

## Letter from religious leaders of Britain following the Brexit ·

Unity and solidarity.



“One clear lesson of history is that, in times of uncertainty, people instinctively crave the familiar. When fear sets in, it is no more than human nature to seek comfort in the familiar. But such fear must not be allowed to breed mistrust of ‘the other’”: These are the words of the open letter recently published in *The Times* in London, signed by Cardinal Vincent Gerard Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, and by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby of the Anglican Communion, together with Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, and Maulana Syed Ali Raza Rizvi, President of the Majlis-e-Ulama Shia Europe.

In the letter, the religious leaders express their strong condemnation of the incidents of xenophobic intolerance, which has been increasingly reported in the UK following the outcome of the referendum on Brexit, and they invite all citizens to unity and to national solidarity. “For all that lies outside of our personal control, every person has the power to conquer their own instinct to apportion blame to others for perceived injustice. Today we call upon every citizen of our great country to recognise personal accountability for their every action, rather than avoiding that responsibility by looking for scape-goats, and to challenge racial and communal prejudice wherever it is found and thus ensure that we are, more than ever, a country united”.

During the week of 23 to 30 June — according to the AGI — 331 xenophobic attacks occurred in the United Kingdom, particularly against immigrant communities, which usually occur at an average of 63. Cardinal Nichols firmly condemned these incidents. In an interview with BBC, the President of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales reiterated his strong concerns over the escalation of racism, calling into question the responsibility of governments in recent years which, the Cardinal said, have left Churches and religious communities alone to address the social tensions related to migration. This wave of racism and hatred is unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

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