Far Right Violence

A Messaging Guide

FRAMING PRINCIPLES

* **Universalise immediately - centre your message on those in fear of violence**

  Focus on what it's like for visible minorities, especially Muslims, who are living in fear of this violence. Immediately connect with people's humanity and make it clear that the people at risk are just trying to go about their lives.

> Right now people up and down Britain are living in fear of violence. People of colour – Black and Brown people, and Muslims in particular, have been hurt, threatened and intimidated as they go about their lives in their communities. *Families are scared to send their kids to school, parents are unsure if they are safe to go to work and grandparents are afraid of going to pray.*

* **Say what this is - Islamophobic, racist violence**

  Name that this isn't just random disorder, but instead it is focused on visible minorities, migrants and Muslims in particular.

> We know that this violence is targeted at Muslims - especially women wearing hijabs, People of Colour and people seeking asylum. It is devastating that the tragic crime committed in Southport continues to be associated with ongoing violence against people of colour. Families and the community in Southport need to grieve in peace - this wave of violence is making it so much worse for them.

* **Keep focus on those in power - and be clear they have responsibility**

  It's crucial that we don't let those in power off the hook - and that we locate this political violence in the rhetoric and policies of those who have had power.

For too long politicians have used these communities as a scapegoat to distract from their failings to address poverty and inequality. Muslims and vulnerable people seeking asylum are being used as a target for people's fears and anxieties and as a result [of racist dog whistling] are now bearing the violent brunt of that callous and cruel behaviour by those in power.

This isn't just about Farage, or the right of the Conservative Party, it's about the normalisation of Islamophobia from those many people in power who have stirred the pot of racism and bigotry and are now acting surprised that it's boiling over.

* **Be mindful of how you talk about social media - don't let it distract from the main argument**

Clearly social media, especially X, have played a key role in this moment but by laying the blame wholly on the platform, we can end up ignoring the responsibility of others, such as the many politicians and parts of the media who have promoted racist and xenophobic narratives. Frame social media as part of the problem - not the entirety of it.

* **Avoid calling for rioters to be locked up, or comparing their sentences to other sentences**

Although it can be galling to see softer treatment of far right rioters it's important to remember that any lurch towards harsher sentences, new laws and police crackdowns could have serious consequences for marginalised communities in the future. Instead focus on what politicians and others can do to address the causes of the violence.

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* **Show that the vast majority of people oppose this violence - and talk up cross-faith community clean ups and the counter protests**

It's important to remind people that those taking part in these violent riots are a tiny minority, and that the vast majority of people in this country live side by side peacefully. The far-right is targeting community centres, libraries, job-centres, local businesses. And remember that social media platforms like X are pushing this violence - and making it seem more mainstream than it is.

Look at the aftermath of this violence and you see communities coming together to clean up. Most people in this country want to support their neighbours, whatever they look like and whatever religion they follow. We saw on Wednesday how thousands showed up to counter the threat of violence taking to the streets to stand together and oppose this

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violence.
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* **Talk about how governments can do things differently**

Don't leave people at the end of your interview thinking that nothing can be done - it's crucial to give people hope for change.

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Things can be different. In the short term this government must recall
Parliament, and they must name the Islamophobic nature of this violence.
Mosques and other vulnerable community spaces should be given extra
protection and this government must immediately stop scapegoating
Muslims and people seeking asylum, and instead focus on fixing the deep
problems in our economy and society.

On a personal level, we need to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our
friends and neighbours who are most directly threatened by this
disgusting hatred, and show that our communities are stronger than those
who would want to divide us.
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FACTS THAT TELL A STORY

Politicians of all stripes have been guilty of whippin up anti-Muslim and anti-migrant rhetoric.

Jonathan Ashworth said migrants are "'put up in hotels and they can stay in these hotels for the rest of their lives"

Suella Braverman said 'The truth is that the Islamists, the extremists and the anti-Semites are in charge now.'

"These animals need locking up for good," said Lee Andreson, the Reform UK MP for Ashfield -- speaking of local unrest in Harehills a few weeks ago.

During the election Nigel Farage said there are "a growing number of young people in this country who do not subscribe to British values, in fact loathe much of what we stand for", when asked about Conservative plans to bring in national service for 18-year-olds. Asked during that interview on Sky News if he was referring to Muslims, Mr Farage said: "We are."

Islamophobic incidents have increased by 335 per cent in the UK since Hamas' attack Israel on October 7, according to new research from Tell MAMA, a charity which records anti-Muslim incidents. In recent days there have been reports of Muslims and other racialised people being harassed, intimidated and physically assaulted. Bricks are being thrown in people's houses, cars destroyed, racist graffiti is being scrawled on public walls.

