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Scotland must take action on anti-Muslim extremism, says scholar

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Paigham Mustafa *(Image: NQ)*

Paigham Mustafa – who has been living under a fatwa for more than 20 years – has said there needs to be a national conversation about what Islam truly stands for and why misunderstanding of the religion is fuelling division. He is also calling for greater learning within schools and wider society, arguing that education about Islam remains one of the most effective ways of reducing prejudice and strengthening community cohesion.

There have been some 70 attacks on UK mosques in the past year, about one every five days.
Hate crime against Muslims also grew 19% in the year to March 2025, according to the Home Office, to a record of 4476 reported incidents.
In the past few weeks, Amnesty International has said that Islamophobic attacks across the UK were “reaching emergency levels".

“Anti-Muslim hate crime has risen significantly, and mosques across the country have increasingly become targets of vandalism, arson and intimidation. We must have a national conversation about what Islam really teaches, and defuse the toxicity of bigotry,” said Mustafa.

"The greatest tragedy is that Islam is too often defined by those who neither understand nor properly practise it. Extremists distort its teachings from within, while bigots misrepresent it from outside.

"Between these opposing forces, the authentic message of the Quran – peace, justice, mercy and human dignity – is frequently lost."

Mustafa has been living under a fatwa – a religious edict calling for "action to be taken against him" – for more than 20 years. This was organised by Glasgow Central Mosque and was issued against him because of his view that Islam should return to the teachings of the Quran.