



National Black Police Association Statement - 11th July 2026

The National Black Police Association is deeply saddened by the display and burning of a replica mosque on a bonfire in Northern Ireland.

Only weeks ago, we saw minority ethnic families forced to flee their homes as racist violence took hold. For many, those events are still raw. Against that backdrop, targeting one of the most recognisable symbols of the Muslim faith is not an isolated act of provocation. It adds to a growing sense among many Muslims and ethnic minority communities that they are being singled out, demonised and made to feel unwelcome because of who they are and what they believe.

That is why we must call this what it is. This is Islamophobia and it has no place in a modern, democratic society.

It is deeply concerning that some seek to justify behaviour like this under the banner of freedom of expression. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right, but it has never been a licence to intimidate, dehumanise or stir up hatred against people because of their race or religion.

Hate crime legislation was introduced because Parliament recognised that prejudice-driven offences cause harm far beyond the immediate victim. They create fear throughout entire communities, discourage people from openly practising their faith or expressing their identity, and undermine the confidence that everyone should have to live safely and equally within society. That is why these offences demand a robust response.

Northern Ireland knows better than most the consequences of allowing hatred and division to become normalised. The legacy of sectarian violence should strengthen the determination to protect vulnerable communities, not weaken it. Policing has a responsibility to act decisively, reassure those who feel targeted and ensure that everyone, regardless of their race or religion, is equally protected under the law.

The National Black Police Association stands in solidarity with the Muslim community and all those affected. We will continue to support a police service that confronts racism, Islamophobia and all forms of hate without fear or favour, because no one should have to live in fear simply because of their identity or faith.