



European Evangelical Alliance Call to Action Against Anti-Muslim Hatred

Anti-Muslim Hatred – A Call to Action

Hatred against people because of their ethnicity or religion is on the rise across Europe. This is not something that Christians should ignore. The European Evangelical Alliance is issuing this call to action about anti-Muslim hatred in Europe, following up its recent text on antisemitism.

A call to action is followed by a brief review of history, present attitudes and examples of hatred. There are some biblical reflections and finally an overview of Christian attitudes towards Muslims and Islam.

This call to action is about resisting the prejudice, hatred or unfair treatment of Muslims.

a call to act

With hatred against Muslims increasing across Europe, the European Evangelical Alliance believes that action is needed. It calls upon Christians to

- Renounce and condemn all acts of violence and discrimination in their country.
- Renounce and condemn all anti-Muslim acts that have been committed, especially by men and women who claimed to be Christians, but whose words and deeds contradicted the teachings of Jesus and of the Bible.
- Give all our fears to God and ask Him to help us love Muslims.
- Notice and pray for the Muslim community around them; neighbours, colleagues, and mosques in their area;
- Notice, pray and speak up about incidents of hatred against Muslims around them and in the news;
- Seek ways to build friendship with both Muslims and Christian believers from a Muslim background and help newly arrived migrants and refugees to integrate into society;
- Seek a civil public square where there is freedom of religion or belief for all and respect for difference.

- Reach out in solidarity with Muslims, standing side by side with them when they or their property are attacked. Be ready to provide sanctuary if the situation gets serious.

Finally, the European Evangelical Alliance calls for the clear, respectful and compassionate communication of God's Gospel message of love to all people, including to Muslims.

History matters

The history of Europe and Islam is complicated. There have been centuries of invasion, conflict, forced conversion and occupation. None of us wants this history repeated. Europe has also been blessed by goods, culture and knowledge from the Islamic world that has come through trade and peaceful periods of multicultural coexistence. Some nations have had Muslim communities for centuries, others have Muslims whose families came from former colonies or were invited to come as workers and others have few Muslims. These differences of history are important. Attitudes towards Muslims are profoundly marked by the past, as well as present realities.

European attitudes toward Islam

Today across Europe, most Muslims live, work and study harmoniously among and with those of other faiths or none. They believe in peaceful coexistence, contributing to the common good and simply getting on with their lives. However, they are not newsworthy so rarely catch our attention.

Instead, people understandably worry about horrific acts of Islamist terrorism, the radical and violent teaching of some imams, attacks on individuals who choose to leave the Muslim faith, honour killings, or brutal regimes abroad where a savage and intolerant form of Islam is enforced. It is absolutely right to speak out against this brutality, advocate for religious freedom for all in Muslim nations or, for example, express deep concern for women in conservative Muslim communities.

Many feel troubled by the number of Muslim refugees coming to Europe and the increasing visibility of Muslims around them. Others wish to protect their national identity and values from too much Muslim

influence. There is still a strong understanding that most European nations¹ have had a Christian heritage that is worthy of respect, even as secularism grows.

But none of these concerns justify acts of hatred against Muslims.

Anti-Muslim hatred

Hatred against Muslim men, women and children is on the rise. Muslims are attacked in the street and face discrimination. Copies of the Qur'an are burned in deliberate acts of provocation. Mosques are damaged or Muslims are denied the right to open a place of worship in the first place. Hate speech against Muslims reaches to the level of demanding their murder. In Germany in 2020, nine people were killed in a racist shooting². Some public rhetoric claims that all Muslims are terrorists or rapists. Therefore, it is no wonder that public opinion in much of Europe is anti-Muslim and stands against any more Muslim asylum seekers or migrants being allowed to settle³.

Many Christians are known for being good neighbours and speaking up with wisdom. But, at times, Christians have also been complicit in unfair anti-Muslim rhetoric, choosing to see Islam and Muslims in broad terms as primitive and violent. Some Christians want to deny Muslims religious freedom. We may also have failed to come alongside our Muslim neighbours when they have been treated unfairly by society. Or maybe we blame the Muslim community for their growth in numbers, rather than seeing the mission opportunities around us to share Jesus' love.

What Does the Bible Say About Hatred?

We serve a God of love, who, from the very beginning of our existence has loved us, cared for us, and provided for us. (Deuteronomy 7:9) Loving and serving God means following His example to love all His creation, including those we find easy to like and love and those who we find difficult and challenging to like and love (Matthew 5:38-48). The only way we can do this is by asking God to enable us to do so.

