

Britain is a beacon of Islamic values, says cleric

Kaya Burgess
Religious Affairs Correspondent

It is easier to live by Islamic values in Britain than in many Muslim countries, according to a leading Shia cleric who has urged Middle Eastern leaders to learn from the tolerance of Britons.

Maulana Syed Ali Raza Rizvi, a Muslim scholar and author, was born in Pakistan, educated in Iran and grew up in Birmingham. He said that London better embodied Islamic values than some Muslim cities because of the British respect for other cultures.

He was speaking alongside Ephraim Mirvis, the chief rabbi, and Cardinal

Vincent Nichols, the archbishop of Westminster and head of the Catholic church in England and Wales, at a joint lecture in London at which the Jewish and Catholic leaders warned that religious expression risked being driven off the streets by secular voices.

Maulana Rizvi said: "I feel that London has more Islamic values than many of the Muslim countries put together. There are many different communities living together [in London] in peace and harmony, giving respect to the others and loving others. And that is what Islam is all about.

"Unfortunately, much of the Muslim political leadership [in Muslim



haven't even been here for 100 years. So we have a lot to learn both from Jews and Christians in terms of education [and] integration."

The chief rabbi, also speaking at the Benedict XVI interfaith lecture, said that religious minorities in Britain should integrate but not assimilate, arguing that they should pass Norman Tebbit's "cricket test" of cheering for Britain but without losing their own identity or traditions.

He attacked plans to extend Sunday trading hours as part of an attempt to "drive religion off the streets", warning of what he described as increasingly aggressive secularism.

Cardinal Nichols criticised the government's counterterrorism policies, warning that they risked branding all religious people as extremists, and dismissed the notion of uniquely British values.

Moulana Rizvi joined Cardinal Nichols in predicting the demise of the government's Prevent strategy, which is designed to protect children from radicalisation.

Cardinal Nichols said: "The list of 'British values' are neither British nor are they primary. They are good human values and are all rooted in something much deeper. And that's the kind of consideration we need if Prevent strategies are going to gain public support and not risk alienating some people.

"Without some sound definition [of extremism], countering extremism is not only difficult to fashion but dangerous in the premises it might unwittingly adopt and then the alienation it could consequently engender."



David Cameron
visiting a mosque.
Maulana Rizvi,
left, has praised
British tolerance

countries] has failed to provide that. I feel more Islamic living here, because I can easily practise my faith and give respect to all other members of the community — belonging to different faiths and not belonging to any faith — because that is what Islam is all about, respecting and caring for others."

Maulana Rizvi added that many second and third-generation Muslims in Britain, including his own children, felt that it was their only home.

"We want to contribute positively in to British society as a minority," he said. "Our Jewish and Christian brothers have been in Britain for centuries and we're only new to this country, we

Next global viruses have no vaccines

Tom Whipple Science Editor

More than a dozen viruses pose the threat of severe outbreaks and there are no vaccines to protect against them, a senior virologist has warned.

Adrian Hill, director of the Jenner Institute in Oxford, named Mers, a respiratory syndrome that has emerged in the Middle East; Sars, which swept the world in 2003 before being contained; the marburg and chikungunya viruses; and zika. He said that they appeared simple to combat and called for the creation of a global fund to defeat them.

"These look like they are doable vaccines," he said. "They are not difficult like HIV or malaria. It was pretty easy to make an ebola vaccine once we got round to it."

There are now ebola vaccines that could have stopped the recent deadly outbreak but they were not available at the time. Professor Hill conducted trials on two candidates.

At the annual Oxford London lecture, he said the difficulty was that many of the other viruses might never cause a serious outbreak but some of them probably would. "The basic problem is, there isn't a business case. Large companies won't invest £100 million to produce a vaccine against something that may not reappear.

"The bottom line is we need to be prepared, and we are not. One of the ways to be prepared is to have vaccines stockpiled. If you look over the last 15 years at pathogens that have come along, every one we knew about previously.

"With zika there will be no vaccine for at least 18 months. That's too slow. What we need is a manufacturing facility, standing by and ready."

Doctors' strike causes 5,000 cancellations

Katie Gibbons

Thousands of medical procedures were cancelled as junior doctors went on strike for a third time.

The medics, who are unhappy with new seven-day contracts, will continue their 48 hours of industrial action today. It is their longest walkout to date. Health leaders warned that the strikes were taking their toll on NHS services.

Jeremy Hunt, health secretary, announced that he would impose new contracts on junior doctors after four months of failed discussions with the British Medical Association.

Figures from 228 NHS institutions, including 154 acute hospital trusts, showed that 2,077 inpatient procedures and 3,187 day-case operations and procedures were cancelled as a result of the two-day strike. Hundreds more routine clinics and appointments were likely to have been affected.

Dr Anne Rainsberry, national incident director for NHS England, said: "This is clearly going to be a difficult couple of days. A 48-hour strike will put significantly more pressure on the NHS and the cumulative effect of these recurring strikes is likely to take a toll.

"The safety and care of patients is always our number one priority and staff across the NHS are doing all they can to minimise the impact on patients of the action."

The BMA has refused to accept the contract because it does not include an increase in hourly rates for anti-social weekend shifts for junior doctors.

The Department of Health claims that it will result in an average 13.5 per cent basic pay rise and cap the number of long shifts.

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