WORDS THAT WORK

Do say...	Don't say...	Why...
Violence / Terror Marches	*Protest*	*Don't legitimise the violence and point to their aim being to terrorise communities*
Community coming together	*Counter-protest*	*Don't make an equivalence between the two groups.*
Far Right violence is a stain on our communities	*Both sides need to keep peaceful*	*Don't make an equivalence between the two groups.*
People are being whipped up by far right rhetoric and misinformation.	*Legitimate concerns about immigration / integration*	*Don't reinforce the false justifications for the violence*
Violence	*Pogrom*	*Pogrom isn't a very recognisable word - and could be distracting.*
Racist and Islamaphobic violence	*Mindless thuggery*	This is a coordinated and targeted attack - we should name it as such.
The idea that far right violence is being policed differently	Two-tier policing	Don't repeat the framing. We don't want this phrase to become embedded in the conversation.

COMMON ATTACKS

ATTACK: Muslim groups are retaliating, too; should they not be condemned?

RESPONSE: What we're seeing now is organised violence from the far right against Muslim communities across the country – and in the vast majority of places, the response from the communities *has been* incredibly brave and moving – with people from all backgrounds standing together to say that this violence doesn't represent the place where they live.

ATTACK: "Legitimate" concerns about immigration and concerns about homelessness and lack of jobs

RESPONSE: The violent riots currently terrorising members of our communities are the result of decades of politicians and the media failing to condemn racism and Islamophobia – and in too many cases using Muslims, People of Colour and migrants as scapegoats for the very real issues being faced by people in the UK today. Let's be really clear: long NHS waiting times, the housing crisis, rising homelessness and the challenges facing our public services are the direct result of years of underfunding by successive governments – but instead of taking responsibility, politicians have pointed the finger at people in our communities just trying to get on with their lives.

ATTACK: The "protesters" say they are just voicing what everyone else is thinking

RESPONSE: The vast majority of people in this country are compassionate people who care about their communities and are absolutely sickened by the violent racism we've seen in recent days. You can see that in the really moving images of people coming together to repair the damage caused to streets, homes and community buildings by rioters. The people trying to sow division and tear our communities apart are a violent, right-wing minority – and it's down to all of us who are appalled by their actions to make our voices heard in saying that this violence is not done in our name.

ATTACK: What about two tier policing?

RESPONSE: The truth is that this isn't a real thing. It's a tactic of division. The idea that the police treat people worse because they are on these far right marches just doesn't bear out.

ATTACK: Surely, the main issue here is social media and the role it has played in these riots spreading misinformation?

RESPONSE: There is no doubt that we need to tackle how misinformation is being spread and the role it has to play in these riots. But we also have to look not just at this moment but the years of politicians who have whipped up anti-Muslim and anti-migrant rhetoric and the failure to condemn this language. This should be a reckoning for politicians and sections of the media (both traditional and social media) alike to see how they tackle misinformation and prejudiced language.

ATTACK: Don't we just need to lock up all the rioters and throw away the key?

RESPONSE: The fundamental problems we are facing of racism in society is not a public order problem. Prisons and criminalisation won't stop this violence, and doesn't address its roots either. To move forward the government must drop the divisive rhetoric, reverse anti-migrant policies and invest in communities across the UK.



WHERE THE PUBLIC ARE AT

1. **85% of Britons oppose the unrest at recent protests and just 7% saying they support the violence.**

   Opposition to the riots is near-universal across every part of the public, with Reform UK voters

being the only group showing any substantive levels of support, at 21%. Even this is a clear minority, with three-quarters of Reform voters (76%) opposed to the riots. Support among other voters is far lower – only 9% of Conservatives, 3% of Labour voters and 1% of Lib Dems favour the outbreak in violent disorder. Yougov

2. **Two thirds (67%) of the public are concerned about the rise of the far-right in the UK, with voters across the political spectrum more likely to say they are concerned than not - except for Reform UK voters.**

   When asked whether they think the politics of the far-left or the far-right is more of a threat to UK democracy, the public is most likely to say they're an equal threat (39%).

   Three in ten (28%) say the far-right, 11 percentage points more than those who say the far-left (17%). Savanta

3. **Only one in eight Britons (12%) feel the rioters are representative of the views of most Britons, with three-quarters (76%) saying they do not represent the majority of the public.**

   There is an element of a partisan divide, but even among the more generally sympathetic Reform voters, only three in ten (29%) feel the rioters are representative of wider Britain, compared to six in ten (62%) feeling they aren't. The only people who feel the rioters are some kind of 'silent majority' are those who support the unrest, six in ten of whom (62%) are under the impression that their views are widely shared. (Yougov)

4. **For the British public, 'thugs' is the most apt description of those causing the unrest, with two-thirds (67%) feeling it is appropriate based on their actions. A similar 65% of Britons would describe them as 'rioters', with six in ten (58%) believing the rioters are 'racist' and a small majority (52%) agreeing with the prime minister's label of 'far-right'.**

   There is greater scepticism about describing them as 'terrorists', with only a quarter of Britons (23%) feeling this is appropriate. But only one in five (21%) would agree with the rioters' self-description as mere 'protestors' or 'activists', while just one in six (16%) would class them as 'people with legitimate concerns' and even fewer (9%) would use the term 'patriotic'. Yougov

ENDS

If you want to comment on the document feel free to message Matthew on 07745706480 (whatsapp preferable)

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