



# Joint Jewish, Muslim, Christian Statement on Recent Tensions and Violence in Sydney

Friday 19 April 2024

We, the Jewish Council of Australia, the Islamophobia Register Australia, and the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, are deeply concerned by the heightened tensions and acts of violence that have occurred in Sydney over the past week. We extend our deepest condolences to the victims, family members and all those affected by the tragic mass stabbing incident at Bondi last Saturday and to the Church community of Wakely's Christ The Good Shepherd Church and the Assyrian community more broadly, after a shocking incident at the church where four people including a Bishop were alleged to have been stabbed. This attack triggered further violence outside the church directed at paramedics and police.

Recent days have shown that fear and misinformation can spread rapidly in the wake of such events. We must reject any attempts to use these incidents to perpetuate antisemitism, Islamophobia or any form of racism, hatred or intolerance. Instead, we must come together to support one another, amplify facts over falsehoods, and demonstrate the strength of our shared values of inclusivity and mutual understanding.

Unfortunately some community leaders, media and politicians have fostered community division and racism. This must end now. People of different faiths and backgrounds must not be demonised or dehumanised.

Now is the time to work towards ensuring that Sydney is a place where people of all backgrounds and religions can feel safe, welcomed, and empowered to build a better future together. We stand ready to work with all who share this vision for a pluralistic, just, and multicultural, multi-faith society.



**Sharara Attai, Executive Director, Islamophobia Register Australia, stated:**

“Female shoppers at Bondi and the Assyrian Christian community have both been targeted by senseless violence. Our prayers are with all the victims and loved ones of both incidents. The rise in Islamophobic incidents, and antisemitic and Islamophobic rhetoric and conspiracies that we’re seeing over the past week is also deeply troubling and we urge everyone to remain calm but vigilant, and reject division. We also remind anyone who may experience or witness any incidents of Islamophobia to please report it to the Register.”

**Father Patrick McInerney, Director, Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, stated:**

“In these challenging times, we call on all politicians, media outlets, and community leaders to act responsibly and openly to combat racism and division. Words and actions have a profound impact, and we urge you to use your platforms to reinforce messages of solidarity, compassion, and respect for our diverse communities.”

**Dr Elizabeth Strakosch, Executive Officer, Jewish Council of Australia, stated:**

“The dehumanisation and demonisation of Palestinian and Muslim people that we have seen in the media's coverage of Israel's actions in Gaza has contributed to a climate of Islamophobia. Some politicians have also fanned the flames of hatred for their own political gain. It is incredibly important that the tragic and terrible attack at the Christ The Good Shepherd Church not be used to reinforce prejudice and racism.”

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