



How allies can support friends, colleagues and communities during racist and Islamophobic violence

In the aftermath of the horrific stabbing incident in north Belfast on Monday night, Northern Ireland has seen a further resurgence of racist and Islamophobic violence. Families and individuals have again faced intimidation, online targeting, violence, destruction of property and arson, with some forced from their homes. We have also seen emergency services, alongside members of civil society including PPR and CATU, place themselves in harm's way to support people already at risk of further harm.

Across Belfast, arterial routes have been blocked by masked groups, echoing deeply troubling patterns from the conflict, when paramilitary checkpoints and no-go areas were normalised features of life in Northern Ireland. Workers providing essential services have been harassed on their way to work, and children have been sent home from school for their own safety. These actions amount to collective punishment and terror directed at broad and diverse minoritised ethnic communities for the alleged actions of one individual, who has now been charged and is before the courts.

This escalation comes amid an already hostile political and social environment. Our EC Far-Right Monitoring Subgroup had called an emergency meeting only last week in recognition of the serious risks facing minoritised communities. The situation has since deteriorated further, with far-right actors encouraging and exploiting fear, anger and misinformation. As allies, friends and responsible members of society, we have a duty of care to our neighbours, colleagues and communities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Practical ways to offer support

- **Show solidarity through practical support:** Friends, neighbours and colleagues may be frightened, traumatised or unable to go about their daily lives safely. Offer practical assistance where appropriate, such as helping with groceries, providing lifts, accompanying people on essential journeys, keeping someone company at home, or simply listening. This may be especially important for migrant community members who do not have family or wider support networks nearby.
- **Take civic and political action:** Write to elected representatives and ask them to show clear leadership in support of minoritised communities. Be clear that you expect representatives to unequivocally condemn all acts of racist violence and intimidation. There must be no

legitimising of attacks on migrant, Muslim or minoritised ethnic communities, and no political point-scoring when people's safety and homes are at risk.

- **Challenge misinformation and disinformation:** Do not allow harmful narratives to spread unchallenged. Where it is safe to do so, challenge racist and far-right tropes in conversation, including with people close to you. Report false or harmful content on social media, particularly posts that incite hatred, intimidation or violence.
- **Support reporting where appropriate:** Minoritised ethnic communities need support to ensure incidents are taken seriously and recorded. Reporting crimes or online threats can become an additional administrative and emotional burden for people already experiencing harassment, intimidation and violence. If you witness something online or in person, consider making a report yourself, or offering to support someone else to do so if they want that assistance. You can report incidents or crimes through the PSNI by calling 999 for emergencies, 101 for non-emergencies, or you can report online through this link: <https://www.psnipolice.uk/report>. If you would prefer to report anonymously, you can do so through Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111, or through this link: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/give-information-anonymously>. If you require assistance in reporting, you can contact Victim Support at: <https://www.victimsupportni.com/the-victims-journey/should-you-report-a-crime/report-a-crime/>.

We also wish to reassure minoritised communities that the PSNI now no longer share victim and witness data with the UK Home Office, if you are supporting someone in reporting a crime, please rest assured that they will not be automatically referred or have their details shared with the Home Office. More details can be found here:

<https://www.psnipolice.uk/sites/sharinghomeofficeimmigrationenforcement>

- **Speak with children and young people:** Racist and far-right narratives are being promoted to children and young people, including online. Check in with young people in your family, community and wider networks. Create space for questions, challenge racist ideas when they arise, and support young people to recognise misinformation, scapegoating and dehumanising language.

Useful resources

1. [Act Now: Talking points for navigating conversations around the attack in North Belfast](#)
2. [Hope and Courage Collective: Narrative Guidance Following Violence and Riots \(Based on learning from riots in Dublin\)](#)
3. [FactCheckNI: Immigration factsheets and reports](#)
4. [Belfast Telegraph: Fact checker: All you need to know around immigration and crime in Northern Ireland](#)
5. [Hope Not Hate: Belfast Riots and Racism: What we know so far](#)
6. If you would like to know more about the online context and patterns of far-right organisation, you can also refer to CAJ and Rabble Co-Operative's research reports: [Mapping Far Right Activity Online in Northern Ireland Project Report: Case studies on the role of social media in anti-immigration protests and racist incidents](#) and [Inciting a Pogrom? Social media and the racist disorder in Ballymena and beyond during summer 2025](#).

Support organisations

Responsibility for protecting communities in this moment of fear and crisis lies first and foremost with statutory authorities. Yet the response so far has fallen far short of the severity and urgency of the situation. Below are support organisations that may be able to help. We recognise, with gratitude and care, that many of these organisations are themselves stretched, and that their staff, volunteers and communities may also be living with the harm and fear caused by this week's disorder.

- Advice NI
- Housing Rights
- Victim Support NI/ Hate Crime Advocacy Service
- Anaka Women's Collective
- PPR
- CATU

Legal aid advice is available from solicitors in NI on Immigration, Housing and Criminal matters. To find a solicitor: <https://lawsoc-ni.org/using-a-solicitor/find-a-solicitor>

NI Direct have published guidance on a range of services and signposting organisations which can be accessed here: [Help and advice for anyone affected by the recent disorder | nidirect](#)