



## **NEWS RELEASE**

**09 October 2009**

### Statement by Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

Following discussion at a meeting of the Inter Faith Network's Executive Committee this week, its Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs have made the following statement:

“While inter faith relations in the UK are generally positive there are, from time to time, developments which seek to drive a wedge between our faith communities. These range from demeaning rhetoric which claims that some faith communities are less truly British to demands for restrictions on freedom to worship or on other aspects of practising one's faith. While these views may be expressed in ways which remain just on the right side of the law they can still be deeply disturbing. There are also periodic reports of attacks on faith community property – from places of worship to cemeteries – and disruptive activities by extremist groups.

As we prepare for Inter Faith Week next month in different nations of the UK the importance of good inter faith relations is very much to the fore. As well as highlighting the positive aspects of working together, it is important that we continue to work, peacefully and effectively, to dispel negative stereotypes; counteract prejudice; prevent disagreement from leading to conflict; and work in mutually supportive ways to ensure that all our communities feel safe, secure and valued.

We must continue to work, with energy and commitment, for a United Kingdom where all are free, within the law, to express their beliefs and convictions and practise their faith; where we handle differences well; and, while respecting the right of others to disagree with us, look always for points of commonality and shared values on which we can build together.”

*Dr G L Bhan, Co-Chair*

*Rt Revd Tom Butler, Co-Chair*

*Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE, Vice-Chair*

*Hon Barnabas Leith, Vice-Chair*

*Dr Indarjit Singh CBE, Vice-Chair*

*Mr Vivian Wineman, Vice-Chair*

***Note for Editors:***

The Inter Faith Network for the UK [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) was founded in 1987. It links in membership national representative organisations of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths in the UK; national, regional and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies with an interest in inter faith issues. It works with its member bodies and other agencies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK; to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance; and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity.

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***Inter Faith Week:***

Inter Faith Week takes place from 15-21 November 2009 in England and Wales  
[www.interfaithweek.org.uk](http://www.interfaithweek.org.uk)

Scottish Inter Faith Week takes place from 22-29 November 2009  
[www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org](http://www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org)