

Geachte leden van de Raad,

Hierbij stuur ik u ter kennisneming door de reactie van mijn ambtgenoot van Christchurch op onze brief inzake de aanslag in die stad op 15 maart j.l.

Met vriendelijke groet,

J.M.L. Niederer

burgemeester



23 May 2019

Mayor JML Niederer and E Franken (Acting City Manager)
City of Roosendaal
Postbus 5000
4700 KA
Rossendaal
Holland

Dear Mayor JML Niederer and Mr Franken

I am writing to thank you for your message of condolences in the wake of the atrocity that struck at the heart of Christchurch's Muslim communities in their time of prayer on March 15 this year. This act of terror was inspired by a hatred that I and my fellow councillors cannot begin to comprehend.

The response locally, nationally and internationally, on the other hand, has been inspired by love, compassion and kindness, and from our local Muslim brothers and sisters we have heard of the infinite capacity for forgiveness, which was so eloquently expressed at the National Remembrance Service by Farid Ahmed, whose wife was killed at Al Noor Mosque.

"I don't want to have a heart that is boiling like a volcano. A volcano has anger, fury, rage, it doesn't have peace. It has hatred, it burns itself within, and it burns the surrounding. I don't want to have a heart like this and I believe no one does. I want a heart that is full of love and care and full of mercy, and will forgive lavishly, because this heart doesn't want any more life to be lost. This heart doesn't like that the pain I have gone through, that any human being should go through. That's why I have chosen peace, love and I have forgiven."

An act that was designed to divide us has united us as a city and as a nation. And the message has gone out around the world that this is how to respond to terrorism - not with retribution, but with generosity of mind and spirit, as we build bridges across cities and across the world.

As Imam Gamal Fouda, stated at the Call to Prayer a week after the attack: "We are broken-hearted, but we are not broken. We are alive, we are together, we are determined to not let anyone divide us. To the families of the victims your loved ones did not die in vain, their blood has watered the seeds of hope. Through them the world sees the beauty of Islam and the beauty of our unity."

New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Adern, who also spoke at the National Remembrance Service, spoke of how we had all felt lost for words in the wake of the attack.

She said: "What words adequately express the pain and suffering of 50 men, women and children lost, and so many injured? What words capture the anguish of our Muslim community being the target of hatred and violence? What words express the grief of a city that has already known so much pain? I thought there were none. And then I came here and was met with this simple greeting. Asalamu Aleykum. Peace be upon you. ...even when we had no words, we still heard yours, and they have left us humbled and they have left us united".

And as a city, we have chosen not to be defined by what happened on that day, but rather all the goodness that it has inspired, and the knowledge that we can all make a difference.

All the messages we have received, especially those that have come from places that have known our pain, have helped to uplift our Muslim communities and our city as a whole. We stand in solidarity with you in our condemnation of terrorism. We stand with you in support of human rights. And we reject all actions that engender hatred, violence and division. We now know where that can lead.

Thank you once more for your message and for the commitment to being the change we all want to see in the world.

Yours sincerely



Lianne Dalziel
MAYOR



If not claimed within 7 days, please return to
Christchurch City Council, PO Box 73016, Christchurch 8154



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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR