

Solidarity gathering at Toowoomba Mosque, Monday, 26 January 2015

Dear friends and community members: Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullah. Peace and blessing of Allah be upon you.

I am very humble to welcome you to the Garden City Mosque. In deed this is a Mosque for everyone, and you are always welcome to visit this place of worship regardless of your faith.

Once again Toowoomba is on the national and international media for wrong reasons. One person's criminal act no way represents the dignified residents of a proud community of peace and harmony. Special thanks to everyone here for taking time to turn up to the Mosque on an Australia Day, with competing priorities and family commitments.

Your presence here in the Mosque after the failed burning attempt is highly appreciated by the community of Muslims all over the world. I congratulate and thank you for your courage and determination to stand side by side with your fellow Muslim citizens. Friends are tested through difficult time – you are tested and passed the test of the time. We are friends in humanity and proud sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

I don't think this attack will do anything to create any divisions in the broader community or ruin any of the harmony that has been created in Toowoomba. We have very good relationships with our neighbours, the city council and other religious leaders here. We believe that will continue.

Acts of destruction and violence would only bring the communities together. The perpetrators will have nothing but frustration and disappointment, certainly no sympathy no support from the community.

Some people may try to relate the recent attacks in Sydney and Paris to the arson in Toowoomba Mosque. Let me condemn any attack on innocent people by anyone in the name of any religion. No innocent people can be harmed or killed, ironically saving life is Islamic, not killing. Myself and all Muslims in Toowoomba are against any kind of terrorism and violent act.

The Pope Benedict XVI correctly explained there should be limit to freedom of speech. I thank him and his followers for a balanced view and stand on the very sensitive issue. There is no freedom of destruction, no freedom to attack/burn place of worship or people of universal repute and honour in the name of freedom of speech.

Let me clear it once again, over 1.7 billion Muslims love Prophet Muhammad (sws) more than their own lives and they recite his name at least four times in each of the five times daily prayers. No cartoons or vile articles on him will change an iota of respect and honour of Muhammad (sws). No one has any right to joke about the man who has been chosen by Allah and has raised his praise.

The holy Qur'an says, "Mankind was one single nation" 2:213. "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other" 49:13.

We are all from Adam and Eve, we could trace back to the same ancestors. Allah has created each one of us as his representative (khalifah) on earth. We must reflect on our obligation as the representative of God as we all are accountable to Him for every single act anywhere on this earth.

As followers of revealed religion, Muslims must believe in Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and all other prophets, peace be upon them, and the Qur'an hails them very highly.

There are lot more common in the Bible and the Qur'an than the differences we would find – both books came from the same source the Almighty Lord.

The news of this attack has been covered by many national and international media. This will be very unhelpful, to say the least, in Toowoomba's bid to be declared as the 'City of Peace and Harmony' by the UNESCO. The attacker of the Mosque has indeed attacked on the hard work of the resident of this city and its Council.

To Toowoomba Residents: Toowoomba Regional Council, University of Southern Queensland, Pure Land Learning College, Islamic Society of Toowoomba and many residents and organisations of the Garden City have been working very hard for sustainable peace and harmony in the community. You have once again shown the unified support for the first Mosque of your city. I am sure this will further reputation of you and your city.

To Media: The bad news has hit many national and international media outlets. That was an act of one person. Look at this meeting how many dignitaries and members of the community are here for solidarity with Muslims. Please make an extra effort to get the message of unity of Toowoomba residents out in the world.

To Fellow Muslims: Thankyou for your patience and not reacting to provocation, and that is what your religion, Islam, teaches you. You will receive reward from your Lord. The show of support for you from the people of other faith today gives an obligation to support them whenever needed. We must appreciate these friends and extend support and return the favours when appropriate. This is the minimum we should be doing as members of the same human family.

To Government Officials: Government support to secure the place of worship that are high risk to avoid potentially serious consequences. Law enforcing agencies must take appropriate steps to secure places of worship.

Thank you again, and may God bless you and God bless Australia.

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