



## **Didsbury Mosque (MIC) Response to Families Statement made at the Manchester Arena Inquiry.**

1. MIC stands with Manchester and the wider community in unreservedly condemning all acts of hate and terror and is grateful to the Inquiry for the important work being done in attempting to uncover why such an attack was able to be committed.
2. The families of victims deserve to know the truth. We co-operated fully with the Inquiry as we also wish to understand the truth behind this incident.
3. No proven evidence has been presented to suggest a link between the radicalisation of Salman Abedi and the mosque.
4. Had the trustees been aware of any such extremism they would have reported it to the Police without hesitation.
5. Didsbury Mosque has worked very closely with the local police and Prevent as demonstrated by a seminar that was held at the mosque prior to the Manchester Arena bombing.
6. The MIC had informal policies to guide sermons and other activities, to prevent any drift to extremism or politics and on two occasions these informal guidelines were reinforced when we felt that they were breached, when two sermons touched controversial areas.
7. Clearly, there needs to be a greater transfer of information between all government bodies including the police and intelligence services and places the community frequent, such as mosques and other such places.
8. Information relating to potential radicalisation of individuals has never been passed to MIC by any government body and MIC believes that this should have been done in order to allow places of worship and schools to focus on individuals who might be susceptible to radicalisation.
9. The Libyan factionalism arising out of the Libyan revolution also existed among the Muslim community in Manchester.
10. On a few occasions, it spilled over into the mosque among staff and congregation, we have had to manage that.
11. Factional politics has no place at our mosque and should be considered separately from the abhorrent and callous act of Salman Abedi and his brand of extremism and terror which has nothing to do with the mosque or Islam.
12. Mr Saeiti was made redundant from the mosque in August 2020 after a restructuring process and there is an ongoing industrial tribunal case, so we are unable to comment further on the matter other than to say that the mosque disputes what he has said and has not been given the opportunity to cross examine or test his evidence and as such, it remains his opinion only.
13. The witness statement from Mr Saeiti given on 24th November at the Arena Inquiry is one-sided inaccurate and does not reflect the truth.

14. Some of the points he has raised were simply not correct. We feel he has given an inaccurate view of some incidents at the Centre and its trustees and is motivated by bitterness at being made redundant.
15. For the avoidance of doubt, Mr Saeiti was given a copy of the petition against him in March 2021 and this directly contradicts what he stated in evidence.
16. Mr Saeiti's enmity with Mustafa Graf is well known at the mosque and whilst we do not speak for Mr Graf, fairness requires that Mr Graf be afforded the opportunity to address the comments and allegations made against him by Mr Saeiti.
17. The MIC will also be responding and clarifying inaccuracies directly to the Inquiry and not the media at this stage.
18. Our legal team has not been able to question Mr Saeiti on his statements at the Inquiry.
19. Whilst the Inquiry has not yet reached a formal conclusion on the evidence presented, it is unfortunate that Mr Saeiti's version of events is being promoted as accurate and the truth.
20. We are saddened that Mr Saeiti has chosen to use the Inquiry as a vehicle for his personal politics and grievances against Mr Graf and the mosque.
21. Furthermore, if Mr Saeiti was aware of individuals supporting/linked to terrorist groups, it was his religious, moral and legal duty to report them directly to the Police and security services and the trustees at the mosque.
22. Instead Mr Saeiti decided to wait until the Arena Inquiry to make it public. His inaction must be scrutinised because at best it is withholding highly relevant information and at worst it is further evidence of fabrication, something that must be taken very seriously indeed.
23. Mr Graf and Mr Saeiti are no longer employed by the mosque.
24. In closing, the mosque cannot express enough sadness and sympathy to the families of the victims and seeks to assure all, that could anything more have been done to prevent this heinous act from taking place, it most certainly would have.

Manchester - November 2021