are those shared by Scottish Muslims: care, compassion, dignity, respect and honesty. So it is natural that so many Muslims who form a significant proportion of Scottish BAME communities have had a long and enduring history of substantial contributions within the NHS and they continue to be an indispensable asset.

However, we have deep rooted health inequalities facing the Muslim community with higher rates of poverty, of diabetes and Asian women still twice as likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than someone from the broader population.

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NHS Scotland provides a service we all have faith in.

NHS Scotland needs to ensure equity of access such that your ethnicity, cultural background or challenges with the English language does not impair the quality of health or social care you receive. This requires cultural and linguistic competence on the part of every part of the NHS as well as an understanding of the intersectional nature of health inequalities.

Forming the solutions that tackle the endemic inequalities is to ensure that there is diversity at all levels of the NHS and indeed Scottish Government. Diverse leadership has many evidence based benefits, however organisations are not diverse by chance, rather, led by good political thinking and choices. The progress made to help level gender balance is a testimony to that. When we have this in place, issues pertaining to communities and experiences of those underrepresented people are discussed. Without this vital perspective this would otherwise be deprioritised or not spoken of at all.

NHS Scotland provides a service we all have faith in, with the challenges post pandemic particularly waiting times exacerbated by workforce problems, its value and desire to protect its founding principles has perhaps never been so acute.

Whilst the challenges faced by the NHS and the enduring health inequalities in society at large continues to be great. We believe that the resolve of Scotland is greater. That together, we can overcome and see even greater times for the NHS and indeed our nation.

Eid Message

Alex Cole Hamilton

Leader of Libral Democate
Party Scotland

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Muslim communities across Scotland and the rest of the world, a very happy Eid al-Fitr.

Eid is a time for families and friends, joy and happiness. Peace and unity are the spirit of Eid - and in these testing times internationally, this message could not be more powerful.

As communities come together in celebration, it is important to recognise the immense contribution that British Muslims make to Scotland and to the whole of our United Kingdom. And whatever our politics, we are all united in this celebration and in our support for diversity across Scotland.

On this very important day of celebration, I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Eid.

There are too many across our world, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who live with those challenging consequences every single day. And I reaffirm my commitment to challenge those injustices every day. Because ultimately, that is what our faith, but also our politics must be about.

I also reflect on the many challenges we face here in Scotland. As we continue to challenge Islamophobia and other forms of prejudice and hate.

There are too many in our communities who suffer every day due to that prejudice. That's why I will continue to work across political parties to defeat Islamophobia and to make sure everyone can live in peace, dignity, and with equality.

I hope you enjoy a peaceful Eid with your family. Once again, Eid Mubarak.



Islamophobia: Definition & its Adoption

By **Dr Muhammad Adrees**

Islamophobic hate crimes in England and Wales have skyrocketed last year, according to statistics revealed that Muslims became the most targeted religious group among others, according to the Home Office figures. The number of religious hate crimes recorded by police and targeting Muslims was 3,459 in the year ending March 2022, showing a 42% increase since last year. Because of Islamophobia rising hate crime in United Kingdom to combat this social painful issue British parliamentarians established all parties parliamentary group. Following lengthy meetings and discussion issued the following definition of Islamophobia. This definition is widely adopted by many political parties, universities, and other institutes.

All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims Definition of Islamophobia
"Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness."

- 1) Calling for, aiding, instigating, or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/ fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.
- 2) Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government, or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism, and claims of a demographic 'threat' posed by Muslims or of a 'Muslim takeover'.
- 3) Accusing Muslims as a group of being

responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.

- 4) Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.
- 5) Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the 'Ummah' (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- 6) Denying Muslim populations, the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.
- 7) Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, e.g loyalty tests.
- 8) Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia (e.g. Muhammed being a paedophile, claims of Muslims spreading Islam by the sword or subjugating "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness." minority groups under their rule) to characterize Muslims as being 'sex groomers', inherently violent or incapable of living harmoniously in plural societies. Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.

Muslim Council of Scotland thanks all the political parties who have adopted this definition. We also expect that this definition will be adopted by all the political parties and institutes throughout the United Kingdom.