To hate, take revenge, exclude or desire the destruction of any people group, including Muslims, clearly violates God's commandment to love our neighbour as we love ourselves (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31).

¹ Of course, there are also Muslim majority nations within Europe.

² Examples of Islamophobia can be found at <https://islamophobiareport.com/en/>. Highlights include <https://migranttales.net/police-and-security-guards-acquitted-over-hijab-removal-case-in-finland/> or <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2022/09/351529/go-back-karima-moualnavigates-racism-in-a-country-she-calls-home> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ueCjzqaVt3M> or <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20200221-debate-germany-shooting-gunman-kills-nine-in-suspected-racist-attack>

³ 70.2% of Germans surveyed in 2022 did not want any more Muslim migrants. See Page 12 <https://islamophobiareport.com/en/>

Hatred of any kind is contrary to the will of God, the example of Jesus, and the teaching of Scripture. (1 John 2:11) Christians are called to “get rid of” all hatred and be compassionate and forgiving towards one another as in Christ, God forgave us (Ephesian 4:31-32).

God does not hate his creation, rather, He loves the world (John 3:16), and that includes Muslim people. In Genesis 21, we learn that God chose Isaac and his descendants to be the bearer of His covenant promise. However, He had compassion on Hagar and her son Ishmael, the son outside the covenant. Jesus taught that his message was also for the despised community of the time – the Samaritans. And He commanded His disciples to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Muslims are not outside of God’s saving plan. Jesus died for their sins and rose from the dead, and He longs to see them saved (as He does for all mankind) (Matthew 23:37).

Even if others around us choose to fear or believe conspiracy theories, Christians are called upon to be different and to fear the Lord alone (Isaiah 8:12-13). There is no excuse for hatred against Muslims. Ultimately, it is a spiritual evil, grounded in an attempt to thwart God’s plans for the redemption of a fallen humanity that He sent his Son to save.

Christian responses to Muslims and Islam

Many Christians, along with their fellow Europeans, are fearful of Muslims. Some are convinced that Muslims cannot be trusted, and their values are too different to be able to fit well into Europe. That is why EEA supported the making of “[The Peace Between](#)” film and developed a discussion guide to enable communities to explore their beliefs about refugees in a non-judgemental way.

Other Christians put aside the big political issues, choosing instead to learn about Islam, pray and befriend Muslims. They know that doing this has nothing to do with approving of everything about Islam, nor of compromising their Christian faith. They also seek to share the Good News of Jesus with their Muslim friends. Please see some resources to help with this at the end of this document.

Christians are often at the forefront of helping Muslim migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to integrate into European society. This does not mean supporting an open-door migration policy. Political approaches will differ. However, since all humans are made in the image of God, everyone is worthy of both compassion and justice.

There are challenges related to Islam that deserve our attention and prayers. Criticism of Islam is not hatred. We need to find more opportunities to talk honestly about tough issues. For example, Christians of Muslim background in Europe can face ostracism and violence because they have left Islam. Sometimes the wise response is collaboration with moderate Muslims; At other times, it is simply right to challenge. The Church also needs to step up in loving welcome to these converts, providing a new sense of family.

Honest talking that can lead to change is most likely to come out of relationships of respect. We can be inspired by interfaith projects that have nothing to do with compromising theology but focus on projects that make a difference. There are anti-extremism initiatives and welfare projects. And there are collaborations which cultivate principled pluralism where communities of different cultures and beliefs are secure in being themselves and making space for those who are different. The only way that we can live together with our deepest differences is by having a civil public square⁴.

A time for action

In the end, Christians are called to fear God alone and to share the Gospel message of love to all people.

Anti-Muslim hatred happens around us in Europe. We see it. The European Evangelical Alliance calls upon its members not just to see it but to act.

Resources: Materials and Organizations

[Christian Witness in a Multi Religious World](#) Good principles for appropriate evangelism

[Ethical Guidelines for Christian & Muslim Witness](#)

<https://training.sharinglives.eu/courses/sharing-lives> A course to help Christians share their lives with Muslims

<https://friendshipfirst.org/> Helping ordinary Christians to discuss Good News with ordinary Muslims

<https://almassira.org/> A course for Christians to use to help Muslims learn about Jesus.

<https://www.mahabbanetwork.com/> A prayer & inspiration network

<https://www.joiningthefamily.org/> Supporting Christian Believers from a Muslim Background

Graphic Note

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⁴ See <https://www.europeanea.org/a-civil-public-square-resources/> for resources on a Civil Public Square.

