

News story: Eid al-Fitr 2017: Home Secretary's message

I wish you a happy and peaceful Eid Mubarak.

This is a time when families come together in faith to pray and celebrate, and share in the spirit of togetherness. And while this festival always holds great importance for the UK Muslim community, as it does around the world, for many this week's festivities will carry an even greater emotional weight.

The entire country has been left shocked and saddened by the many tragic events of the last few months – the latest being the horrific attack on the Muslims in Finsbury Park as they left late special Ramadan prayers. And as you gather together in faith and take well-deserved comfort from the company of family and friends, I hope you also feel the friendship and best wishes of those of all faiths and none.

With every Eid celebration we are given another opportunity to reflect on the invaluable contribution British Muslims make to our lives and why they are such an important part of the fabric of our society.

I am sure I am not alone in having such contributions at the forefront of my mind over the past few months.

I was reminded by the Muslim men, women and children, awake in the early hours for their pre-dawn meal, who saved countless lives by alerting sleeping neighbours to the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower. And later the mosques that opened their doors and arranged food and supplies for those who had been left with nothing.

I was reminded by the expressions of solidarity from the Muslim community for victims of the terror attacks at Westminster, London Bridge and in Manchester, and by their condemnation of the twisted individuals who claimed to carry out those atrocities in the name of their religion.

And I was reminded when, just moments after their community had found itself the target of a terrorist attack, an Imam and several worshippers from the Muslim Welfare House protected the man who would later be arrested in relation to that attack.

These terrible acts were carried out to divide us, but only serve as a reminder that the Muslim Community is an inseparable part of this country. Extremists try to convince us that being Muslim and being British are incompatible, but it is clear that our core values are one and the same.

We must unite together as one community to rid ourselves of these twisted ideologies. The strength and resilience I have seen over the past few months makes me more confident than ever that the UK is equal to the challenge.

In the meantime Muslims and people of all faiths must feel safe from violence

and persecution. We are working together to tackle hate crime and using the full force of the law to protect every person in the UK.

Last year I published the government's hate crime action plan and launched a £2.4 million fund to provide protective security for places of worship which are at risk of hate crimes. Many mosques have already benefited from funding. But following last week's attack I am making another £1 million available to ensure that mosques and other places of worship have all the protection they need.

I am immensely proud to live in a diverse and vibrant country which counters hate with love and which bands ever closer together when cowards try to divide it.

So to all Muslims, in this country and around the world, I want to say a blessed Eid al-Fitr.