Scottish Muslim Community Stress & Concerns

Dr Muhammad Adrees

There have been contacts between Islam and Scotland since the 7th Century CE, through trade, scholars, diplomacy and sadly colonialism. In the second half of the 18th, and in the 19th Centuries, there were many servants accompanying returning merchants and colonial administrators, and seamen recruited for British merchant ships staying in Scotland. Dr Wazir Baig is known as the first Muslim to have been in Scotland as a medical student at the University of Edinburgh from 1858 to 1859. While Muslims served in the British armed forces in both world wars, immigration began in larger numbers in the 1950's and 60's when the British Government encouraged people to come from its empire/colonies to meet labour shortages. The 2011 Census showed that Muslims made up 1.4% of Scotland's population. This equates to 766,737 people. It is confidently expected that the 2022 census will show these numbers have increased, as will the diversity of ethnic backgrounds of Muslims in Scotland.

The Muslim community is playing an important role in all walks of life to assist in a Scotland that is progressive and prosperous. With a growing population and greater input from this community, the Muslim community are expecting the Scottish government and local authorities to work with community leaders to meet both the religious and cultural needs of this population.

The following areas have been, and are currently overlooked by the Scottish government and local authorities:

a) Education system:

1. The school curriculum, at all levels has been decided without consultation with this community. There are many

concerns about the content of sex and relationships education, and dialogue is required both to deal with misconceptions, and hear the voices of Muslim parents. Similarly, the teaching of history neglects much of the contribution of the Muslim world, being very Eurocentric in its approach. There is not even one Islamic education teacher throughout Scotland.

2. Single sex toilet and changing facilities are being removed, to be replaced by "gender neutral" spaces, which do not meet Muslim requirements for modesty, and many girls' (Muslim and non-Muslim alike) wish for safe female only spaces.
3. Five times a day prayer is compulsory from puberty onwards, and there are no facilities for Prayer in primary or many secondary Schools. The necessity of praying, and facilities to enable this, should be built into school's understanding of the needs of their students, and not left to students to have to argue for.
4. Recognition of Islamophobia in schools is still not fully recognised and is a fact of life for most Muslim students, impacting on their school experience.

b) Women needs are not cared about:

5. Muslim women make up around 50% of the Muslim population, and single sex space is very important for many Muslim women, but there are very few women-only facilities and these are under threat by "gender neutral" policies.
6. Women-only health improvement and leisure facilities are almost non-existent in Scotland. Facilities where male security staff monitor cameras and watch activities are not truly women only.

c) Islamophobia is growing:

7. Islamophobia continues to be a scourge on Scottish society, and is not decreasing. This leads to Muslims feeling insecure as residents and citizens of this

country. Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure there is a wide understanding of Islamophobia and actions taken so that it can be countered. More work to encourage and support the reporting of hate crimes, and to ensure successful prosecution of cases is required.

8. We call for the re-establishment of the Cross-Party Group on Islamophobia to carry forward the excellent work started by the previous CPG.
9. During travel, it is disproportionately likely that 'random' security checks are done on this community, and many young Muslims feel they are disproportionately stopped by the Police. Scottish government should use the powers and influence it has to ensure there is no profiling by Police forces that disproportionately impacts on Muslims.
10. Research shows that broadcast media disproportionately show negative views and stereotypes of Muslims, which feeds islamophobia. Scottish Government should use the influence it has to encourage a change in this, and should run campaigns, as was previously done with the One Scotland Many Cultures

campaign, to encourage a supportive atmosphere.

d) International oppression of Muslims:

11. International level oppression of Palestinians, Kashmiris, Rohingya and Uyghur Muslims. Muslims are part of a worldwide community (Ummah) and strongly feel the pains of oppression suffered by brothers and sisters. We urge the Scottish Government to use its influence and International Relations Department to put pressures on these governments of oppressed people's and avoid trading with them.

The Muslim Council of Scotland expects that our government and local authorities will look into these very significant areas and thereby make the necessary improvements so that the issues faced by Muslim community can be managed for a Scotland that is all-inclusive.

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