

MAYOR OF LONDON

Rt Hon Theresa May MP

Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Date: 22 March 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you, as Leader of the Conservative Party, to urge your party to adopt the definition of Islamophobia produced by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for British Muslims. As Mayor of London, I adopted the definition at City Hall this week, and it has also been adopted by both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats.

The horrific terrorist attack in Christchurch tragically demonstrated the consequences of failing to root out Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment from our society. I am sure, like me, your thoughts and prayers remain with the families and friends of the victims and all the people of Christchurch and New Zealand.

I wrote to the Home Secretary this week asking him to do more to reassure British Muslims that they and their places of worship will be better protected in the aftermath of Christchurch. I am grateful that he has increased funding for protective security at places of worship this year and created a new fund to provide security training. I am seeking further clarity that funding and resources will be provided immediately to enable mosques to be prepared ahead of Ramadan which begins in May.

However, reassuring British Muslims about their safety in the aftermath of Christchurch is not just about policing and security. It also requires us to relentlessly root out the Islamophobia and anti-Muslim abuse that has crept into the mainstream of our society and political debate. It is vital that our political parties lead from the front in this effort and set the strongest possible example to society.

The Conservative Party in particular needs to do much more to send the clear message that Islamophobia is totally unacceptable, as unfortunately that has not always been the case over recent years.

I myself have repeatedly been subject to Islamophobic abuse from Conservative members and supporters. I have lost track of the number of Conservative Councillors and members that have been suspended or faced legal action as a result of making Islamophobic comments towards or about me. The current Conservative Mayoral candidate shared material online describing me as

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"the mad mullah of Londonistan" and escaped any sanction from the Conservative Party. And I am yet to receive an apology from you or anyone else involved in the 2016 Conservative Mayoral campaign, which was widely condemned for being Islamophobic, including by senior Conservative politicians.

But this is not about me. I am deeply concerned about the message these incidents send to our wider society. They risk legitimising the views of those extremists that seek to divide our communities and spread hate, and put off young British Muslims - and no doubt those of other faiths or beliefs - across Britain from pursuing a career in politics or public service.

I hope you will take this letter in the genuine spirit with which it is meant. This is not about party politics - it is far more important than that. You will know that I have rigorously called out racism wherever I have seen it - including on anti-Semitism within the Labour Party.

Adopting the APPG definition of Islamophobia will send the strongest possible signal that there is no place for Islamophobia or anti-Muslim sentiment in the Conservative Party or anywhere else in our politics or wider society, and I strongly urge you to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the name.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

Cc: Rt Hon Gavin Barwell, Chief of Staff, 10 Downing Street